THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS FOR THE MINSK II: POWER, PREFERENCES, AND INTERACTIONS EXAMINED

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Why do countries sign but not implement peace agreements? The Minsk II intended to solve the Ukrainian Crisis, but implementation has been slow and violations of the cease-fire occur routinely. I selected three theories to examine the Minsk II: realism, liberalism, and constructivism. I utilized the concepts of military power, preferences of the leaders signing, and time and type of meetings to try and determine why the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany, France, and the separatists in Eastern Ukraine, signed the agreement but did not implement it. I found strong evidence to suggest that the preferences of only key implementers matter, and some evidence to suggest that meeting in-person and conducting exhaustive negotiations are more productive than phone-calls.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Scholars, politicians, government officials, humanitarian workers, and everyday citizens agree – the crisis in Ukraine is an important topic and requires attentiveness and more importantly requires a solution (Poushter, 2015). Yet for all of the dialogue about how important and problematic the crisis is, very little literature exists outside of attempts to analyze the crisis as a fight between two long-established and discussed 'enemies': The West and Russia. While Ukraine should be the main character in existing literature, the nation and its people are relegated to a corner – the geopolitical power push between the West and Russia and evidently the much more popular headline thus far. Even worse, evidently no scholarly work has appeared regarding the very document that attempted to end the crisis most recently, the Minsk II.

The Minsk II Agreement, organized by France and Germany's leaders and signed by Ukraine, Russia, and the separatist leaders of the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) and Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) is technically still in effect today in 2018. However, cease-fire violations are common occurrences, little constitutional reform has occurred, and more interestingly, no one even seems remotely interested in going back to the negotiating table (ReliefWeb International, 2017).

The purpose of this thesis is to close the literature gap regarding the Minsk II – literature on the Ukrainian revolution is not sufficient enough on its own. Scientific analysis may provide unique insight into the crisis and the agreement. This thesis will also try and find explanations for the Minsk II puzzle – an agreement signed but not implemented. I answer two main questions. First, why was the Minsk II signed? Second, why has implementation failed? The four nations and separatist groups negotiated the agreement with intent to implement change and end

the crisis, but clearly three years later implementation has not occurred in full nor has violence ceased. These questions are important for several reasons. First and foremost, because limited scholarly research to back up any claims made regarding the agreement's existence and status has been written. If Minsk II is indeed a dead agreement, these actors – particularly Ukraine and the separatist regions – should not go back to the negotiating table without having first understood what went wrong in the first (or in this case second) place. If those 'who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it', then perhaps the lack of literature and knowledge of the mistakes from the Minsk I Agreement (also known as the Minsk Accords) have led us down the path towards a similar looking, stagnated-at-best agreement this time around.

In a broader sense, this thesis hopes to contribute to the much larger literature on peace agreements. What can Minsk II tell us about failed peace agreements, or the implementation process? Is the Minsk II and the Ukrainian Crisis an anomaly in peace agreements? Is the Ukrainian Crisis too unique or not to contribute to the larger studies of international relations and why states sign peace agreements? The Ukrainian Crisis and its current peace agreement are interesting, with a lot of moving pieces, and a lot of actors with different opinions and mindsets about the world and its direction. The Ukrainian Crisis may be the catalyst for peace or destruction – it would be foolish to assume the stakes are low when it comes to solving this problem. In short, this peace agreement could help researchers understand the conflict, its complexities, and how those complexities translate onto paper to create or fail to create a solution.

This study has three objectives, each one associated with the main tenets of realism, liberalism, and constructivism. The first objective is to determine what impact balancing militarily has on signing and implementation, if any. The second objective is to determine if

preference convergence occurs with the actors (and implementers) of the Minsk II, and what impact convergence or divergence has. Lastly, I will try and determine if in-person meetings are more effective than phone calls between leaders. Altogether, this thesis will delve into balance of power issues, preferences and perceptions of threat, and interaction quality between the leaders who negotiated Minsk II.

I find evidence that preference convergence with principal implementers – i.e., those who will actually undertake the required changes the agreement calls for – matters immensely on the success of implementation, and that the preferences of those whose job is sit back and watch implementation occur, well…their preferences might not matter so much in the long term. When it comes to preferences, what actors say they prefer is important, but what they do not say is also incredibly insightful. I also begin to find evidence in favor of in-person, long-haul negotiations.

Each theory is unique and will take a look at different parts of the negotiation and implementation process and timeline. The factors examined are wide ranging – from military enlargement to dozens of statements from leaders all the way to the time and style of meetings leaders have. The point of this is to see if three of the most popular theories in international relations – realism, liberalism and constructivism – which are incredibly different, can offer compelling answers to the questions surrounding the Minsk II. This is a good starting point for scientific research on the Minsk II. While there are certainly other theories with other answers, and the theories I chose may also have different measurements that could answer (or not answer) the two questions, all three of the theories and their hypotheses have interesting and compelling methods of measuring the variables. If all else fails, this thesis will at least showcase an introductory examination of the Minsk II and at best may contribute to the larger concept of why peace agreements fail.

I focus on the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, France, Germany and the separatists' leadership because this process was elite-initiated and elite-driven. It is especially useful to recall here that the leaders who conducted the Minsk II's negotiations, like the French and German leaders are not actually signatories to this agreement (more than likely because they accept no responsibility in its execution). Non-implementers have a vested interest in both signing and implementation, and it will be interesting to see if, on top of answering the two research questions, any of the data and evidence collection suggests anything about what influence non-implementers have on Ukraine and the separatists. The role of the European Union as a whole, and the role of the United States will also be analyzed. Not being party to the Minsk II might be just as important as being party to it.

This thesis will be divided into several parts. I start the next chapter off with some key background information on the Ukrainian crisis and where literature started and stopped. I will also discuss a less than obvious actor in the crisis– the European Union. Each chapter will then examine one of the theories looked at – this includes an overview of the theory, the literature review, the theoretical explanation it would suggest, and of course the all-important hypotheses. From there I will go over the methodology, data and evidence collection processes and limitations that popped up along the way. I will then review the results; analyzing the important findings and making a determination if the research supports or rejects the hypotheses. Finally, each theoretical chapter will end with a discussion and interpretation of the findings, and there should be plenty of findings to interpret. For the discussion section, the three theories will finally come together for an examination. I will compare the theories, discuss the strongest and weakest hypotheses. For hypotheses that are rejected, they will undergo a rigorous evaluation to

determine why they did not work, as well as what alternative explanations could have been better.

