Bachelor Thesis

SILENT WHISTLEBLOWING

Failed Potentials for Public-Sphere Discourse

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MMT376 Bachelor thesis
Multimedia technology

Nord Trøndelag University College
2014

HINT

HiNT University College, Norway (internal)

SAMTYKKE TIL HØGSKOLENS BRUK AV KANDIDAT-, BACHELOR- OG MASTEROPPGAVER

Forfatter(e): Julian Norum

Norsk tittel:

Engelsk tittel: Silent Whistleblowing - Failed Potentials for Public-Sphere Discourse

Studieprogram: Multimedieteknologi

Emnekode og navn: MMT 376

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Dato: 6. mai 2014

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Foreword and Acknowledgements

It had seemed to me that that NRK, the public broadcaster in Norway, offered a too narrow analysis of the crisis in Ukraine 2014. The consistent focus on Russian misconduct, the immediate acceptance of Ukraine´s new government, and the lack of alternative speculation as to what had caused the unrest in the first place. Then, the main case study presented itself in form of a debate program, one Thursday night in March. Finally, a dissident presented an alternative interpretation, for the first time on Norwegian television. His opinions, of course, were quickly denounced as "grotesque" and "beyond belief", but it reaffirmed my observations of a cohesive environment, non-permissive of any factual debate. I decided to find out which important information was not being presented. This documentation makes in large part, the empirical data for my thesis.

Marit Kathryn Corneil believed in my project, gave valuable support, and pointed me in the right direction. Thankyou!

Abstract

Despite evidence obtained by whistleblowers showing contemporary U.S. policies to sponsor, agitate and assist in armed coup d'états, the consensus in Norway still seems to find any such speculations to be beyond reason. A televised debate on Norwegian broadcaster *NRK*, following the Ukraine coup d'état in 2014, demonstrated broad support of the newly installed government, while strongly condemning Russia´s behaviour in the events. One dissident member of the debate dared to speculate as to how the coup really started, and gave reference to evidence suggesting U.S. involvement in agitating unrest. His statements were dismissed as grotesque, and invoked laughter in the audience. Successive case studies provide necessary context, before the NRK debate is subject to a critical discourse analysis,

which demonstrates the discrepancy between available information, and the informational value of the debate. This indicates that evidence obtained by whistleblowers fails to influence public-sphere discourse in Norway. The thesis argues this is due to NRK still being an imporant *gatekeeper* of news in Norway, and that online sources beside the mainstream, fail to mass-communicate. A normative evulation then suggests that small editorial staffs may be exposed to group-pressure and cohesive thinking. Lastly, some reflections on whether online network technologies benefiting from "collective intelligence" might improve decision-making in news.

List of contents

1 Introduction

This thesis will provide a critical discourse analysis of a Norwegian televised debate by national broadcaster *NRK*, following the violent protests in Ukraine 2014. The study does not aim to prove U.S. / NATO responsibility of the Ukraine coup, but rather provide empirical data obtained by whistleblowers, investigative journalists, and credible critical sources, which combine to demonstrate the need for a more critical analysis of events. Successive case studies will provide the necessary historical framework to support the thesis argument. First, the role of contemporary whistleblowers will be analyzed, and the reactions their revelations have caused. Then, a critical analysis of contemporary U.S. foreign affairs will show a lack of adherence to international treaties. Some focus will then be devoted to contemporary U.S. policies on clandestine actions aimed at overthrowing foreign governments, as evident in leaked U.S. military manuals. Insight into such documents helps define key concepts, and discredits notions that secret operations were mere artifacts of the Cold War era, but rather that such tactics have received heightened priority after 9/11. Leaked documents indicate U.S. covert operations taking place in many parts of the world.

Due to the limitations of the scope of this thesis, and to avoid a superficial account of events, one example will serve as a comparative test case. It focuses on attempted coup d'états in Venezuela, and how leaked correspondence from the U.S. embassy in Caracas shed new light on these conflicts. The documents show that President Hugo Chavez´s criticism of U.S. actions in his country was justified.

2 Thesis Question

The thesis will present information obtained by whistleblowers, investigative journalists, and credible critical sources, and demonstrate how it fails to influence public-sphere discourse in

Norway. The specific case study is a televised debate on Norwegian public-service broadcaster *Norsk Rikskringkasting (NRK),* regarding the coup d'état in Ukraine 2014. A critical discourse analysis will demonstrate a discrepancy between critical information on the issue, and the informational value of the debate. It will show that NRK in this case fails to adhere to the standards of public-service television, which include providing in-depth examination of topics, and to place particular interest in making sure controversial opinions are also topic for deliberation.

The thesis´ contention is that this information fails to reach the public-sphere in Norway, largely due to a continued reliance on responsible *gatekeepers.* In Norway, the main *gatekeeper* is NRK. The potential for group pressure (*groupthink)* in editorial staffs, and the possibility of implementing new forms of democratic models to prevent it, such as models of *"collective intelligence",* will also be briefly reflected upon. The goal is not to raise systemic criticism, but rather a normative evaluation, and provide suggestions for future study.

3 Historical Background

In *Structural Transformation of The Public Sphere* (1962)*,* Jürgen Habermas explains how correspondence of news in Europe originally spread along trade routes. These were news from abroad, of the court, commercial events, and some common interest. This information was originally not in the public sphere, but as letters between merchants. By the mid-17th century, weekly journals started to appear. The merchants became indispensible sources for news, but only a selection was passed on to the journals, as merchants had little interest in making their private correspondence public. News itself became a commodity, but also a way for governments to communicate with its citizens. Gradually, society itself became a public affair, and the "*public sphere"* was born. Book reviews and scholarly articles started

appearing, and also critical writing. A platform for public criticism towards authority had been established. Habermas quotes a rescript from Fredrick II from 1784:

> A private person has no right to pass public and perhaps even disapproving judgement on the actions, procedures, laws, regulations, and ordinances of sovereigns and courts, their officials, assemblies, and courts of law, or to promulgate or publish in print pertinent reports that he manages to obtain. For a private person is not at all capable of making such judgements (Habermas, 1962, p. 25).

This quote shows early attempts by the European leadership to place restrictions upon the press. The United States of America had just been formed at the time. Their distrust of European governments, and an ambition for a more transparent democracy, is evident in Thomas Jefferson´s correspondence letter from France in 1787, where he comments on civil uprisings in the U.S.:

> Cherish therefore the spirit of our people, and keep alive their attention. Do not be too severe upon their errors, but reclaim them by enlightening them. If once they become inattentive to the public affairs, you and I, and Congress, and Assemblies, judges and governors shall all become wolves. It seems to be the law of our general nature, in spite of individual exceptions; and experience declares that man is the only animal which devours his own kind, for I can apply no milder term to the governments of Europe, and to the general prey of the rich on the poor (Jefferson, 1903, To Colonel Edward Carrington, para. 4).

For the press to influence society, it requires an educated and literate population. Jefferson saw public education as another cornerstone to a functioning democracy. Today, the principle of freedom of expression is defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

> Anyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers (UN, 1948).

The technological innovation that allowed journals to become important in the democratization of societies was the printing press. Later inventions such as the phonograph and cinematograph *(graph* = to write) were able to write and store optic and acoustic content. Along with electricity, several technological advances eventually led to television. A televised debate meant that telegenic qualities also mattered, in order to win elections. The new medium had an impact on the democratic process itself. What these new inventions had in

common was their ability to store time. It only took one century to transform the ancient storage monopoly of writing into the possibilities of the digital age (Kittler, 1997).

Inventions leading to what we know as the Internet came from military research. In the 1950´s, the U.S. had developed retaliatory plans on how to respond to a nuclear attack from the Soviet Union. During successive attacks, the scenario outlined in planning documents awarded the likelihood of victory to the side that had the most resilient command, which could sustain lines of communication for the longest amount of time. Both FM-communications and phone lines were not considered to last for long. The concept which could prevent any attack from occurring was that it would lead to the destruction of both parties, known as *Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD).* This logic however, would not hold if a first strike could wipe out the adversary´s lines of communication and prevent retaliation. The idea of a central communications hub was changed to the concept of a web, which would have no such fragile point, inspired by theories in neurology on how the brain could use remaining functions effectively even if brain cells had died. Headed by the *Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA, today known as DARPA),* technologies for such a non-hierarchical web of communication started development in the late 1960´s, and led to the creation of *ARPANET* (Ryan, 2010).

Another important part to the Internet we know today is the ability for servers across the globe to speak the same language. CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, was in the early 1990s the workplace for scientists from several different countries. They all brought with them incompatible computer systems. To ensure interoperability between the researchers, Sir Tim Berners-Lee developed a software called *Enquire.* It was the first step towards his invention of the *World Wide Web* (*WWW*). The standard was eventually adopted, and in early 1994 Sir Berners-Lee and other early developers founded the *WWW Consortium,* known as *W3C,* to promote the standardization of web technologies.

Today, virtually everyone can record, store and broadcast content on the Internet. Currently, 100 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute. That is 6000 hours every hour (YouTube, 2014). The technological advances have elevated the scale of communication worldwide. As such, one could say that the new mediums themselves carry messages that change society. Marshall McLuhan compares a light bulb to a medium without information, yet it allows for new human activities, and therefore it carries a message. The message of any new medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces in human affairs (McLuhan, 1964).

In addition to uploading content, the World Wide Web has enabled participation online. The added possibility for interaction is referred to as "Web 2.0". Social media permits a more personal presence online, and another shift is the trend towards user-generated resources. In 2000, Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger started *Nupedia*. The plan was to create a free online encyclopedia where experts would volunteer their time. After nine months, only twenty articles were produced. Frustrated with the slow pace, they decided to try the *Wiki*-approach. *Wiki* is a Hawaiian word for "quick". The first *Wiki*, made by software engineer Ward Cunningham in 1995, allowed any user to edit any portion of the content, and each edit would be stored. The *Wiki* then, became the sum of all accumulated changes, with all edits stored in its history. Adopting this method for Nupedia was not something its advisory board of experts approved of, so Wales and Sanger instead started *Wikipedia.* Within a year, 15 000 articles were created (Shirky, 2008). Today, the number of articles in the English version has reached over 4.5 million, and Wikipedia is the only noncommercial site in the top twenty web sites of the U.S.