I find the second hypothesis for liberalism to be the strongest answer for implementation, with an abundance of evidence to support the claim that divergent preferences prevent implementation. I also find limited but supportive evidence to assert the claim that highly engaged, exhaustive and in-person meetings led to the signing of the Minsk II. I will also go in depth on the limitations of the study, including measurement problems that come up along the way. Finally, at the end of it all, I will try to solidify the answer to the two research questions. I will discuss larger implications, whatever contribution my thesis may hold, and go over some potential new avenues for research.

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND OF THE UKRAINE CRISIS

The crisis in Ukraine's origins come from the desire of the European Union (EU) and Ukraine to integrate further than they had previously cooperated. Ukraine has been a part of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) since the policies' inception, which intends to provide integration between Ukraine and the European Union through trade, economic strategy, travel agreements, and other avenues. Ukraine is considered one of the post-Soviet states of "strategic importance" for the European Union (Rettman, 2009). The Ukrainian government negotiated an Association Agreement (AA) with the European Union that would open up trade, but would require the Ukrainian government to implement reforms such as addressing the root causes of corruption, and democratic transitions that aligned closer to the European Union's stated values and norms. Around the same time and fearing a loss of influence in what was Russia's most historically cherished neighbor, Russia invited Ukraine to join the Eurasian Customs Union (ECU). According to Samuel Charap and Timothy Colton (2017), the Russian government's request for Ukraine to join the ECU significantly "upped the ante, as the customs union was much more far-reaching and binding than any of the previous Russia-led regional endeavors. Russia's impatience seemed to be driven more by the growing geo-economic contest with the EU in the region" (p. 115). While the ECU would not offer as many economic benefits as the large market of the European Union could, Ukraine would not be forced to make changes in the way it governed their people, which was appealing for a nation so divided.

Ukraine is highly fragmented, with pro-Europeans in the West and Euro-skeptic, pro-Russians in the East (Sakwa, 2016, p. 29). In February 2013, the President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso said, "one country cannot at the same time be a member of the customs union and be in a deep common free-trade area with the European Union," effectively

forcing Ukraine to choose: integration with the European Union or integration with Russia (Pifer, 2013). While then-President Viktor Yanukovych, who was considered a relatively stable and reliable partner for Russia, expressed interest in the Association Agreement, he ultimately chose to suspend implementation on November 21, 2013 (Englund, Lally, 2013; Harding, 2010).

The choice to suspend the Association Agreement was met with furious public protests in Western Ukraine, in particular the capital Kiev, known as the Euromaidan Revolution during the winter of 2013 (BBC, 2013). Protestors demanded the removal of Yanukoyvch from his seat and when police and protestors clashed, it encouraged more people to come and protest. By February several hundred people were dead, and Yanukoyvch was backed into a corner with the Ukrainian Parliament ready and willing to do anything to get him out. He signed the Agreement on the Settlement of Political Crisis in Ukraine with opposition leaders, leaders from the Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform (pro-EU), the All-Ukrainian Union and Svoboda – all parties that by in large do not support protections for ethnic Russian minorities. Fearing for his safety and facing arrest, Yanukovych and the majority of his officials fled and sought sanctuary in Russia (Baunov, Jarabik, Golubov, and 2015).

Russia viewed Yanukovych's ousting as a coup and that the new and illegitimate government, whom they deemed as far right nationalists, had an inherently anti-Russian agenda. The Russian ambassador to Ukraine was withdrawn, and Russian President Vladimir Putin and his advisors concluded that the collapse of talks and agreements between protestors in Ukraine and Yanukoyvch were due to a Western plot to install a loyal government in Ukraine that would move Ukraine closer to the EU and more importantly closer to NATO (Charap et. al., 2017, p.126).

While the West and Western Ukraine saw Yanukovych's fleeing as a victory, the pro-Russian Eastern Ukrainians and ethnic Russian minorities were threatened and hostile as they saw their government unfairly and illegally ousted. 81% of Eastern Ukrainians and 60% of Southern Ukrainians did not support the protests, the parties that came to power, or the methods in which they took administrative buildings (Research & Brandings, 2013). Around the time Yanukoyvch fled, the Russian military began sending Russian soldiers without insignias into Ukraine (Herszenhorn, 2014). Russia quietly and successfully annexed Crimea and held a constitutional referendum where an overwhelming number of Crimeans voted to join the Russian Federation and nations in the West do not consider this referendum to be fair (Morello, Constable, Faiola, 2014; RT, 2014). Pro-Russian separatists also began showing up in the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblast, and when they became armed by the Russian government, they seized reasonable portions of territory along the Eastern border with Russia. These actions were met with swift condemnations from the international community and harsh economic sanctions against Russia, but it did not dissuade them.

A Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine was formed in 2014 to try and halt the heavy fighting in Donbass and it included representatives from Russia, Ukraine, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Informal representatives from Donetsk and Luhansk also appeared, and the provisions were labeled the Minsk Accords (which we now call the Minsk I Agreement). It included an immediate cease-fire, monitoring by OSCE, decentralization of power in Ukraine, giving local governments more independence, and for all illegally armed groups to leave Ukraine and re-establish secure borders (see Appendix A). While LPR and DPR leaders signed the document, they continued to fight and claim more territory that could have been beneficial to them, including at Second Battle of Donetsk Airport. Both sides

accused each other of violating the cease-fire first (a routine and ongoing issue between parties). There was also confusion and accusations about elections that were supposed to be held in these territories. Minsk I took less than 5 months to disintegrate.