As mentioned, the news journals became a platform for criticism of authorities as early as mid-1700s. In modern times, people who reveal sensitive information regarding government misconduct or unethical policies within an institution are commonly known as

whistleblowers. Daniel Ellsberg, a former military analyst, became known for having photocopied a 7000 page study on the decision-making in the Vietnam War, and handing it over to the *New York Times.* He faced charges under *The Espionage Act,* and a possible sentence of 115 years in prison. In 1973, all charges were dismissed on grounds of governmental misconduct against him (Arnold, 1973). The leak became known as *The Pentagon Papers,* and revealed that the public had been mislead by the presidential administrations of both Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson, about the level of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. President Lyndon B. Johnson was planning for an escalation of the war in 1964, even as he was claiming the opposite during that year´s presidential election (History, 2011). In 1971, *New York Times* published a series of daily articles based on the leaked documents, but after the third, U.S. Department of Justice temporarily managed to block publication on grounds of national security. *The Washington Post* joined forces with *New York Times,* and won a court battle, which justified the publications under the First Amendment´s protection of a free press. Daniel Elsberg has since been an activist for government transparency, and has co-founded *The Freedom of the Press Foundation,* with other activists, journalists and whistleblowers including Edward Snowden and Glenn Greenwald. Various protections have since been installed for whistleblowers, such as *The Whistleblower Protection Act* of 1989, with organizations such as *National Whistleblowers Center (NWC)* advocating for improved legislature.

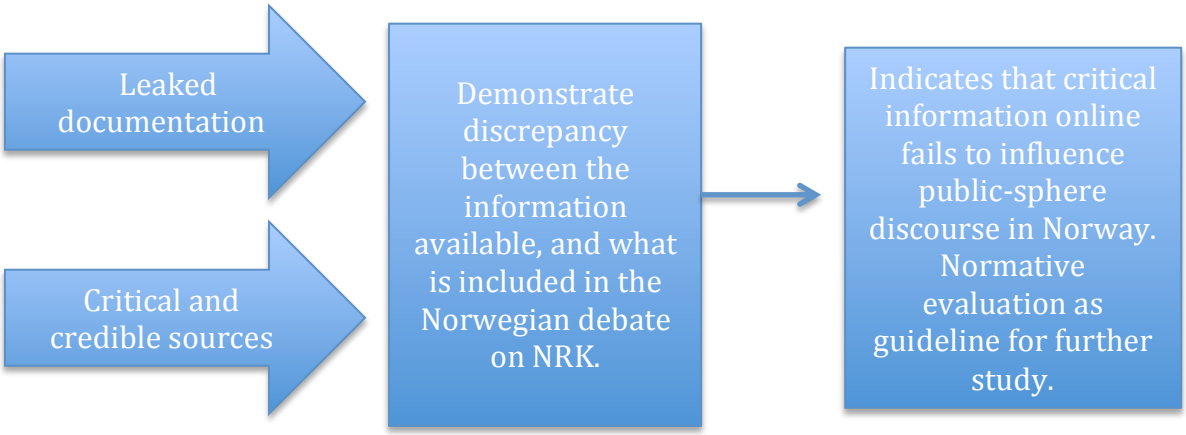
Traditional whistleblowers still relied on editors of the press willing to publish classified information. The task of filtering and deciding which information reaches the public is called *gatekeeping,* and is the center of media´s role in modern public life (Shomaker and Vos, 2009). Today, the Internet provides new platforms of publication. Traditional *gatekeepers* are no longer the only guardians of information. Still, there is a need to ensure files are kept secure, and that sources are protected. WikiLeaks is a non-profit organization

founded in 2007 by the *Sunshine Press*. It builds upon the *Wiki*-philosophy to an extent, in that it receives information from anyone who wants to upload content. It employs sophisticated technical solutions to make sure files are secure and that sources receive necessary protection. Due to journalistic and ethical considerations, a network of volunteer journalists verifies the material. They write news articles on the published material, underlining why it has significance to society, while also releasing the leaked documents (*Wikileaks*, 2014). In 2009, Wikileaks won the *Amnesty International Media Award* (*The Guardian*, 2009).

4 Research model

The empirical data for this thesis consists of declassified or leaked official documents, newspaper articles, interviews and other types of discourse. A critical discourse analysis method will be used. The aim is to demonstrate a discrepancy between what information is available, and what information is included in a Norwegian debate, televised by public broadcasting, NRK. This will suggest that critical information online still fails to influence public discourse. Finally, a normative evaluation will be provided, which aims to provide potential guidelines for further study.

Research diagram:



5 Methodology

The methodology will have its roots in the humanities, and particularly the *Digital Humanities*, which looks at ways new media impacts our social interaction. In the thesis, this relates to how available critical information online fails to influence the public-sphere discourse due to continued reliance on traditional *gatekeepers*. A critical reading of the empirical data will be presented in successive case studies. These are meant to provide a necessary context, which will support the argument that relevant information seems to be missing from the Norwegian debate regarding the Ukraine crisis in 2014, which finally will be subject for analysis. The thesis will make eclectic use of critical discourse analysis (CDA), ultimately concerned with emphasizing a lack of objectivity in the debate. "Criticism is brought to bear on objects of experience whose ´objectivity´ is called into question; criticism supposes that there is a degree of inbuilt deformity which masquerades as reality." (Coultard & Coulthard, 1996, p. 3).

CDA is a transdiciplinary form, which allows for various "points of entry". The thesis will not focus on semantics or syntax, the very structure of discourse or structure of mind, but more on the macro-level societal impact. The goal of critical discourse in general can be said to be motivated in creating awareness to injustice in social public affairs (ibid.). CDA is relational in nature, its focus not primarily on individuals, but rather social relations. Social relations are complex, and include people who talk, write or communicate somehow, expressed through conversations, newspaper articles etc., in short all form of communication. The analysis will include relevant discourse missing from the debate, to emphasize how it otherwise could help inform the issue. Further, the analysis will not be merely descriptive, but provide normative critique. "Critique assesses what exists, what might exist and what should exist on the basis of a coherent set of values" (Fairclough, 2010, "1 Discourse Analysis

Critique", para. 9). In the final analysis and conclusion, the goal is not to critique systems, but rather provide a normative evaluation and suggestions towards future study.

6 Theory

To allow citizens to form opinions based on factual information, the institution of a free press is arguably more important to society than government itself:

> The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers and be capable of reading them (Jefferson, 1903, To Colonel Edward Carrington, para. 4).

The historian Howard Zinn compares his work to that of a mapmaker, who in order to produce a practical map must take an enormous amount of geographical data and present it according to the needs of a particular type of map. While the mapmaker´s selection is based on common purpose for everyone in need of a particular map, the historian's purpose for avoiding emphasis on certain facts is ideological. Any chosen emphasis will support some kind of interest, political, racial, national or sexual. Furthermore, the historian's ideological interest is not openly expressed, the way a mapmaker's technical interest is apparent. Zinn claims this deception is not intentional, but because the historian has been trained in a society in which education and knowledge are not used as tools for contending social classes, races or nations (Zinn, 1980).

In the process of narrowing down large amounts of information to be presented to the public, journalists become *gatekeepers* who decide what information passes on. When various media present events in roughly the same way, this portrays a *consonant* version of reality, in which the audience has limited information from which to form opinions (Shoemaker, 2009). As with history, emphasis on certain facts might be omitted from contemporary reporting, and a selection based on ideology is being made.

Habermas established the ideal *"public sphere",* an environment where important matters to democracy are discussed. He also argued that the capitalistic system eventually corrupted the democratic function of media (Habermas, 1962). In *Manufacturing Consent* (2008), Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky define what they call a "Propaganda model", where power sources that fund the media as advertisers, serve to define news. While some critical sources exist, these are marginalized within the system. In addition to a large media bias, they describe a media landscape mostly focused on entertainment, and a news sector devoted to superficial sensationalism. The U.S. has largely a commercial broadcast model, which places trust in market mechanisms. The theory is that an audience would choose to watch only if it were satisfied with the quality, or choose a competitor.

An opposite system would be a State model, in which the government is trusted to use the media for its own purpose. The third option, a public-service model, is based on a distrust of both State and commercial broadcasting. It aims to provide citizens with information, education and entertainment free of commercial, State or political influences. It must be accessible to all citizens, and seek to be "used" by the largest possible number, without necessarily optimizing ratings. Another important principle of the public-service model is that broadcasters must dare to be distinctive, and represent voices not typically heard in commercial media. It should appeal to the audience´s intelligence and understanding, with an emphasis on in-depth explanation and examination. In Europe the financing is typically based on license fees. In Canada and Australia, public broadcasting is financed out of the State funds. Though, many public broadcasters have also resorted to some commercial financing. Public broadcasters have also adopted specialty channels and online content to keep up with the digital development (UNESCO, 2000).

In the 1970´s all European countries had a monopoly of public channels, except Britain, Italy and Luxembourg. By 1997 the balance was reversed, when only three countries,

Austria, Ireland and Switzerland had just public national channels. This shift led to a huge amount of imported television programs, mainly from the U.S. The private media as such, tended more towards entertainment. Research indicates that public television actually leads to more informed citizens, as there is a correlation between political knowledge and a preference for public television in most West European countries (Holtz-Baca & Norris, 2001). This could be due to various causalities. Maybe people who are generally more politically oriented most often prefer public television. It could be that the habitual watching of public television actually brought about the political knowledge, or it could be a more interactive combination of both. Some also claim that public broadcasters are becoming increasingly similar to commercial media. "They share either the avoidance or the defying of contemporary political controversy, the kind that would bring trouble from powerful patrons" (Ledbetter, in Herman & Chomsky, 2008, Updating the Propaganda Model, para. 9).

Many have seen the Internet as a promising alternative, and a potentially more democratic and unfiltered source of information. The *World Wide Web* still maintains its interoperability and open *http* protocol, which is not a corporate proprietary technology nor subject to any government regulation. However, with recent revelations of massive surveillance, and privatization attempts, Sir Tim Berners-Lee feels that the open and neutral system he created is under attack from governments and corporate influence. He is a passionate advocate for protecting open standards, and preventing interference from governments or business (Forbes, 2013).

Wikipedia is an example of a non-profit resource, which has a purely democratic foundation. By placing trust and responsibility in the public, private citizens have created a resource without governance or inspection. *Wikipedia* assumes that errors will be introduced less frequently than existing ones will be corrected. New articles on Wikipedia might be incredibly simple, and are called "stubs". These simple articles encourage people to add

content, even though they might not be experts on the subject. However, what must be factored in is the "*power law distribution",* which seems to hold true when it comes to bloggers, Wikipedia contributors, photographers on Flickr, etc. This predictable imbalance shows that the most active contributors are exponentially more active than the average ones, which in turn are exponentially more active than the least active. This phenomenon seems to drive large social systems. While only 2% of Wikipedia users ever contribute, it has value for millions of others (Shirky, 2008).

"Where does the mind stop and the rest of the world begin?" The question was posed by philosophers Andy Clark and David J. Chalmers, in their study *The Extended Mind* (1998). Many people would accept that what is outside the body is outside the mind. The concept proposed by Clark and Chalmers is that of an "*active externalism",* in which the environment plays an active role in cognitive processes. If paired with external entities, the human organism may be said to be acting in a *coupled system*. "All the components in the system play an active casual role, and they jointly govern behavior in the same sort of way that cognition usually does. If we remove the external component the system´s behavioral competence will drop" (Clark & Chalmers, 1998, p. 4). *Wikipedia* can be said to enhance the cognitive abilities of an individual, but it is also created and accessed by people all over the world, and its content updates all the time. It is a resource that goes beyond functioning only in a *coupled* system with an individual, it can more fittingly be described as a form of "*collective intelligence".* Many web-resources might fit this description, or perhaps it could extend to the entire *WWW*.

Studies on *"collective intelligence",* or "*group intelligence",* indicate that groups can outperform individuals in decision-making. A classic example is simply known as the *Jelly-Beans-in-the-Jar* experiment. Professor Jack Traynor presented his class with a jar filled with jellybeans, and asked them to guess how many it contained. The students could not talk to

each other, but had to make individual guesses. The correct number was 850 beans, while the average of the class estimate equaled 871. Only one student out of 56 made a better guess (Surowiecki, 2005). If you repeat the experiment, it is likely that one or two students will make a better guess than the group, but it will not be the same student each time. Thus, the group average will provide the most reliable estimate. Another study, conducted by physicist Normal L. Johnson, gave computer agents the challenge of navigating a maze, as if navigating streets in a city. At each turning point, or node, they could either go right or left. First the agents were sent through the maze to "learn" about the environment. The second time, they had to find the most efficient way through. By calculating what the majority did at each node, the solution provided by the group was quicker than even the "smartest" agent, proving again that the group had provided the most reliable solution (ibid.).

Another aspect of group dynamics applies to smaller and more homogenous groups. Here, members might find it easier to simply agree with the rest rather than challenge a majority, as observed by psychologist Solomon E.Asch in 1955. In his study, a group of young college students, all men, were asked to participate in a study of visual judgment where they would be comparing the length of lines. Two cards are held up. The first card shows a single line, the second card shows three lines of various lengths. The group is asked to decide which of the three lines on the second card is closest in length to the line on the first. This is repeated several times. The comparison is simple to estimate correctly, but the group is instructed to willfully agree on wrong lines, and only occasionally the correct one. Except for one person, who is unaware of being the only test subject. At first, the test subject disagrees with the group with an increasing level of insecurity, embarrassed laughter and hesitancy, before eventually agreeing with the majority. The experiment was conducted with 123 subjects, and a considerable percentage agreed with the false estimates of the majority under group pressure. Under normal circumstances individuals matching the lines would make

mistakes only 1% of the time. The number of opponents in the group also mattered. The inaccuracy of the test subject was hardly influenced by only one opponent, but increased linearly and peaked at seven opponents. More than seven opponents however, seemed to decrease the influence of group pressure somewhat (Asch, 1955).

So, group pressure can influence an individual´s decision making, but group cohesiveness provide high motivation to be a part of the group. Members express solidarity and positive feelings about meeting each other, even though they might be subject to internal conformity to norms. The cohesive groups tend to reject and attempt to convert any non-conformist members. Members then withhold personal doubts from each other. Instead of deliberation opening people´s minds, deliberations within a homogenous group may reinforce feelings of being right. The psychologist Irving L. Janis pointed out that such group dynamics might also take place in politics, just as in ordinary groups among citizens, and coined the word *groupthink.* In politics, it might even have a strengthened effect, as external pressure seems to strengthen group loyalty. To prevent groupthink, if not to resort to dictatorship, Janis suggests avoiding small groups of decision-makers to avoid group insulation, and all practices that foster premature consensus (Janis, 1982). Applied in a broad sense the studies on group pressure and collective intelligence, suggest that cognitive diversity may benefit decision making, as opposed to relying on "expert"-solutions, or insulated small groups of decision makers. Group dynamics are complex, another factor of basing decisions by observing the majority, could in many cases be a strategy for survival. This "*social proof*" is a tendency to think that if many people do something it is probably for a good reason. It could therefore also be argued, that the best thing for a group is to have members allowed a great deal of independence (Surowiecki, 2008).

The effects of group pressure might also vary with different cultures. A study by Stanley Milgram (1961), designed upon the research by Solomon E. Asch, applied similar

methods for testing group cohesiveness. Milgram wanted to compare the effects of group pressure on students in Paris to students in Oslo. Large universities in the capitals were chosen to get a widespread representation, as they had students from different parts of the country. Through different variations of the study design, the results showed that Norwegian students consistently adhered to group pressure to a significantly higher degree than the French. Though aware that there might be great variance within each country, Milgram viewed the results conclusive. "I found Norwegian society highly cohesive. Norwegians have a deep feeling of group identification, and they are strongly attuned to the needs and interests of those around them". Milgram theorized that cohesiveness might be a natural effect of the high level of social responsibilities in Norway, and the care for others. As a consequence, he argued, "it would not be surprising to find that social cohesiveness of this sort goes hand in hand with a high degree of Conformity" (Milgram, 1961).

By extension, Irving L. Janis´ idea of *groupthink,* could certainly apply to editorial staffs, even in public service broadcast. To prevent *groupthink,* Janis suggests avoiding small and insulated homogenous groups. It is hard to conceive how *"collective intelligence"* could be applied to improve objectivity in editorial staffs, but future case studies may be developed to test this potential. The Internet provides an abundance of information, including *extremist* points of view, due to the lack of a journalistic filter (Liestøl & Rasmussen, 2003). The role of responsible *gatekeepers* is also to filter such information. But, could the theory of *"collective intelligence"* be applied to promote self-governing *gatekeeping* of information? Several user-generated news sites exist today, including *WikiNews.* The non-profit news site allows users to create, edit or expand any article. It contains what it calls *synthesis* articles, based on other sources, and *original reporting.* Although not strictly devoted to news content, *reddit.com* allows user to vote articles up or down, effectively creating a form of self-governing *gatekeeping.*

7 Case Studies

7.1 Contemporary Whistleblowers

Initially, as leaks provided by *Wikileaks* provide much of the empirical data of this thesis, it is necessary to provide a brief analysis of contemporary whistleblowers, to establish their credibility. The veracity of the leaks by contemporary whistleblowers is recognized by major newspaper editors worldwide, such as *The Guardian, The Washington Post,* and *The New York Times.* The leaks have not been disputed as false, and the reactions they have caused indicate their impact on society. From extremely harsh criticism advocating the death penalty for treason, to high esteems such as the Pulitzer Prize for public service. The test case will analyze three contemporary whistleblowers, Bradley Manning, Edward Snowden and Julian Assange, who all remain in exile or imprisonment for their actions.

Bradley Manning worked as an intelligence analyst in the US army, when he leaked over 700 000 classified documents and video to *WikiLeaks* (Lewis, 2013). Manning was first arrested by military investigators when he served in Iraq, and later confined to military detention in the U.S, where he was held in solitary confinement for almost a year, locked up alone for 23 hours a day in an 11-month period, frequently stripped naked at night. The U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture, Juan Mendez, has formally accused the U.S. government of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment towards Manning. Mendez was not able to reach a definite conclusion on whether Manning had been tortured, because they were denied speaking in private (Pilkington, 2012). The lack of privacy is a violation of human rights procedures according to the UN, and considered unacceptable. Guards at the military prison later testified that confinement in a windowless cell measuring 6-by-8 foot (1.8-by-2.4 meters) for 23 hours a day was due to the risk of suicide (*NBC-News*, 2013).

On the 1000th day of Manning´s detention without trial, a protest was coordinated in 70 locations around the world (Harris, 2013). In a pretrial-hearing, military judge Denise Lind

said that the delays were "reasonable under the unique circumstances of this case", but also mentioned that the treatment he received was "more rigorous than necessary". Manning was sentenced to 35 years in prison in August 2013, acquitted of the most serious charge he faced - *aiding the enemy* - but convicted on multiple other counts, including violations of *The Espionage Act* (Tate, 2013). Manning will be eligible for parole in eight years, and the 1294 days he already spent in military custody was deducted from his sentence, including 112 days taken off due to the harsh treatment he endured in captivity. The military court in Manning´s case would not allow his testimony be made available to the public, but it was leaked on YouTube by *The Freedom of the Press Foundation.* In the testimony, Manning states his main objective was to inform the general public and spark a debate on U.S. foreign policy (*The Daily Conversation*, 2013).

Edwards Snowden, a former contracted infrastructure analyst for the NSA (National Security Agency), leaked extensive amounts of top-secret documents. He fled from his home in Hawaii to Honk Kong where he met with journalist from *The Guardian,* Glenn Greenwald, and filmmaker Laura Poitras. *The Guardian* became the first newspaper to report on the findings, and a video testimony was made, where Snowden exposed his identity and shared the rationale behind his actions. Snowden explained that sitting at his desk, he could wiretap virtually anyone. He felt the public was owed an explanation of such decisions made outside of the democratic model. Secret operations, he claimed, lead to willfully distorting public opinion. Greenwald and Poitras have since founded *The Intercept,* together with journalist Jeremy Scahill. Their mission is to provide a platform to report on the documents provided by Snowden, and eventually grow into a comprehensive fearless news corporation (*The Intercept,* 2014). *The Intercept* is financially backed by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar, who is prepared to spend $250 million on the project. Omidyar was approached by *The Washington Post* with an offer to buy the newspaper. This led him to consider investing in a news

property. When he learned that Greenwald, Poitras and Scahill had plans to start something new he chose instead to join forces with them, stating that the right kind of journalism is a critical part of democracy (Rosen, 2013). *The Intercept* is not, like *WikiLeaks*, said to be a non-profit organization, and their business model is yet unclear. Greenwald and Poitras were awarded with the *George Polk Award* for journalism in April 2014. At the acceptance ceremony in New York they dedicated the award to Snowden (Holpuch, 2014). The same month, both newspapers *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post* received the Pulitzer Prize for public service, for their articles based on the leaks by Snowden. As a comment on the award, Snowden said his actions would have been meaningless had it not been for the courage of these dedicated journalists (Pilkington, 2014).

According to a Gallup survey of June 2013, the public view on Snowden in the U.S. remains divided. 44% of adults felt he did the right thing leaking the files, while 42% thought it was wrong. The same poll did however indicate disapproval for public surveillance programs collecting mass phone and Internet data, 53% disapproved while 37% approved of such programs (Gallup, 2013). Should Snowden return to the United States he is likely to be charged under the *Espionage Act,* like Manning. Snowden currently resides in Moscow, under temporary asylum to Russia. U.S. Foreign Minister John Kerry urged Russia to extradite Snowden to the U.S. despite the lack of any extradition treaty between the two countries, calling on "our friends" to hand over a "fugitive from justice" (*The Guardian*, 2013). President Obama´s view remains that Snowden should return and face his charges: “If, in fact, he believes that what he did was right, then, like every American citizen, he can come here, appear before the court with a lawyer and make his case” (White House*,* 2013).

Critical voices include congressman Peter King, a candidate for presidency in 2016. King calls Snowden a traitor and *The New York Times* an accomplice for advocating a pardon in their editorial (*Fox News*, 2014). Former CIA director James Woolsey argued that

Snowden should be prosecuted for treason. "If convicted by a jury of his peers, he should be hanged by the neck until he is dead" (Tomlinson, 2013). Execution is also called upon by Lt. Col. Ralph Peters, NSA analyst for Fox News: “We need to get very very serious about treason, and oh by the way for treason, as in the case for Bradley Manning or Edward Snowden, you bring back the death penalty” (Fox News, 2013).