By February 6, 2015, U.S. President Barack Obama was facing intense pressure from Democrats, Republicans, former and current defense and national security advisors to arm Ukraine and arm them lethally (Kaplan, 2015). Fearing that the U.S. would actually arm Ukraine and potentially start a massive scale war too close to EU borders, French president François Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel hustled a new peace plan together called the Franco-Germany Plan, by February 7, 2015 and scheduled negotiations with Ukraine, Russia and the separatist leaders for February 11, 2015. After 16 hours of negotiations, the Minsk II Agreement was signed.

The Minsk II looks eerily similar to the Minsk I – it includes the same cease-fire, withdrawal of heavy weapons from front lines, and decentralization of the Ukrainian government (see appendix 2). As with the implementation process for Minsk I, Minsk II's 'implementation' period was less than ideal. Sides began accusing each other of not doing what they agreed to do in a timely manner, or purposefully violating the cease-fire to try and take territory. Encircled separatists in Debaltseve began receiving aid from Russian troops to push Ukrainian troops away before the cease-fire even began (Kramer, Gordon, 2015). The Russian government refused to acknowledge their participation on the ground, but also said they could not implement measures of the Minsk II because it was 'not a participant in this conflict' (Kramer, Gordon, 2015). In Russia's eyes, they could sign the agreement (unlike France and Germany) but not consider themselves to be an implementer.

Current literature coming from international affairs experts agree there is importance in the Ukrainian Crisis and the signing of the Minsk II. According to Sergei Plekhanov (2016), the importance of the Minsk II Agreement was a demonstrated willingness of Russian and Western leaders to defuse the Ukrainian crisis through concerted action. Alexy Gromyko (2017) believes the Minsk II is "probably the last real chance to establish lasting peace in Ukraine" (p. 29). He says, "in Minsk, all of them invested huge political capital in the peace process and all of them should be deeply interested in its success" (Gromyko, 2017, p. 30). The 'western leaders' only included leaders from France and Germany though, and the European Union did not sign or even involve itself in the peace-making attempt.

The Centre for European Studies in Brussels examined the deadlock in the Minsk Process in 2016. They argue that economic sanctions have become the core instrument of the EU and US, and the persistent deadlock ought to renegotiate the Minsk II and widen the 'Normandy Format' (the leaders of the Minsk II who are supposed to routinely meet) to include the US and bolster reforms in Ukraine (Kostanyan and Meister, 2016, p. 1).

The Role of the European Union

Tereza Novotna is highly optimistic about the future role of the European Union given the progress they made in 2106. "Despite all the EU's trials and tribulations, the EU remains a global actor, particularly when improving its hard power in addition to its soft power" (Novotna, 2017, p. 188). She cites the Implementation Plan on Security and Defense as a sign of the European Union's decision to move forward in the realm of shared security duties, and that it is only due to the building and emphasis on consensus-building that such a plan was put in place (Novotna, 2017, p. 182). Spearheaded by the European External Action Service, the Implementation Plan on Security and Defense emphasizes a better response to external conflicts and crises by the

Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), and most importantly, to strengthen the CSDP's ability to 'contribute more systematically to the resilience and stabilization of partner countries recovering from or threatened by conflict or instability' (High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2016, p. 3).

Not all are so confident about the role the EU exerts in foreign policy, and Lisbeth Aggestam and Markus Johansson argues that a paradox exists between the demand for effective EU leadership to address collective action problems, and leadership legitimacy (Aggestam, Johansson, 2017, p. 1216). "We contend that leadership does not come automatically from having a formal leadership position, but must be understood as a social role" (Aggestam et. al., 2017, p. 1216). They believe that leadership requires a dynamic interaction process, and that only recognized leaders can truly exert influence in foreign policy. Most interesting, their theoretical model finds that member states of the European Union have created informal practices that allow them to bypass the EU High Representative. Such conflict between member states and the institutional hierarchy of the European Union is highly problematic if one views the EU's greatest power as their ability to act as a single voice.

Ian Manners developed a theory claiming the European Union is a 'normative power'. He believes that the EU is founded on and has as their foreign and development policy objectives, "the consolidation of democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Manners, 2002, p. 241). It is also dedicated to pursuing such norms in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Manners believes there are six ways that the EU, as a normative power, diffuses their norms: contagion, informational diffusion, procedural, transference, overt diffusion and cultural filtering (Manners, 2002, p. 245). It can be suggested that the Ukrainian overthrow of Viktor Yanukovych, while undemocratic, was a direct

result of European liberal norms being diffused into Ukraine, which then encouraged Ukrainians to pursue integration with the EU.

In lieu of the traditional 'Normative Power' Europe, the EU can be viewed as a 'liberal power'. In terms of crisis management and security policy, the EU differs from the 'Western way of war' (Shaw, 2005). The EU prioritizes the minimization of risks for soldiers, transfers risks to other troops, and outsources combat tasks whenever possible (Wagner, 2017, p. 1408). Liberal Europe emphasizes materials as well as norms. More importantly, Europe as a power is constrained by their domestic side, their members have varying interests, ideas and institutions that limit the way the EU works as a whole. Security policy is constrained, and that may explain why the EU is incredibly reluctant to put forth any hard power assistance in the Ukrainian crisis. That is why the European Union has been referred to as a small power (Toje, 2011).

Still, the EU has been fairly involved in the crisis without being a signatory. The European Council has had several 'extraordinary' meetings of all EU Heads of State and Government regarding the Ukrainian crisis, beginning March 6, 2014 and as recently as September 14, 2017. The European Council has approved travel bans, asset freezes, and requested the establishment and continuation of economic and trade sanctions against Russia (European Council, 2014). Prior to the Minsk I, in a meeting on June 26th & 27th, 2014 the European Council signed the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, and stated their support for Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko's peace plan which included protections for the Russian language, and increased autonomy to the fighting regions along with a cease-fire (BBC, 2014). The European Council listed a set of demands (or 'concrete steps') for the separatists to make or face "significant restrictive measures"; the demands include a return of border checkpoints to Ukrainian authorities, release of all hostages, and launch negotiations with President Poroshenko

(European Council, 2014). Separatists were not interested in meeting any of those demands, and on July 16,18, and 25 the European Council again convened and initiated new restrictive economic measures. The EU strengthened sanctions again on September 12, November 28, 2014, and January 29, 2015 prior to the Minsk I's signing. When Angela Merkel and François Hollande presented the Minsk I to the EU members in an informal meeting, the European Council stated that they stand "united to support the efforts of President Poroshenko to restore peace and to maintain independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity in Ukraine" (European Council, 2015). Several other sanctions were then put in place as the cease-fire continued to be violated and implementation became less and less likely.

Besides sanctions, the role of the European Council is very unclear, especially since no statement was made from the Council regarding Minsk II. Although the sanctions were connected to the implementation of Minsk I and then later Minsk II, the European Council was not a signatory of the agreements. The European Union – aside from their resilience through sanctions – do not have a common voice regarding a solution in Ukraine. Petro Poroshenko's peace plan is not very popular at home, so one could argue the EU is propping up a leader with an unpopular peace plan.

Tara Kuzio believes there are three constraints: first, that the EU never supported Ukrainian membership without domestic reforms, second, that the EU miscalculated Ukrainian leaders and that the EU faced no competition from alternative integration projects, and that Russia is a single actor with one voice whereas the EU is a multi-national actor of 28 states which makes policy making more difficult (Kuzio, 2017, p. 104). Ihor Hurak argues that the Minsk II created a better legal basis for the de-escalation of the conflict, but significant issues remained unresolved or were postponed, like the Crimean annexation (Hurak, 2015, p. 135).

France and Germany went to the Minsk agreements together and without a public statement of support from other EU nations. Perhaps the EU institutions and other member states believed it was France and Germany's place to intervene. France and Germany have had the strongest ties to Moscow of all nations in the EU. While the Baltic nations heavily support any aid going to Ukraine (as they fear being targeted next by Russia), countries in the South like Italy have not contributed as much vocally or financially to the topic. Countries in Northern Europe were initially very supportive of Ukraine but now suffer "Ukraine fatigue" as the reforms these countries desperately pushed for and demanded have been slowly implemented if at all. EU assistance and guidance on reforms have not spurred judicial or administrative reform (Gressel, 2016). Ukrainians also grow fatigued of EU support given that they've received no tangible benefits that they wanted. Tying the sanctions to the Minsk Agreement solidifies the EU's commitment to Ukraine in theory, but in reality, it shows a lack of consensus, support, and dedication in that they will not commit to anything beyond economic sanctions – whereas the United States, for example, has expressed support through sanctions as well as military aid and has openly expressed that they will not take lethal aid off the table.

The United States' role in the Ukrainian crisis was no doubt diminished when Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande did not invite a US representative to the Minsk Accords or the Minsk II negotiations. By making the Ukrainian crisis a 'European' affair, the Minsk II has been used as an opportunity to avoid US hard power tactics such as lethal aid. Still, that does not mean the US does not want to get involved, or that the Ukrainian government no longer views lethal aid as a possible solution, even having signed the Minsk II. What the Trump Administration appears willing to do in Ukraine remains to be seen, but other issues have drawn the

administration's eye away from Ukraine, notably issues in Syria, Iran and economic issues such as tariffs.

CHAPTER THREE: REALISM

Realism is one of the classic theories in international relations which some key assumptions. In realism, states are the central actors being studied, trying to obtain power in a rational way in anarchic world (Goodin, 2010, p. 133). The world realists operate in is generally competitive and at times conflictual. This theory, which emphasizes the security of the state, has developed immensely over the past few decades, with many scholars enhancing the theory beyond the traditional view. The development will be summarized here, beginning with classical, liberal realism, the popular neorealism, and ending with the balance of power.

Perhaps one of the most crucial and classic versions of realism comes from Hans Morgenthau's *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, which in the chapter on international relations and realism, he describes six principles of realism. First, realism must be grounded in human nature – idealizing humans is irrational (Morgenthau, 1961, p. 5). The second principle is the true desire: power. All states can be analyzed through their desire to gain and keep power. Third, he concedes that while power is the method of analysis, the measurement may change over time (Morgenthau, 1961, p. 11). The fourth principle is that, "political realism is aware of the moral significance of political action" (Morgenthau, 1961, p. 12). However, the fifth principle states that states will operate under the guise of morality to disguise their ambitions. Finally, it is important to study politics through power because legal and moral analysis has failed.

Neorealism

One of the most influential pieces of neorealism comes from Kenneth Waltz. In *Theory of International Politics*, he assumes states act based on self-help, state to state interaction reflect a

desire to survive (Waltz, 1980). He argues international systems are defined in regard to the number of great powers they accommodate.

Offensive Realism

Offensive realism was theorized by John Mearsheimer as a challenge to defensive realism (from Kenneth Waltz). Offensive realism postulates that great powers, in an attempt to dominate the international system, will choose buck-passing over balancing. Buck-passing is when a nation refuses to confront a growing threat in the hope that another nation will. John Mearsheimer uses World War II as an example of buck-passing: the US had the opportunity to confront Nazi Germany early on but waited, and benefitted from that buck-passing by only facing Nazi Germany when they were years into a massive scale offensive attack (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 160). With offensive realism, states are depicted as very aggressive, "they look for opportunities to alter the balance of power by acquiring additional increments of power at the expense of potential rivals" in order to alleviate fear of aggression from another nation (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 34). If a nation has a chance to become a hegemon, they will take it.

Mearsheimer's view of the world puts war always as a possibility or in the background, which is unrealistic. This high level of aggression is not seen today, although perhaps conditions could become ripe for Mearsheimer's world to become plausible once again, although his examples of World War II exist before intergovernmental organizations. Certainly, if the chance arises to become the hegemon, nations will take it, but the environment in which that could occur is very rare in today's world.

Defensive Realism

Defense realism is considerably less hostile of a theory, with Kenneth Waltz asserting that countries do not want to maximize power but maintain their position in the system (Waltz,

1980, p. 126). Defense realism believes states prefer the status quo and will balance to achieve that status quo. This could be true and it could be false. There are numerous cases over the years to suggest some nations simply do not like the status quo like Nazi Germany or North Korea. However, some countries who are comfortable – and more realistically those that receive protection from other countries – may find the status quo suitable. NATO countries such as Lithuania may enjoy the power dominance the United States has, as it allows for the U.S. to put a lot of military in possible areas of conflict and provides a sense of security to a country that otherwise may not withstand a turn of events such as an invasion.