Finally, Julian Assange co-founded an infrastructure for releasing leaked documents safely, through the website *WikiLeaks*. Assange has been in exile in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London since June 2012, when he was granted diplomatic asylum. Assange is an Australian citizen, but several U.S. officials advocate his arrest, or assassination. Former speechwriter for president Bush, Marc Thiessen, now a columnist for *The Washington Post*, calls *Wikileaks* a criminal enterprise that violates the *Espionage Act.* He argues for its leadership to be put to justice: “Assange is a non-US citizen operating outside the territory of the United States. This means the government has a wide range of options for dealing with him. It can employ not only law enforcement but also intelligence and military assets to bring Assange to justice and put his criminal syndicate out of business” (Thiessen, 2010). Thiessen advocates any means necessary in bringing Assange to justice anywhere he is, with or without that country´s cooperation. All this however, permissible actions by U.S. official policies, should it be commanded by the White House.

Assange does not leave the Ecuadorian embassy in London because he fears the U.K. will extradite him to Sweden, where he is wanted for questioning on charges of sexual misconduct. Assange predicts in turn that Sweden would extradite him to the U.S. This is a credible fear, considering Sweden is a close ally to the United States, and U.S. policy on abductions, as evident in the leaked *Field Manual for Unconventional Warfare*:

> If a state for internal political reasons may be unwilling to extradite a target or give its public consent to the target´s removal. Unofficially, the state may be prepared to have the target removed without granting formal consent and may even offer some

> cooperation in carrying out the action. (Wikileaks, 2008, Appendix D - Abductions, para. 2)

The document also mentions that abductions will be carried out to prevent "terrorists, other dangerous individuals, and their state supporters, from assuming they are safe from such unilateral action".

When asked by ABC News Australia whether Assange is a whistleblower or a "high tech terrorist", U.S. Vice president Joe Biden argued that Assange was closer to being a "high tech terrorist" (MacAskill, 2010). Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton calls WikiLeaks an attack on the international community and stated in a response to the leaks: "We are taking aggressive steps to hold responsible those who stole this information" (Sheridan, 2010). Former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and presidential candidate in 2012, Newt Gingrich, said in an interview with Fox News: *"*Information Warfare is warfare, and Julian Assange is engaged in warfare. Information terrorism which leads to people getting killed is terrorism, and Julian Assange is engaged in terrorism. He should be treated as an enemy combatant " (Fox News, 2010).

Another presidential candidate, and congresswomen of Alaska, Sarah Palin, called Assange "an anti-American operative with blood on his hands", and asked "why was he not pursued with the same urgency we pursue al-Queda and Tailban leaders?" (Beckford, 2010). She received support from Rick Santorum, a republican who has served both in Congress and Senate, and came second to Mitt Romney as the Republican party´s presidential nominee in 2012. When meeting voters in New Hampshire, Santorum expressed his views on Assange: "We haven´t gone after this guy, we haven´t tried to prosecute him, we haven´t gotten our allies to go out and lock this guy up and bring him up on terrorism charges. What he´s doing is terrorism, in my opinion" (Ramer, 2010).

Such comments by highly respected figures in American politics demonstrate the inherent threat to civil rights posed by contemporary U.S. policies, in which "terrorism"

justifies abduction or assassination of foreign civilians, without legal proceedings. Julian Assange comments in an interview with Bill Maher: “We have risen to a situation, or collapsed to a situation in the U.S. now, where you can be killed by someone in the White House, the president on down, for completely arbitrary reasons. You won't know you are on the kill list until you´re dead.” (Maher, 2013).

The *Espionage Act* of 1917 was originally drafted as legislature in World War 1 to meet challenges of treason during a declared war. When not used in a restricted conflict, the broad definitions in the *Espionage Act* could potentially be applied to large portions of the population, as it includes anyone unlawfully having possession of secret documents (US - Gov., 1917). As congressman Ron Paul points out in a speech in the House of Representatives, if Assange were to be prosecuted for publishing classified documents, this would also mean *The Washington Post, The New York Times* and others would need to be prosecuted. Ron Paul makes a distinction between what he considers to be treason, and the act of whistleblowing: “Is there not a huge difference between releasing secret information to help the enemy in the time of declared war, which is treason, and the releasing of information to expose our government lies that promote secret wars, death and corruption?” (Paul, 2011).

In Britain, several conservative politicians have argued for the prosecution of *The Guardian* for releasing such documents. Editor Alan Rushbridger had to testify before the Parliament´s home affairs committee, in December 2013. When asked if he accepts that the newspaper´s decisions had damaged the country, Rusbridger stressed that this was a virtually identical decision by several major newspapers, and that they have never published names of intelligence personnel. He mentions talking to 30 leading editors in the world, all agreeing it was right to publish the material. He explains that *The Guardian* has published 26 documents so far, out of more than 58 000, having made a very selective judgment about what to print.

At the time they received the documents, so did members of the press in Brazil, Germany and the U.S. (Home Affairs Committee, 2013).

Officials from the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), Britain´s intelligence headquarters, pressed *The Guardian* to hand over the documents. Instead, the newspaper finally agreed to physically destroy the hard drives where the files were stored, under the supervision of GCHQ officials on 20 July 2013, in the basement of the newspaper´s offices in London (Harding, 2014). Making it known that copies existed in the U.S. and Brazil, Rusbridger felt more confident destroying the evidence, rather than taking the matter to the courts. *The Guardian* is moving a lot of its reporting to the U.S. due to the *First Amendment* protection of the press (Democracy Now, 2013).

The *First Amendment* of the U.S. Constitution protects the freedom of speech and press, yet what was imposed upon *The Guardian*, could theoretically happen in the U.S., under the *Doctrine of Prior Restraint.* Prior Restraint deals with official restrictions imposed upon various forms of expression in advance of actual publication. In other words, the doctrine provides limited exceptions to the first amendment. The doctrine has been rejected by several members of the U.S. Supreme Court, but never by the whole court. The late Thomas I. Emerson, professor of Law at Yale University, important in shaping modern Civil Liberties Law in the U.S., urged caution in a 1955 paper regarding the doctrine of prior restraint:

> These are strong pressures in modern industrial society for controls over expression that prevent rather than punish after the event. In part, perhaps, the trend may be justified by the complexities of modern life and the increased need for effective regulation. But in part, the growth stems from the efforts of those who seek to manipulate the minds of large groups of citizens upon whom a government or administration must depend for support (Emerson, 1955, p. 649).

7.2 U.S. Foreign Policies Contradicting International Treaties

Declassified documents provide an understanding of U.S. foreign relations after WW2, as George F. Kennan established in the *Foreign Relations Report* of 1948:

> We have about 50% of the world's wealth but only 6,3% of its population. This disparity is particularly great as between ourselves and the peoples of Asia. In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and daydreaming; and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives. We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction (Kennan, 1948, p. 524).

The report clearly outlines a strategy to maintain an advantageous disparity, which would require an aggressive foreign policy. This could be viewed in context to the beneficial situation the U.S. was left in after WW2, and also spark speculations on how the U.S. has maintained warfare as an economic stimulant, through the *"Military Industrial Complex"*, as warned by President Eisenhower in 1961. The focus here will remain on contemporary policies, and how they could be perceived to conflict international conventions and law, as well as human rights. In the official 2005 U.S. National Defense Strategy, the seizure of foreign regions is declared as a legitimate course of action:

> We will promote the security, prosperity, and freedom of action of the United States and its partners by securing access to key regions, lines of communication, and the global commons (US Gov., 2005, p. iv).

The document also presents a clear view on judicial processes:

> Our strength as a nation state will continue to be challenged by those who employ a strategy of the weak using international fora, judicial processes, and terrorism (US Gov., 2005, p.5).

Military engagement without being faced with imminent attack, is also official policy:

> Allowing opponents to strike first - particularly in an era of proliferation - is unacceptable. Therefore, the United States must defeat the most dangerous challenges early and at a safe distance, before they are allowed to mature (ibid.).

Such policies contrast the U.N. charter´s stated goals of equality among nations, to bring about "respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples" (UN, 1945, Article 1-2). The U.N charter also specifically denies threats to member states:

> All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations (UN, 1945, Article 2-4).

Further, the UN Security Council is the proper authority to determine what constitutes threats to the peace:

> The security council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken (UN, 1945, Article 39).

Article 51 of the Charter allows for self-defense, but only in the occurrence of an "armed attack*",* and to last only until the Security Council has taken measures to maintain international peace and security. Supporters of *preemptive war*, and *War on Terrorism,* have used Article 51 to support their arguments.

The Geneva Convention is another standard to ensure international human rights. These principles have been followed for more than half a century by almost 190 countries, and in 1996 the U.S. congress also made it a felony to violate the agreement. The Bush administration following 9/11, authorized breaking it:

> The Supreme Court says that we must conduct ourselves under the Common Article 3 of the Geneva Convention. And that Common Article 3 says that there will be no outrages upon human dignity. That´s like, it´s very vague. What does that mean? "Outrages upon human dignity", that´s a statement that is wide open to interpretation. (*C-SPAN*, 2006).

Leaked documents by whistleblowers and investigative journalists have later revealed just how much these rules were "interpreted", in order to expose detainees to extremely harsh treatment. A leaked CIA memo, in response to an officer asking to use methods which might violate U.S. legal code against torture, permits such methods as long as they do not inflict severe pain or suffering, or threat of imminent death:

> 1) Attention grasp, 2)Walling, 3)Facial hold, 4)Facial slap (insult slap), 5)Cramped confinement, 6)wall standing, 7)stress positions, 8)sleep deprivation, 9)insects placed in a confinement box, and (10) the waterboard (*WikiLeaks*, 2002, p. 2)

Details on sleep deprivation:

> *You have orally informed us that you would not deprive Zubaydah of sleep for more than eleven days at a time and that you have previously kept him awake for 72 hours, from which no mental or physical harm resulted.* (*WikiLeaks*, 2002, p. 3)

The document shows that creative versions of techniques are also granted:

> In addition to using the confinement boxes alone, you also would like to introduce an insect into one of the boxes with Zubaydah. As we understand it, you plan to inform Zubaydah that you are going to place a stinging insect into the box, but you will actually place a harmless insect in the box, such as a caterpillar [...] you should not affirmatively lead him to believe that any insect is present which has a sting that could produce severe pain or suffering or even cause death [...] An individual placed in a box, even an indiviual with a fear of insects, would not reasonably feel threatened with severe physical pain or suffering if a caterpillar was placed in the box (*WikiLeaks*, 2002, p. 14).