Christopher Layne focuses on what he calls, 'the poster child for offensive realism', the United States. Layne utilizes the United States as an example and argues that the U.S. is a global hegemon but is not an offshore balancer as it should be, and that the primary rationale for US military presence in Europe and northeast Asia is to maintain peace and stability (not to stop other countries from rising to hegemon status) (Layne, 2002, p. 121). He asserts that the U.S. has 'consistently sought to establish itself as a global hegemon; rejected the grand strategic alternative of offshore balancing, and made the maintenance of peace and stability in Europe and northeast Asia the central objective of its hegemonic grand strategy' (Layne, 2002, p. 122). The utilization of Europe as a venue to dominate militarily certainly has merit given Layne's use of over 60 years of US military history in the European arena.

These theories are the foundation of realism, but have often failed to explain keystone events such as the Cold War or the outcome of the Cold War. These theories also fail to explain the rise of the United States, and actions (or inaction) that nations have responded with, fearing the United States becoming a hegemon. Balance of power tries to address those concerns and changes.

Balance of Power

Balance of power asserts that states are always trying to maintain a level of strength or power (usually militarily) so that they are not dominated by another state, much like realism in general states. Jack Levy argues almost all of the theorists agree that, "sustained hegemonies rarely if ever arise in multistate systems, and a balancing coalition will form against any state that threatens to gain a position of hegemony that would enable it to impose its will on other states" (Levy, 2004, p. 35). He also asserts that all versions of balance of power begin with the assumption that the goal is to maximize security and that states are territorial (Levy, 2004, p. 31).

If one state becomes stronger than the others, the theory predicts the strongest state will attack weaker neighbors. When confronted by a very strong state – and many balancing theories operate in a world where there is a unipolar threat – states will either 'balance' or 'bandwagon'. Balancing can include allying with others, and bandwagoning is aligning with the threat to avoid being attacked. In older theories such as Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1980), the US versus the Soviet Union was considered one of the best examples of states having to either balance of bandwagon in a bipolar system. Kenneth N. Waltz's contribution to balance of power theory comes from his main work in 1980, *Theory of International Politics* and his work on it again in 2000, *Globalization and American Power* (Waltz, 1980;1999). In 2000, he states that "both friends and foes will react as countries always have to threatened or real predominance of one among them: they will work to right the balance" (Waltz, p. 55-56). He also says balancing takes two forms: internal and external. Internal balancing refers to when a state will increase military power to match up to other states, and external balancing is allying to counter the hegemon (Waltz, 1980).

Some have reviewed Kenneth Waltz's work, most notably Stephen Walt (1986) when he wrote *The Origins of Alliances*. Walt draws a clear distinction between balance of power theory and balance of threat theory and argues the latter 'incorporates the idea of power but subsumes it, in conjunction with geography, offensive capabilities, and intentions, within the more general concept of threat' (1986). Walt also argues that the balance of power theory predicts that states will ally against the strongest state but balance of threat predicts that states will ally against the most threatening state (1986). This strong distinction is what makes Stephen Walt's critique of Kenneth Waltz's work and the entirety of balance of power so widely cited.

Soft Balancing

One of the latest additions to balancing theory comes from Robert Pape (2005) who came up with soft balancing, defined as: "actions that do not directly challenge military preponderance but that use nonmilitary tools to delay, frustrate, and undermine aggressive unilateralist policies" (Pape, 2005, p. 10). This example was used to explain how European countries responded to the US's invasion of Iraq in 2003. Eventually, the theory suggests, soft balancing can become hard balancing (which is traditional hard power such as military buildups, war-fighting alliances, and transfers of military technology to the threats opponents). Soft balancing was created and is important because without it, it would appear that nations were not actively balancing against the United States at all. With soft balancing, many actions the European Union has taken over the years can be explained.

Negative and Positive Balancing

In an adaptive form of balancing, Kai He develops a 'negative and positive' balancing model to explain why states do not form alliances to balance against power or threats like they used to before the Cold War. He suggests that balancing strategies are shaped by the level of threat perception regarding their rival – if there is a high threat perception a state will choose to positively balance (strengthen their own power in world politics) and if they do not feel very threatened they will choose to negatively balance (undermine the rival) (He, 2012, p. 154). Morgenthau was right in suggesting the method of analyzing power would change. Some of these theories have been successful and unsuccessful in analyzing why states have acted the way they have. Realism is still incredibly useful in analyzing the power dynamic and aspect of international relations and state-to-state interactions.

Hypotheses

Power may be incredibly useful in explaining the Minsk II's signing and lack of implementation. Specifically, the balance of power theory may have relevance. Recalling that in the theory that when a state is confronted by a very strong state, they will either balance or bandwagon to avoid being attacked, one can deduce that a country who wants to avoid being attacked will sign an agreement. Likewise, a country attacking may sign an agreement should they begin to see signs of balancing. It would also suggest an unbalanced world – the signing of an agreement is an attempt to re-balance. In terms of implementation, implementation should occur if the agreement re-balances everything. Remember that states do not balance (or form alliances) if the rising state does not show aggressive intentions. From here, I hypothesize the following:

H1: If Ukraine, Germany, and France balance against Russia, the agreement will be signed.

H2: If Ukraine, Germany and France balance against Russia, the agreement will be implemented.