There are numerous other reports of detainee abuse, such as prisoners shackled, blindfolded, hung by wrists or ankles, whipping, punching, kicking or electric shocks (Davies, Steele, & Leigh, 2010). Also, prolonged exposure to extreme temperatures, strapping prisoners to metal containers and force-feeding them (*New York Times*, 2006).

According to the *Nuremberg Principles,* a person who commits a crime under international law can be liable for punishment regardless of internal laws of the individual country, and regardless of whether the person acted as Head of State or Government official, as long as a moral choice was possible. Crimes against peace include planning, preparation or execution of wars in violation of international treaties, or being a part of a conspiracy to such actions (UN, 1950). In November 2011, after two years of investigation by the *Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Commission* (KLWCC) in Malaysia, a tribunal unanimously found President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair guilty of war crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, and genocide as a result of their roles in the Iraq War. They found the invasion of Iraq to be illegal, as stated in the jury declaration:

> The invasion and occupation of Iraq was and is illegal. The reasons given by the US and UK governments for the invasion and occupation of Iraq in March 2001 have proven to be false. Much evidence supports the conclusion that a major motive for the war was to control and dominate the Middle East and its vast reserves of oil as a part of the US drive for global hegemony (Al Jazeera, 2011).

The second indictment dealt with war crimes, and resulted in Bush and close officials being found guilty of torture and war crimes, having violated the *Nuremberg Principles*, the *Geneva Convention* and the *Convention Against Torture*. The legal verdicts in Malaysia are the first of its kind in the world. Internal investigations of the U.S. Senate reveal that the intelligence community never assessed Iraq as an imminent threat:

> The Intelligence Community never considered Iraq an "imminent threat". In fact, DCI Tenet made that clear in his February 5, 2004 speech describing the intelligence Community´s performance in assessing Iraq´s weapons of mass destruction programs. Referring to the analysts who worked on the National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq´s Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs, Tenet specifically noted, "They never said there was an imminent threat" (US Gov., 2003, p. 496).

The Rome Statute is a treaty that established *The International Criminal Court* (ICC) in Hague, to prosecute war criminals. The U.S. signed the treaty under President Bill Clinton in 2000, but it was not ratified by Congress. The signature was revoked in 2001 by the Bush administration. By unsigning, the U.S. does not have to extradite people wanted by the court. The ICC has 122 member states, including all of South America, nearly all of Europe, most of Oceania and roughly half the countries in Africa. A further 31 nations have signed, but not ratified the treaty, including Russia. Another 41 UN member states have not signed nor ratified the treaty, including China and India (UN, 2014). A member of the prosecution team in Malaysia, professor of international law at the University of Illinois, Francis Boyle, says he figured out the legal complications involved with holding higher officials of the U.S. accountable. Even though the U.S. is not part of *The Rome Statute*. He formally submitted the evidence from the proceedings in Malaysia to the ICC, and his complaint regarding U.S. officials is the only one to remain within the court system thus far without being rejected.

Boyle feels the ICC has only dealt with petty offenders, compared to "these wholesale mass murderers and criminals from the U.S., Britain and Israel" (*Press TV*, 2012).

The Obama administration has also been criticized for violating international law. A UN report by the Human Rights Committee, from March 2014, criticizes the U.S. for a number of human rights violations, and urges legal consequences:

> The State Party (U.S.) should ensure that all cases of unlawful killing, torture or other ill-treatment, unlawful detention, or enforced disappearance are effectively, independently and impartially investigated, that perpetrators, including, in particular, persons in command positions, are prosecuted and sanctioned, and that victims are provided with effective remedies (UN - HRC, 2014, p. 3).

The report also criticizes both mass surveillance programs and the use of killer drones, and questions the lack of transparency and legal justification for such attacks, as well as lack of accountability for the resulting loss of life. The report recognizes the right to national self defense, but questions the U.S. interpretation of such rights:

> The Committee remains concerned about the State party´s (U.S.) very broad approach to the definition and the geographical scope of an armed conflict, including the end of hostilities, the unclear interpretation of what constitutes an "imminent threat" and who is a combatant or civilian taking a direct part in hostilities (UN -HRC, 2014, p. 4).

Professor Boyle has since urged Pakistan to file a case against the U.S. at the ICC for performing drone strikes within their country.

This case study has presented official policies and leaked documentation, which confirm U.S. violation of international treaties and law. The UN is now explicitly calling on the U.S. to seize unlawful activities. In regard to the thesis question, this perspective is required in order to challenge the legitimacy of the U.S / NATO alliance, as advocate for peace and democracy. Former president Jimmy Carter calls for Wahington to reverse course. Until then, "our country can no longer speak with moral authority on these critical issues" (Carter, 2012).

7.3 Unconventional Warfare (UW)

Empowered by *The Freedom of Information Act,* organizations like *The National Security Archive* in Washington have pressed for the declassification of several documents. Today, large amounts of evidence show U.S. involvement in overthrowing governments all over the world. Although the declassified documents would be relevant, the focus will remain on contemporary policy. An important part of U.S. military operations today is *Unconventional Warfare* (UW). UW employs various tactics, but its overall objective is best explained by quoting the *Field Manual for Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*, obtained through WikiLeaks:

> The intent of the United States (U.S.) UW operations is to exploit a hostile power's political, military, economic, and psychological vulnerability by developing and sustaining resistance forces to accomplish U.S. strategic objectives. (*WikiLeaks,* 2008, p. 1)

The manual states that UW has taken on new significance, where as before such secret operations were part of general war, now *Special Forces* (SF) are required to focus on UW during conflicts "short of war".

> The United States cannot afford to ignore the resistance potential that exists in nations or countries that are our potential enemies. In a conflict situation or during war, SF can develop this potential into an organized resistance movement capable of significantly advancing U.S. interests. (*WikiLeaks*, 2008, p. 11)

A resistance movement is a portion of the civil population working to overthrow the established government, through which insurgency might use tactics such as subversion, sabotage and armed conflict (ibid.). The structure of a revolutionary movement is compared to a pyramidal iceberg, where only the tip is visible to the outside, such as direct guerilla actions in the later stages. The "underground" activities include long periods of infiltration. Infiltration of administration, police, military and national organizations, labor unions, student and national organizations, and all parts of society. Also by a gradual increase of propaganda and *psychological preparation,* to generate an increasing atmosphere of *wider discontent*. These steps are explained in a seven-step process:

> There are seven phases to a U.S.-sponsored insurgency. They are preparation, initial contact, infiltration, organization, buildup, combat deployment and demobilization (ibid.).

The preparatory phase involves *Psychological Operations* (PSYOP) as far in advance as possible. PSYOP units prepare the resistance organization and the civilian population to accept U.S. sponsorship. The second stage of *initial contact* deploys a small "pilot team" to the area before more Special Forces (SF) can be infiltrated. At this stage PSYOP can develop themes, symbols and programs that support the operations (*WikiLeaks*, 2008, p. 14). PSYOP is generally important, and used to highlight the government´s actions taken against the population during its counterinsurgency campaign. This will help convince the uncommitted population´s support for the cause. In the final *deployment stage,* combat operations increase. PSYOP focus on themes and symbols of nationalism, and the inevitability of their victory. They continue targeting the population to increase support. Then, the final *demobilization stage* is described as the most difficult. PSYOP's main objective in this stage is to prevent formation of groups opposing the newly recognized government. Among the techniques listed, is *"control rumors by publishing and broadcasting the news"* (*WikiLeaks*, 2008, p. 18).

Publishing the news could be labeled as an *Information Operation (IO).* "Information Operations (IO) involve actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems, while defending one´s own information and information systems to achieve information superiority in support of national military strategy" (WikiLeaks, 2008, p. 19). The ultimate target of IO is described to affect the human decision making process, not only for adversaries, but including "friendly decision-making processes". An overall strategy is to minimize the U.S. presence while maximizing its impact. "Without recognized legitimacy and credibility, military operations will not receive the support of the indigenous population, the U.S. population, or the international community" (*WikiLeaks*, 2008, p. 23). The leader and "figurehead" of the resistance should be "a prominent member of society who commands the

respect of his fellow citizens" (ibid.). The leader may declare himself head of a shadow government. If the enemy government uses power against the movement, the U.S. may instead recognize this as the official government of the country. The overall goals of all U.S. supported insurgencies "may range from interdicting foreign intervention in another country, to opposing the consolidation of a new hostile regime, to actually overthrowing such a regime" (*WikiLeaks*, 2008, p. 11).

7.4 Comparative Test Case - Attempted Coups in Venezuela

Venezuela experienced an attempted coup in 2002, when former president Hugo Chavez was briefly forced to resign. Pedro Carmona, head of Venezuela´s biggest business organization Fedecamaras was instituted as president, but Chavez regained power after only 48 hours (*BBC*, 2002). CIA briefs declassified by motions of American attorney Eva Golinger, through *The Freedom of Information Act*, have since established that the Bush administration had knowledge of the coup in advance, yet any direct involvement is unclear and the documents remain redacted (Forero, 2004). One of the declassified CIA briefs, a little over a month before the coup, states that the Venezuelan Interior Minister was working with opposition groups trying to persuade Chavez to resign. The analysis given is that a successful coup would be difficult to mount (*CIA*, 2002). The U.S. had knowledge only five days prior to the unrest, that a coup was underway and that it probably would not succeed:

> Dissident military factions, including some disgruntled senior officers and a group of radical junior officers, are stepping up efforts to organize a coup against President Chavez, possibly as early as this month [...] prospects for a successful coup at this point are limited. The plotters still lack the political cover to stage a coup (*CIA*, 2002).

In spite of prior knowledge of military officials plotting the armed coup, White House press correspondent Ari Fleischer stated to the press the day after Chavez' resignation:

> According to the best information available, the Chavez government suppressed peaceful demonstrations. Government supporters, on orders from the Chavez government, fired on unarmed peaceful protesters resulting in 10 killed and 100 wounded […] The results of these events are now that President Chavez has resigned

> the presidency […] the Venezuelan people have expressed their right to peaceful protest. It was a very large protest that turned out. And the protest was met with violence (*CNN*, 2002).

President Chavez survived the coup and remained in power. In 2006, he addressed world leaders at the UN General Assembly, opening his speech by recommending everyone to read *Hegemony or Survival - The Imperialist Strategy of The United States,* by Noam Chomsky, which he said is an excellent book to help us understand what has been happening in the world throughout the 20th century and now. Chavez went on to call President George W. Bush the devil, and accused him of trying to preserve the current pattern of domination, exploitation and pillage of the people of the world. He said the U.S. is trying to install their own version of a democratic model, a democracy of elites, imposed by weapons and bombs. He urged the UN to prevent this from happening, and advocated reforms that would make the UN more powerful, such as removing the veto power of the five permanent members, U.S., U.K., China, France and Russia (*C-SPAN*, 2006).