The main assumption that exists is the assumption that prior to the Minsk's II's signing, there is an unbalancing occurring – the evidence of which is the invasion of Ukraine. France and Germany feel threatened by the destabilization of a country so close to EU borders, a large and increasing military putting troops (albeit unmarked troops) onto *European* soil. France and Germany, along with Ukraine, must try and re-balance. If balancing occurs, signing and implementation should occur. I suggest that the world in which this theory operates is one in which France, Germany and Ukraine are not weak, but not necessarily Russian-level strong. So, in this case, an alliance forms between France, Germany and Ukraine – this is consistent with statements from the leaders of these countries – all of them denounce the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, indicating they've chosen to ally and not bandwagon. If perception of threat against Russia remains high, they will not sign. On the other side, if Russia's perception of threat is high, they may sign to avoid a war and draw out whatever benefits they can from a peace agreement (which would be less costly than a war). This seems counter intuitive, why would the alliance of Ukraine, France and Germany not sign but Russia would if threat perception is high? I assume costs for war would be higher for Russia because they do not have the option of allying with anyone except separatists – who really do not have their own military and require assistance in achieving their military goals. If perception of threat remains high for Russia, they may implement to merely reap the maximum amount of benefits without risking a war they cannot guarantee they will win with an alliance going against them. If perception of threat is still high

for Ukraine, they will not implement because Ukraine will view implementation as giving Russia more power, thus increasing the threat.

I defined a few key words to prevent confusion and to make the theory more logical. Balance of power suggests military capabilities are the direct factor in determining whether a state should be threatened or not. Therefore, I suggest a high level of threat occurs when military capabilities of the threatening state are both increasing and larger than the states being threatened. A state can increase their military capabilities and be threatening but not provoke a high perception of threat unless the military capabilities grow to be larger than the state or alliance who would perceive the threat. What is balancing though? Balancing would be when the alliance (Ukraine, France and Germany) make an attempt to 'close the gap', that is, decrease the difference between their combined military strength, and Russia's military strength. When balancing occurs, threat is lowered, and signing or implementing should occur. When they can't balance, they will still feel threatened, and will look at a peace agreement as a mere win for Russia with few benefits for the alliance to take.

Methodology and Results

I looked at the balancing between Ukraine, France and Germany, and the 'alliance' of Russia and the separatists. Russia and the separatists' relationship is more of a dependence relationship however since Russia gives military aid to the separatists. One could argue Ukraine is semi-dependent on France too at the moment– France has provided $594,020 in non-lethal military aid to Ukraine (Goble,2016). I analyzed the military sizes of all countries – Germany, Ukraine, France and Russia, to determine the size of militaries in comparison to each other, and to determine the size of the two aforementioned alliances. This is because two conditions can increase the perception of threat for the alliance: Russia can increase the 'gap' or the size of their

military in proportion to the alliance's combined military strength, or the alliance cannot close the gap by increasing their military size in proportion to Russia's (and the separatists). The 'gap' is what matters here, if the gap shrinks, threat is lowered. If threat is lowered, balancing is occurring. If balancing is occurring, signing and implementation can occur. The gap must not just 'shrink' however. If the Russian military's size went from 80% the size of the alliances to only 50% the size of the alliance, the gap is still too large for the alliance to possibly overcome should a direct attack occur.

The gap in military size between the alliance and Russia should be lower than 33% for countries to not feel threatened by power superiority. The gap is the difference in military size, thus the gap is inherently the difference in countries' *power*. But how much power is enough? Offensive realists argue if a state can get more power it should do so whenever the opportunity arises. Defensive realists argue states should seek appropriate amounts of power to avoid balancing that effectively closes whatever gap the state tried to make. Vesna Danilovic (2002), defines power superiority as a two-to-one ratio of forces (Danilovic, 2002, p. 96). Assuming this is true, the Russian military would need to be double the size of the alliance.

I also took a look at the Correlates of War Project, which created the National Material Capabilities Data Set. This is one of the most popular data sets utilized to measure power relative to other countries. It measures six indicators – military expenditure, military personnel, energy consumption, iron and steel production, urban population and total population, and then gives each country a rating on a scale from 0 to 1. Therefore, if the Composite Indicator of National Capability is 0, then the country shares 0% of global power, but if it is given a 1 then it takes 100% of the global power. For 2012, Russia shares 4%, France shares 1.4%, Ukraine shares .8% and Germany shares 1.7% (Greig & Enterline, 2012). If the alliance of France, Ukraine and

Germany existed in 2012, their total power share would be 3.9% to Russia's 4% which is very close. Seeing as no power dominance exists here, I used Danilova's definition of power superiority. In order for Ukraine, France and Germany to perceive Russia as a high threat, the military power must be double the size of the alliance's military power.

The main assumption here is that a larger army stands a larger threat, which could be untrue if a military uses very old and outdated equipment, but all of the countries involved here have a very high defense budget and are routinely buying and modernizing their military (Stockholm Institute for Peace Research, 2017). I collected a lot of data regarding each country's military. I took data from *The Military Balance* from the International Institute for Strategic Studies' annual assessment of military capabilities from 2014 (pre-invasion) to 2018 (present). Coincidentally, the Correlates of War Project also utilizes *the Military Balance* in their data, indicating that their data is accurate and reliable. Specifically, increases in the number of weapons and weapons per 100,000 is important to suggest a reason to sign from 2014 to 2015, and 2015 to 2016 for a reason to implement or not implement. Because the International Institute for Strategic Studies is considered a nongovernmental group, they annually seek military information from governments, and governments self-report their military size.

Self-reports from governments on their military size come with their own benefits and downsides. First and foremost, in order to utilize the numbers reported, one must assume the government is being truthful. While these nations could lie in order to prevent governments from seeing their full potential, I assume governments will truthfully report because they *wan*t other governments to see their full potential. Military strength is something governments tend to showcase to the world to show they are not to be trifled with. Government's also enjoy showcasing their latest in technological developments in order to appear advanced. There are no

doubt some secrets in military size, but there is no way to compare military secrets of one nation to military secrets of another nation, so I use the information provided as is.

I did not look at purchases for new weapons. Unless the military has had the weapon in their stockpile for potential use at the time of self-reporting, the weapon is not counted. This is important to mention because all of the nations involved report the purchasing of new weaponry through 2020, and how long those weapons take to enter their stockpile. The length of time from purchase of a weapon to entering the stockpile is long and means an increase in spending in one year should not equate with a higher number of weapons right away.

All of these nations had different organizational structures which made counting weaponry difficult. Some only had four branches while another had eight. Most weaponry is divided between four categories (land, sea, air, space) weaponry still overlapped. For example, navies had aircrafts and air forces had satellites or land radars. For this reason, I compiled the data into four main categories: land, sea, air, space. I added together similar items. For example, aircrafts in the navy and aircrafts in the air force were combined under one listed as 'total aircrafts'.

I compiled 20 items to analyze. That data included human strength – total active members of the military and total members of the reserve military for each country. For sea, I looked at 6 major portions of naval fleets – submarines, destroyers, frigates, landing ships & landing crafts, aircraft carriers and cruisers (as well as mine warfare). For land-based weaponry, I looked at two types of missiles, nuclear and non-nuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). I also looked at armored vehicles, maintenance and engineering vehicles, anti-tank/anti-infrastructure, and artillery. For air, I looked at total air defense, aircrafts, helicopters, and drones (unmanned aerial vehicles or UAV's) and for space, I looked at the total amount of

satellites and radars (the military definitions of all of these items can be found in Appendix B). These represent what I believe are the most encompassing categories. Each annual report is well over five hundred pages long, and some information was left out. Total number of anti-infantry vehicles, logistical ships and coastal combatant information was left out.

The data collected was then divided into two sets for comparison: balancing group versus hegemon (France, Ukraine, and Germany, versus Russia – the separatist data was lacking), and weapons per one hundred thousand people. For weapons per one hundred thousand people, I added the countries total weapons (not including active and reservists) together and divided them by the total population, then multiplied by one hundred thousand. For population, I utilized the World Bank for all countries 2014-2016, and the CIA World Fact book for each country for 2017, and 2018 population data has not yet come out. I also included yearly military expenditure (in U.S. dollars, in billions) taken from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) Military Expenditure Database. All results can be found in Appendix B.

The data shows that the Russian military is larger in size than France, Germany, and Ukraine's military combined, any year. At the time of signing the agreement, the Russian military was only about 30% larger however. Since implementation began, the Russian military size has hovered between 38% and 45% larger. While Russia spends more than any individual country, the Ukrainian, French and German military expenditure combined equals $93.43 billion, compared to Russia's $61.7 billion this past year. Unique to Russia is their inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that are nuclear. Although decreasing, Russia still reported 313 nuclear ICBM's and none of the other countries reported having any. In the space race, Russia is eclipsed by France, Germany and Ukraine combined, with their total reported satellite and radar equipment totaling 166 compared to Russia's 112. The three countries also boasted larger

numbers of helicopters, drones, destroyers and frigates fairly consistently over the 5 years of data compiled. Russia, however, had more non-nuclear missile launchers, anti-tank/anti-infrastructure, armored vehicles, submarines, air defense and cruisers for the majority of the years looked at.

In 2015, when Minsk II was signed and began implementation, Russia's military was only 30% larger, a relatively small number. The gap closed between 2014 and 2015 (68% to 30%). While there is a lot of information about the separatists missing, the two years they do provide information shows the separatists are quite small. The German government's weapon stockpile also is small compared to the other nations. What is also interesting is that all nations increased their stockpiles rapidly in 2017, with Russia and Germany increasing their weapons well over 100%.

The Russian military is certainly larger than the Ukraine and Franco-German alliance combined. The weapon gap closes between 2014 and 2015, which was after the invasion of Ukraine and during the signing. In order for Ukraine, France and Germany to balance against Russia and lower their perception of threat, they would have needed to double the size of their weapons stockpile. This does not occur, therefore both hypotheses are rejected, as the alliance cannot balance against Russia.

Just looking at Russia compared to the Ukraine, French and German alliance, their military is large. For comparison, I wanted to include the United States' military. This served dual purposes, but came with one caveat. First, the Russian military is *somewhat powerful* when compared solely to the United States. This is not true in the COW for 2012. In 2012, the US accounted for 13.9% of the total global power share, and Russia only accounted for 4%. Russia's global power share was 71% smaller than the United States (Greig & Enterline, 2017). Second, I

added the US to this Ukraine, French, and German alliance and found that their total weapons almost always came near the doubling threshold for Russia to view the alliance as a threat. There is a caveat to this though: all of those weapons the US has are either across an entire ocean, or dispersed in many areas globally where the US has bases and is engaged in active fighting or monitoring – thus it is hard to say what percentage of the US military weaponry could actually make it to Ukraine if this alliance were to require it. The French and German militaries would too have an issue getting weaponry over to Ukraine, but considerably less effort would be required.

All three potential allies for Ukraine suffer the same problem when it comes to military power – they are unlikely to commit to using their own to defend Ukraine. The very fact that Russia invaded Ukraine and no US, French or German military movements have been implemented is testament to their unwillingness to lend military support. Ukraine is not a part of NATO, and technically the three nations do not have to commit to protecting or supporting Ukraine militarily. In fact, it is highly likely that should Ukraine be offered NATO membership, or the US lend their hand in Ukraine, Russia's perception of threat would skyrocket and would likely produce a war if not at minimum a proxy war.

The hypotheses both could not answer why the Minsk II was signed but not implemented. Balancing, at least in the way I have defined it, does not occur and cannot occur. Perhaps the perception of threat has something to do with it, and maybe Germany and France do not view Russia as a threat due to another factor such as their geographical proximity (France being much further away than Germany). While the data indicates a smaller gap between the alliance and Russia during signing which would have lowered the perception of threat, it does not prove that the alliance *actively* balanced, because Germany, France, and Ukraine all decreased the size of

their military's during that time period (for balancing to be true, they should have been increasing military weaponry as a direct response and challenge to the perceived threat).

It could be that realism and balance of power is outdated – it is an old theory. It does not take into consideration intent of a country besides to gain more power, but there are other reasons to sign and implement an agreement other than to balance or gain power. Maybe I should have measured a different part of power, such as total active troops or the budget versus the expenditure, or utilized a different concept in realism. Unfortunately, there are not many lessons to learn from this failure.