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said during a *National Press Club* appearance in 2006, that Chavez was elected legally, but so was Adolf Hitler. He expressed concern that Chavez was now "working closely with Fidel Castro and Mr. Morales and others". Relations between the U.S. and Venezuela were now very fragile, after claims from Chavez accusing officials at the U.S. Embassy in Caracas of involvement in a spying case, in which Venezuelan naval officers passed sensitive information to the Pentagon (NBC News, 2006). Leaked documents by WikiLeaks show Chavez was rightfully suspicious of the U.S. activities. A memo from 2006, by the U.S. ambassador to Venezuela, William Brownfield, provides an overall five-point strategy to the embassy´s main ambitions: "1) Strengthening democratic institutions, 2) Penetrating Chavez' political base, 3) Dividing Chavismo, 4) Protecting Vital US business, and 5) Isolating Chavez internationally (*WikiLeaks*, 2006).

The document also states this five-point strategy as the main purpose of activities by USAID and its *Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)*: "OTI has directly reached approximately 238 000 adults through alternative values and providing opportunities for opposition activists to interact with hard-core Chavistas, with the desired effect of pulling them slowly away from Chavismo." (ibid.).

The U.S. ambassador to Chile, Craig Kelly, presented a broader vision for preventing Chavez´ further influence in the entire region, as in his 2007 memo: "This, part two in a series of joint cables from Southern Cone embassies, looks at ways the U.S. can counter Chavez and reassert U.S. leadership in the region" (*WikiLeaks*, 2007, para. 1). The letter provides a seven-step measure to limit Chavez´s influence, among these steps:

> Enhance military relationships: We should continue to strengthen ties to those military leaders in the region who share our concern over Chavez [...] If we can, we will make quick inroads into marginalizing Chavez´ influence, bolster democracy and reassert our own leadership in the region (ibid., para. 2).

The memo also mentions strategies to further American interests generally in South America. Argentina is defined as a society "open to our ideas and vision of a market-based democracy", and Chile is "an excellent alternative to Chavez", for its willingness to bring other Latin American countries into the global economy. "We should look to find other ways to give Chile the lead on important initiatives, but without making them look like they are our puppets or surrogates" (ibid. para. 7). The memo then calls for more resources be spent to counteract Chavez, although using "greater discretion". It concludes that Chavez´s anti-imperial, anti-U.S. rhetoric makes him a "formidable foe", but someone who can "certainly be taken". A more "muscular" U.S. presence in the region will counter Chavez´ "brand of socialism" (*WikiLeaks*, 2007, para. 17).

In 2008, President Chavez ordered the U.S. ambassador Phillip Goldberg to leave Venezuela within 72 hours and said Washington was planning a coup attempt in his country. Venezuela´s ambassador to Washington was also ordered to return home. In a televised appearance, Chavez said, "Go to hell a hundred times, fucking Yankees", and that ties would be restored when the U.S. had a new government that respected Latin America (Carroll, 2008). President Chavez was last re-elected in 2012, and vowed to press forward with his socialist reforms, but passed away from lung cancer in 2013. Chavez´s latest popularity poll earned the former president a 64% approval rating (Taylor, 2013). In a Fox News interview entitled "Death of a Dictator", former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., John Bolton, was positive to Chavez' passing. Bolton´s analysis was that a Venezuela "less friendly to Russia, less friendly to Castro´s Cuba, less friendly to left wing regimes around the hemisphere" was in U.S. interests, and called this a potentially "huge change". Bolton did not however award much credit to Chavez' successor, president Nicolás Maduro, whom he considered a "thug". Bolton referred to the entire political system in Venezuela as a "so-called democracy" (Fox News, 2013). In stark contrast, *The Carter Center*, one of the international observers of Venezuelan elections for many years, found the election process in Venezuela to be the best in the world. Its founder, former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, expressed in a speech at *The Carter Center* in 2012:

> I think that the elections in Venezuela, although some people have criticized the result, which is Hugo Chavez having won, there is no doubt in our mind having monitored very closely the election process, that he won fairly and squarely. As a matter of fact, of the 92 elections we´ve monitored, I would say that the election process in Venezuela is the best in the world (The Carter Center, 2012).

President Carter was also impressed with the latest touch screen electronic voting system in the country. In the same speech he mentions that Venezuela, like the U.S., does not however provide public funding for candidates running for public office. All other Latin American countries have public financing of the election process, which ensures outside money does not

determine the outcome. Carter describes the U.S. election process as corrupt, and as one of the worst in the world, due to excessive campaign financing.

In early 2014, newly elected Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro also faced violent protests. Maduro viewed this to be a sign that the U.S. wants Venezuela´s oil, and said the Obama administration was fomenting unrest to provoke a "Ukraine-style" slow motion coup, and that Venezuela had become victim to a type of "*Unconventional War*" that the U.S. has perfected. He found the unrest part of a plan "to portray a country in flames, which could lead them to justify international isolation and even foreign intervention". The violence of anti-government protests led to a reported 37 deaths, and in March 2014, three Venezuelan air force generals were arrested, accused of plotting the coup (Wallis, 2014).

8 Main Case Study - Ukraine debate NRK 2014

In this main case study, the subject for a critical discourse analysis is a televised debate about the Ukraine crisis in 2014, which aired on Norwegian public broadcaster NRK, March 3rd, 2014. The debate is part of a weekly segment called *Debatten (The Debate).* The entire one-hour broadcast is subject to analysis, and parts of it will be paraphrased here.

The Ukraine crisis is ongoing at the time of writing. Hypothesizing on the specifics of the political unrest would be premature, but actually do not consume much of the focus. To clarify; how did the comparative test case study of Venezuela compare to this main case study? Ukraine and Venezuela are not similar political landscapes. As such, the political unrest in Venezuela might differ greatly from the events in Ukraine. For the purposes of this thesis, the aim was simply to provide a contemporary example of U.S. officials plotting to undermine a legally elected government. It was, as all the case studies, aimed at demonstrating a need to challenge the legitimacy of the U.S. / NATO alliance, its motives and affairs. As for the debate on Ukraine, the goal is to emphasize a lack of such criticism. The

intent is to disapprove of the established consensus, which only seems to accept the moral authority of U.S. / NATO, and to allow dissident voices, claiming that the coup might have been agitated by the United States. In establishing that such speculations are merited, relevant data will be included to demonstrate a discrepancy between the information available, and the informational value of the debate. An important distinction must be made between demonstrating a lack of speculation, and providing conclusions on the affairs in Ukraine. Many innocent people have lost their lives in the unrest. However, raising legitimate questions is not in disrespect of victims, but disrespectful to an over-simplification of disastrous events.

The staging of the show permits the host to walk freely between the main panel members, who all stand on podiums in front of an audience (see Figure 1). Some audience members seated in the front row are invited participants in the debate. Although some of these usually are public officials, they could arguably be perceived to have less of an "official" role in the debate, almost as spokespeople of the public. A young woman who grew up in Crimea is seated in the audience. She expresses gratitude that in Norway, there is Internet and other sources of information, where no one dictates what she can watch or read. Further, she explains how planned Russian propaganda is in control on Crimea, and that it has been for years. Though her parents are for it, she is strongly opposed to the idea of Crimea becoming part of Russia. The Norwegian Foreign Minister (FM) Børge Brende says her story stirs up emotions. He goes on to criticize Russia for not respecting Crimea´s borders, and refers to a memorandum from 1994 where Russia recognized Ukraine as a sovereign country. He also establishes that this is the most serious event in Europe since the *Cold War*, and urges a de-escalation of the military pressure, while seeking diplomatic solutions recognizing Ukraine as a sovereign country.

The host asks Foreign Minister (FM) Brende, what the functioning Prime Minister (PM) to Ukraine had to say when he visited him. FM Brende replies that the functioning PM now has a multitude of tasks, among others to "clean up" after President Yanokovych and the corrupt system. Both the host and FM Brende avoid using the functioning PM´s name. Not mentioning the name of the newly installed highest State official in Ukraine when discussing events in the aftermath of a coup d'état, seems unprofessional at best, perhaps distorting at worst. There has been controversy, although not much reported in Norwegian media, about Arseniy Yatsenyuk´s way to power. The issue will come up later in the debate.

Former Chief of Defense, Sverre Diesen, is asked to present his analysis. He evaluates the worrisome element to be the militia groups, and not the military on either side. He compares the situation to events in Georgia, where Georgian militia "strong-armed" Russian militia, and gave the Russians "an excuse" to attack. Diesen says the potential exists in Ukraine for a similar outcome. This is a fair assessment, but Diesen uses phrases like "strong-arming", careful not to call it attacking, while he seems to think Russia was simply waiting for a chance to attack, and found an opportune "excuse". A fact finding mission led by Swiss diplomat Heidi Tagliavini concluded that Georgia had started the conflict in 2008, but also that it did so after a period of "tensions and provocations" and increased Russian military presence. Neither sides were too pleased with the findings, but Russian politicians stated it should mention the U.S.´role in the conflict, which they considered partly responsible for escalating the conflict. (Bidder, 2009). What the Georgian crisis certainly did, was cause optimism in the U.S. regarding Norway´s military spending, as evident in leaked reports by ambassador to Norway at the time, Benson Whitney:

> Proponents of a stronger defense and a closer relationship with the U.S. have been strengthened by the events in Georgia and have been able to challenge the conventional wisdom that dialogue and negotiation will resolve all disputes [...] a shift in attitude on NATO may positively impact future decisions on Norway´s defense budget, the purchase of fighter aircraft (JFS), and strengthening Norway´s relationship with the United States (WikiLeaks, 2008, para. 3).

The report also characterizes Norway as one of the more critical NATO members regarding Georgia and Ukraine to be granted *Membership Action Plan* (MAP) status.

Alternatively, in the debate, senior researcher at *Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)*, Julie Wilhemsen, explains the situation as "extremely polarized", with a population on Crimea that wants a Russian affiliation, and on the other side a new Ukrainian government who has "seized" power to build a new Ukraine without too much Russian influence. She goes on to explain that from a Russian perspective, the continued NATO expansion towards Russia is seen as a threat, and that various coup d'états in opposition of anti-U.S. regimes, including in Ukraine, are believed to be U.S.-sponsored coups to undermine Russian influence. Wilhelmsen provides a factual analysis without excluding claims set forth by Russia. She explains how the new government "seized" its power, and refrains from using words like "liberated". Such a balanced approach could provide a more informed debate, but unfortunately her points are not followed up by the host.

The thesis has provided empirical data relevant in a discussion on potential U.S. involvement, but the debate will return to that later. What could have been addressed further at this point is also NATO-expansionism. Professor of politics and Russian Studies, Stephen F. Cohen at NYU explains what he calls the U.S. betrayal of Russia. In 1991, President Mikhail Gorbachev and President George Bush (senior) agreed that if Russia would accept the unification of Germany, and a united Germany as a member of NATO, the military alliance would not expand "one inch to the east". President Clinton was the first to break the promise and began expansion eastward.

NATO has expanded ever since, and is today on Russia´s borders. Cohen outlines the double standards of U.S./NATO policies towards Russia. When NATO expanded to Russian borders, it was "fighting terrorism" and "protecting new states". When Moscow protested they were engaging in "Cold-War thinking". When Washington meddled in electoral politics in

Georgia and Ukraine, it was "promoting democracy", when Kremlin did the same, it was "neo-imperialism" (Cohen, 2011, p. 170). At the 2014 EU-US Summit in Brussels, Obama told the press "Neither Ukraine or Georgia are currently on a path to NATO-membership", and denied any immediate plans for NATO expansion, while denouncing Russia´s accusations to that effect (Breaking News, 2014).

In 2009, Assistant Secretary, Phillip H. Gordon gave a statement to the Subcommittee on Europe of the House Foreign Affairs, in which the Obama administration´s policies and strategies for "Strengthening the Transatlantic Alliance" were presented. The leaked transcript, clearly lays out a strategy for former Soviet Union countries:

> The job we started after the fall of the Berlin Wall, to help nurture democratic and economic reform among the states of the former Soviet Union -- is far from over [...] Our assistance is essential to bolstering the efforts of still-fragile reformers like Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova to integrate into Euro-Atlantic institutions (WikiLeaks, 2009, Foreign Assistance, para. 1).

On Ukraine specifically:

> It is important for Ukraine´s leaders to work together to address its serious economic crisis as well, including taking all necessary steps to implement the $16.4 billion IMF Standby Program. The United States strongly supports the right of both Ukraine and Georgia to pursue their membership aspirations in NATO [...] Allies, including the United States, are working with both countries to provide concrete advice, assistance, and practical support to help guide these efforts (ibid., Ukraine).

This shows an ambition to implement a very specific $16.4 billion IMF program in Ukraine. A further discussion on the highly criticized *International Monetary Fund* will not be provided here, but it seems everything went according to plan. On May 1. 2014, a $17 billion IMF loan was approved to Ukraine (BBC, 2014).

Another Ukrainian-born young woman is interviewed. She describes the disinformation presented in Russian media. Through her research, she claims to have found that Russia has a designated budget to purchase stocks in media and bribe journalists, in order to have an influence over TV-channels in various countries. She also argues that this is what

leads to conflict in Ukraine, and that many of the people supporting Russia are bribed to do so. While she does not refer to any empirical evidence other than her own accounts, it is plausible that Russia is involved in such actions. The observation that propaganda is causing unrest is probably also correct, but anti-Russian propaganda is most likely the most prevalent factor in an anti-Russian coup.

Dr. Bjørn Nistad is introduced as having some "non-mainstream" opinions. He claims Russia has behaved exemplary on these matters, and is the only part to uphold international law in the conflict. Laughter spreads in the audience. Nistad continues explaining that this is really about a legitimately elected president, who refused to sign an agreement with the EU, preferring closer ties with Russia, within the rights of any sovereign government. He claims the West and the U.S. organized an armed coup d'état, and refers to a YouTube video with U.S. officials planning who should form the new government. Nistad claims western politicians now pretend not to be aware of it and also fail to mention that president Yanukovych did in fact sign an agreement with the demonstrators, where all claims were met. Even so, the violent unrest continued. Fascist groups have now gained control, he claims, and the only part of Ukraine relatively safe is actually on Crimea. He is "shocked" by FM Brende´s misrepresentation of facts. An elevated discussion spreads throughout the audience, while Associate Professor Geir Flikke calls Nistad´s statements "quite shocking", "a grotesque and brutal distortion of facts". This is met with loud applause from the audience.

PM Brende stutters, and seems bewildered. He calls these accusations "very shocking", and says he is emotionally moved by all this, having just returned from Maydan square, where he met with parents of victims. He says that defending President Yanukovych, the most corrupt leader in Europe, removed by his own people, is something not worthy of the debate. This is received by loud applause in the audience. He repeats Russia´s violations of international law. Dr. Nistad´s comments are not received very well with the political

opposition either, Bård Vegar Solhjell from the *Socialist Left* party says there is a non-partisan agreement in Norway to support the democratic uprising in Ukraine, and condemn Russia´s violation of international law. Solhjell does comment on the irony of U.S. Foreign Minister John Kerry´s statement "You just don´t invade another country", and calls for a heightened respect for international treaties. More applause. Professor Janne Haaland Matlary explains that the use of force needs to follow a UN-mandate, which Russia must adhere to. She says, there is no doubt that sending in soldiers without insignia is a clear violation of international law. To contrast this, in 2009, professor Matlary argued that lowered legal implications for war could be helpful:

> The threshold - both political and legal - against intervention is lowered; and this can create much more instability than before. Yet it also opens up for "fixing" failed states; which is on the international agenda like never before. This threat picture demands offensive strategic thinking" (Matlary, p. 21).

Matlary was then interested in the potential for "fixing" states through military force. Exactly who should perform this is unclear, but she views private armies as an interesting concept, as "there is no *a priori* reason why only states should enjoy the use of force". As long as it is within the interest of "great powers", this type of "fixing" could be done, without need of the UN-charter:

> The more we see terrorism as a real cause in stabilization operations, the more security needs will come into the foreground, and the "luxury" of a UN mandate cannot be assumed if great powers have different interests (ibid., p. 37)

This indicates that professor Matlary is an advocate for international law only when it does not conflict the interests of "great powers".

The debate proceeds to become somewhat emotional, when Dr. Nistad finally gets to respond, and is told to reply shortly and not to say anything "that might upset these people". Dr. Nistad says he has every reason to upset these people, when they accuse him of being outrageous, without disproving any of the evidence he gives reference to. In his view, president Yanukovych might have been corrupt, like most Ukrainian presidents, but he was

legally elected. The coup happened after he failed to sign an agreement with the EU, and speculations as to who financed it, are necessary. FM Brende responds that this is a matter of morals and respect for the people who lost their lives in Ukraine. Brende is interrupted by Dr. Nistad who seems quite emotional at this point. He proceeds to accuse FM Brende of cooperating with fascists, and yells that this it outrageous. FM Brende calmly responds that there is a limit to what he will accept being accused of, turning to the host. The host seems to agree and declares that part of the debate over. This is applauded.

According to group dynamics, it is quite clear that the debate consists of a cohesive group, eager to condemn viewpoints that might challenge consensus. The comments by Dr. Nistad are met with characterizations as "shocking" and "grotesque", and perceived as offensive. Non-accepted viewpoints are attacked to enforce conformity. Arguments in favor of the consensus are met with applause, reinforcing positive feelings and adherence to the majority. Dr. Nistad himself also resorts to the same type of argumentation, calling FM Brende´s response "shocking", while yelling that he cooperates with fascists. Julie Wilhemsen quite correctly explains the situation as "extremely polarized", and at one point she goes on to call the debate "quite scary". The climate is certainly not conducive to any factual analysis. For instance, the YouTube video mentioned by Dr. Nistad is quickly dismissed, and clearly not of interest. Any mention of potential U.S. involvement is quickly denounced as morally unjust, and disrespectful concerning the demonstrators in Kiev. Several of Nistad´s claims are met with laughter, and deliberations are as such not welcome to opening people´s minds, but the majority seems dedicated to reinforce preconceived consensus (Janis, 1982). As explicitly expressed by FM Brende, these claims are not "worthy" of the debate, on moral and emotional grounds, reinforced by applause.

Professor Matlary gives praise to former U.S. Foreign Minister Henry Kissinger, for remaining an active political figure to this day. She cites him in saying that it doesn´t matter

how an insurgency starts, as long as it ends the way we want. Kissinger has been instrumental in several U.S.-sponsored coup d'états. According to Peter Kornblush, director of the *National Security Archives* in Washington, Kissinger was the "singular most important figure" in overthrowing the legally elected government in Chile in 1973, and then to offer committed support to Pinochet despite several human rights violations (Democracy Now, 2013). It is no surprise that Kissinger would have little respect for how an insurgency starts. This fact, and any mentioning of the several coup d'états committed by the U.S., is completely neglected from the debate. Also, there is no mention of the attempted coup in Venezuela, at around the same time, where speculations towards U.S. involvement would be highly relevant, as documented in the comparative test case. The remainder of the analysis is devoted to necessary facts and perspectives omitted from the debate altogether.

Are the comments of Dr. Nistad really that outrageous? To assess this, we need to include discourse on the macro-level, as important facts are simply not included in the debate. First of all, that the U.S. has substantial invested interest in Ukraine is not a matter of speculation. In a speech to the non-governmental *U.S. Ukraine Foundation* in December 2013, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland, mentions having visited Ukraine three times in five weeks to support the goals of the demonstrators in Kiev. She says she has spoken to president Yanukovich and urged him to take immediate steps to end the crisis and get Ukraine back to conversations with Europe and the IMF, which she claims would create a "predictable business market" that investors require (*US Ukraine Foundation*, 2013). She states that the U.S. has invested over $5 billion in Ukraine to ensure a "prosperous and democratic" development. She concludes her speech by thanking the members, and says she will continue "to stand shoulder to shoulder with you as we take Ukraine into the future that it deserves" (ibid.).

The YouTube video Dr. Nistad was referring to, also involves Asst. Secretary Nuland, where she in a phone call with U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt, discusses details on who should be members of the new government in Ukraine:

> I don´t think Klitsch should go into the government. I don´t think it´s necessary. I don´t think it´s a good idea [...] I think Yats is they guy who´s got the economic experience, the governing experience (BBC, 2014).

The conversation contrasts official U.S. policy on the crisis, that "ultimately it is up to the Ukrainian people to decide their future" (ibid.). The U.S. has not rejected the veracity of the leak, and in a press briefing Nuland jokingly gave credit to the "impressive tradecraft", in that the audio was very clear. "Yats", short for Arseniy Yatsenyuk, later became the new prime minister of Ukraine and visited president Obama in the White House in March 2014. By inviting Yatsenyuk, whose government president Putin claims took power by way of an unconstitutional coup, the U.S. sends a signal to Moscow that Yatsenyuk is a legitimate leader (Lederman, 2014).

Several distinguished U.S. officials and academics have openly argued that the Ukraine coup was agitated by U.S. manipulation. Dr. Ron Paul, a three time presidential candidate who retired from his congressional seat in 2012, claims the U.S. has facilitated the coup in the sense of "agitating" elements that wanted to overthrow Ukraine's former president Victor Yanukovych. He claims the regime change was made possible through funding by *National Endowment for Democracy (NED), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID),* and multiple *Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)*. He also contradicts the view that the U.S. is promoting democracy:

> Recently a democratically elected government was overthrown by violent protestors. That is the opposite of democracy, where governments are changed by free and fair elections. What is shocking is that the US government and its NGOs were on the side of the protestors! [...] Washington does not want to talk about its own actions that led to the coup, instead focusing on attacking the Russian reaction to US-instigated unrest next door to them (Paul, 2014).

Dr. Paul also mentions the leaked tape of Victoria Nuland as concrete confirmation of direct U.S. involvement, and calls the coup a "cruder and more violent version of the US-sponsored Orange Revolution" (ibid.).

Dr. Paul Craig Roberts, professor of economics and business administration at George Mason University, and former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury under the Reagan administration, offers a similar analysis of the Ukraine situation:

> This was a coup orchestrated by Washington, it is well known [...] Washington has been trying to capture Ukraine ever since 2004, when the first Washington attempt, "The Orange Revolution" failed [...] It was Washington´s intent to capture the Ukraine, put it into NATO so that Washington can put missile bases on the Russian border. Washington also hoped to be able to evict Russia from its Black Sea naval base in Crimea (Slobodny Vysielac, 2014).

Dr. Roberts accuses the Obama administration for recklessly escalating the Ukrainian crisis into a crisis with Russia, and claims western media ignores that the U.S. started the fight, and continues to demonize Russia. Successfully installing anti-ballistic missiles on the Russian border, he claims would degrade Russia´s strategic abilities, on par with U.S. hegemonistic goals.

In 2002 the U.S. did in fact withdraw from the ABM treaty with Russia, which limited the use of Anti-Ballistic Missiles (US Gov., 2001). This was necessary to further develop the *Ballistic Missile Defense* (BMD) program. BMD is a part of a U.S. / NATO strategy of being able to deter any missile attack carrying weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Even though WMDs continues to be one of the U.S' own most vital security strategies. As stated in the declassified 1995 report of the U.S Strategic Command (STRATCOM):

> It is undesirable to adopt declaratory policies such as "no first use" which serve to specifically limit US nuclear deterrence goals without providing equitable returns (STRATCOM, 1995, p. 5).

The same document provides a policy in which the U.S. wants to be perceived as vindictive and irrational:

> It hurts to portray ourselves as too fully rational and cool headed. The fact that some elements may appear to be potentially "out of control" can be beneficial to creating and reinforcing fears and doubts within the minds of an adversary's decision makers. This essential sense of fear is the working force of deterrence. That the US may become irrational and vindictive if its vital interests are attacked should be part of the national persona we project to all adversaries (STRATCOM, 1995, p. 7).

The Obama administration has also pledged to maintain U.S. nuclear capabilities:

> The President has supported significant investments to modernize the nuclear enterprise and maintain a safe, secure, and effective arsenal. The administration will continue seeking congressional funding for the enterprise (White House, 2013).

In light of such policies, providing the U.S./NATO with a missile shield is not something the British *Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* views as a mean for peace, but characterizes the proposed system as offensive. In *Making the Future* (2012), Noam Chomsky argues that the BMD is understood on all sides to be a first-strike weapon, in that it is "capable of nullifying a retaliatory strike and thus undermining deterrent capacity" (Chomsky, 2012, p. 78). Chomsky sites Andrew Bacevich in the journal *National Interest:* "Missile defense isn´t really meant to protect America. It´s a tool for global dominance". The ABM plans leave Russia feeling particularly threatened. In an interview with Al Jazeera, president Putin comments on these plans:

> By building such an umbrella over themselves our partners could feel themselves fully secure and will do whatever they want, which upsets the balance [...] To preserve the balance we must develop offensive weapons systems (Al-Jazeera, 2008).

The *Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* concludes that the U.S. and U.K. governments should concentrate on peaceful, multilateral initiatives, "the only true route to peace, security and nuclear disarmament" (*Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, 2014).

In the debate, there is talk about Russian propaganda misleading the population. The topic of propaganda would be too broad to fully analyze here, but there is circumstantial evidence to suggest U.S. sponsored propaganda surrounding the Ukraine events. A viral video titled "*I am a Ukrainian*" has currently reached over 8 million views on YouTube. The video shows a girl calling herself "The Ukrainian, Citizen of Kiev". She explains that the only wish

of her people is to be free from the dictatorship and from politicians who only work for themselves. The video shows protesters being shut down by violent police. She asks the audience to share the video and speak to friends in support of their cause. The film is however shot and edited by Ben Moses, an American who says he met Yulia while he was in Ukraine making a documentary about democracy and protest movements (Smith, 2014). The video is uploaded to the YouTube channel of the organization *Whisper Roar*, which is collaborating closely with Larry Diamond, senior advisor to NED, and a consultant to USAID. In the NRK debate, there is no mention of this video. *Psychological Operations* (PSYOP) are integral to *Unconventional Warfare* (UW) in general, as described in the case study on UW. The topic of PSYOP does not enter the Norwegian debate, nor does U.S. funding to Ukraine. Professor Matlary writes in her book:

> NGOs, the media, the clergy, women´s groups, and so forth. War always means drama, and the press is in theatre in a new way, using global media to disseminate news in real time. 'Whoever coined the phrase "the theatre of operations" was very prescient. We are conducting operations now as though we were on stage, in an amphitheater' comments General Sir Rupert Smith (Matlary, 2009, p. 4).

The avoidance of emphasis on such sensitive material in the debate may be explained by loyalty to U.S.-interests. Norwegian newspaper *Dagbladet* collaborated with Glenn Greenwald to gain insight into documents showing Norwegian ties with U.S. intelligence. According to the article, one of the top secret NSA documents defines Norway as "one of our top two partners", providing "unique access", and as a "leading distributor" of intelligence (Halvorsen, et al., 2013).

Finally, several sources within the U.S. intelligence community itself have expressed that U.S / NATO has stirred up unrest in Ukraine. Ray McGovern, a former CIA senior-analyst for 27 years, has since founded *Veteran Intelligence Professional for Sanity (VIPS).* McGovern argues there is incredible evidence to indicate U.S. involvement in Ukraine. Like Dr. Nistad, McGovern finds the YouTube video involving Asst. Secretary Nuland, to be

revealing. He considers U.S. financial backing in Ukraine to be a catalyst for unrest, and says the real intention of the U.S. is not only getting Ukraine into EU, but also NATO. (*Democracy Now*, 2014)

9 Analysis and Conclusion

The uprising in Ukraine could prove to be the will of the majority of its people. It could also turn out to be the opposite. The fact remains that President Yanucovych was legally elected, and that he did agree to the terms set forth by the demonstrators, who still chose to pursue violent action. What is also clear is that the U.S. had invested $5 billion to influence internal policies in Ukraine, while any direct involvement remains to be determined. The events should spark a debate regarding such U.S. investments aimed at influencing policies abroad. There clearly should be more debate on whether such actions are in support of democracy, or if they, on the contrary, show a lack of respect for sovereign nations, and are designed to stir unrest to further U.S. interests. It would be natural to include in the discourse, revealing evidence such as the *Field Manual for Unconventional Warfare*, which explicitly states that the U.S. funds and assists overthrowing governments abroad. A higher degree of self-reflexive criticism is needed in Norway, an awareness that Western propaganda actually exists. The YouTube video "Ukrainian, citizen of Kiev" appears slick and professional, and ties to producers in the U.S. cause suspicion. Propagandist methods are likely to become more sophisticated and harder to detect. The shift from using CIA or other intelligence agencies, to NED, USAID and various NGOs, will also make clandestine operations more difficult to spot. In April 2014, leaked documents proved the USAID funded a fake Twitter-service on Cuba, with the intent of gradually encouraging young people to protest their government. The process had involved several front-companies, foreign bank accounts, and other measures to keep it secret (Butler, 2014). Other leaked documents show the GCHQ, the British

intelligence firm, is currently investing 5% of its budget on exploiting social media and the Internet (Greenwald, 2014). An increased awareness to such manipulation is needed. We can also hope for future whistleblowers to provide revelations. It is our collective responsibility to ensure this information reaches the public-sphere, and to advocate improved legal protection for those who speak up against wrongdoing.

The discourse in Norway on the Ukraine crisis has had a continuous emphasis on Russian misconduct and expansionism, especially after the Russian annex of Crimea. Critical voices of U.S. / NATO have hardly surfaced in mainstream media, and when they have, their information has not been subject to further analysis by journalists. The main case study demonstrates that the public-service broadcaster NRK fails to present a balanced factual debate. Even though attempts may have been made to ensure a balanced discussion panel, the large majority seems to focus on criticism of Russia in support of the new government in Ukraine, while categorically denying further analysis of any evidence that might discredit U.S. / NATO. This imbalance could possibly reflect the Norwegian public opinion, in any case NRK fails in its mission as public-service broadcaster to provide an in-depth examination and to emphasize controversial set of opinions, which might not surface in other mediums. As such, NRK shares "the avoidance or the defying of contemporary political controversy", as was Ledbetter's claim of public broadcasting today (Chomsky and Herman, 2008).

Through his research in 1961, Milgram found Norway to be a "highly cohesive society". The role of a public-service broadcaster daring to defy norms and provide in-depth analysis of controversial claims is important to prevent conformity. The NRK-debate allowed the *consonant* version of events (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009) to determine the overall tone of discussion, without further examination of dissident claims. NRK did not fully "dare to be distinctive, and represent voices not typically heard in commercial media" (UNESCO, 2000).

From this, we can conclude that simply relying on NRK in this case would not sufficiently inform an audience, and NRK fails to educate the general public. NRK´s main television channel NRK1, has a 32,4 % market-share in Norway (Medienorge, 2014), and the debate program *Debatten,* regularly has a market share close to 40%. This means NRK must be considered a *gatekeeper*, important in shaping public opinion in Norway. It is doubtful that alternate Internet sources will currently counter this influence on the general population. Chomsky and Herman (2008) reckon that Internet as an alternative source for information requires knowledge, and is not a tool for mass communication unless you have a brand name. The share wealth of information can also be overwhelming. The general public´s need for responsible *gatekeepers* to present digestible information remains.

Irving L. Janis (1982) extended his idea of *groupthink* to exist among decision-makers in politics. It is natural to assume that this could also occur in editorial staffs. The thesis has not established that NRK´s editorial staff has such symptoms, but further study on the state of public service broadcast in Norway could make such enquiries. A thorough analysis of the role of user-generated news sites today has not been provided here, but the topic of applying "*collective intelligence"* to perform self-governing *gatekeeping,* is an intriguing premise for future research. Can technologies in websites such as *WikiNews* and *Reddit* be applied to assist traditional editorial staffs? How would such news sources compare with traditional news bureaus? To what extent can collective decision-making really be trusted? Would the needs of minorities be preserved? After all, there is more to democracy than majority. Could direct mass-participation have corrupting influences on public-sphere discourse, such as mass-capitalism once proved to have (Habermas, 1962)? What about the journalistic profession, maybe the "experts" should have a say? How do journalists relate to this? And, would it really improve the likelihood of sensitive information, as that obtained by whistleblowers, to better inform discourse in the public-sphere? This would quickly become a

rather philosophical reflection, but "having the philosophers seriously move their research programs to the nature of the Web will doubtless cause a paradigm shift in the debate over cognition and the extended mind" (Halpin, Monnin, & Blackwell, 2014, Chapter 2-7.). These questions should find fertile ground for future research in digital media studies and the humanities.

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Figure 1. *Debatten (The Debate)*

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