CHAPTER FOUR: LIBERALISM

Liberalism rejects realist's notion of power as the principle goal and outcome. We can trace liberalism's roots back to Immanuel Kant, when he wrote *On Perpetual Peace* in 1795. He defines three foundations of peace: a civil constitution, the federation of free states, and universal hospitality (Kant, 2003, p. 99). From there, three principles are created. First, power politics is not the only possible outcome of international relations. There can also be mutual benefits and thus international cooperation. In his democratic peace theory, Kant determines that democracies do not fight wars with other democracies because of capitalist ties and those with shared morals are likely to resolve issues diplomatically (Kant, 1903, p. 94). Finally, international organizations and nongovernmental actors can shape state preferences and policies (Shiraev, 2014, p. 78). As a main theory of international relations, liberalism has also developed greatly. Here, I will review the most widely used and discussed theory development in liberalism: neoliberalism, as well as discuss the important concepts of preferences and domestic actors.

Neoliberalism

In neoliberalism, authors such as Robert Keohane argue that the anarchic nature of the international system is exaggerated (Keohane, 1984). Domestic politics play a large role in liberalism. For example, Robert Putnam's widely cited two-level game theory suggests that there are always two games being played simultaneously – one in the international arena and one in domestic politics (1998, p. 430). Putnam's work seeks to account for the interaction of domestic and international factors. Putnam argues there are two levels to international negotiations. First, there is the national level where domestic groups try and pressure the government to pick policies they favor and politicians will coalition build to see their preferences become the choice.

Secondly, there is the international level, where national governments attempt to maximize their own ability to appease domestic actors while minimizing consequences from foreign actors. Essentially, the national government is the middle man – it tries to give both parties enough of what they want to be content with the outcome.

One of the most important pieces of literature on preferences comes from Andrew Moravcsik. He asserts that liberalism lies on the assumption that 'states represent some subset of domestic society, on the basis of whose interest's state officials define state preferences and act purposively in world politics' (Moravcsik, 1997, p. 518). However, Moravcsik does not entertain the possibility that, especially in complex security issues, the subset of domestic society the state represents cannot come to a cohesive and vocal position. Not every issue will be of importance to the domestic society of a state, and they may not even realize the implications of not forming a preference until it is too late. Moravcsik believes there is a two-stage process of constrained social choice. "States first define preferences" and "then they debate, bargain or fight to particular agreements" (Moravcsik, 1997, p. 544). This is one of the most important contributions to preference-based liberalism theory.

Liberalism does not just apply when state interests converge. Foreign policy and choices occur from convergence and divergence of state preferences. Liberalism also maintains the belief that preferences are key determinants of interstate bargaining outcomes. A maximalist liberal contends the outcome of interstate bargaining depends solely on the level of convergence or conflict between underlying national preferences. The closer domestic actors can get in their preferences, the more likely states are to cooperate. Minimalist liberalism is a mix of liberalism and realism (Sandel, 2001, p. 18) Liberalism confirms state interests, but realism accounts for the implementation through relative bargaining capabilities. Some variables that matter the most to liberals would include: representativeness of domestic institutions, social cohesion and extent of transnational economic interaction.

Institutions

Liberalism believes in institutions, and it is obvious why liberalism was created and stands almost at odds with realism. Realism was created at a time when cooperation was limited and international organizations did not exist. Liberalism is thus a theory that is more modern than realism. While realism seeks to understand power politics, liberalism has a more idealistic goal in mind: lasting peace and cooperation. Realism and liberalism have different views of how the world operates. The next theory, constructivism, seeks to discuss those views and their construction.

Hypotheses

Liberalism is a rejection of realism in the sense that it does not believe power is the only outcome of interactions between states. Liberalism focuses more on the ideas of mutual benefits, cooperation, and international organizations and nongovernmental actors for determining preferences and policies (Shiraev, 2014, p. 78). The world has changed vastly since liberalism

was developed, and interdependence has become increasingly important for explaining economic, security, cultural and political interactions.

The most important factor in determining an explanation for the research questions regarding the Minsk II, through liberalism's lense, would be visualize the preferences of each actor. Technically, separatists were given legitimacy as actors when they were allowed to sign and participate in the implementation process, therefore separatists will be considered actors for this research. Preference convergence and divergence should matter a great deal when it comes to cooperation. Therefore, I developed the following hypotheses with liberalism:

H1: If the majority of actors win-sets overlap, Minsk II will be signed.

H2: If win-set overlaps occur with the principle implementing actors, then Minsk II will be implemented.

There is some need to define a few terms here. I define 'win-sets' as the possible outcomes that are likely to be accepted by the actors. This is derived from Robert Putnam's two-level game theory, however for the sake of the scope of this paper, I will only be looking at the signatories – the elite actors. This is due to the fact that initial research indicates domestic interest groups in some of the countries either have made no statements regarding the Ukrainian crisis and the Minsk II, or the domestic interest groups are being repressed by authoritarian regimes. I propose that the Minsk II, like any international agreement will occur when there is an overlap of these win-sets, or preferred outcomes.

The term 'principal implementing actors' also requires defining. While Russia, France, Germany, Ukraine and the separatists signed the agreement, there is no way for France and Germany (and arguably Russia) to implement the agreement. That is quite simply because it is not their country. Thus, principal implementing actors are actors who are located within the

territories where reform is being requested. In this case, governmental reforms are being requested in Kiev, therefore the President of Ukraine is a principal implementing actor. A cease-fire and elections are required in separatist-held territory; therefore the separatist leaders are also principal implementing actors. Controversially, Russia would not be a principal implementing actor. Although their military is in separatist-held territory, I believe separatist leaders have preferences and priorities that may be entirely separate from what the Russian government wants or desires the separatists to do. In this case, separatists are considered free-thinking individuals, even if they favor Russian advice. This is fair – just because the Ukrainian government may favor listening to French and German advice and receive military defense aid from them does not mean the Ukrainian government is not comprised of free-thinking and deciding people.

I analyzed preferences for all actors in an attempt to find where preferences overlapped or converged (or diverged). Preferences the majority of actors should overlap for hypothesis one, but only with principal implementers for hypothesis two. Therefore, for hypothesis one, in order for it to be true, 3 out of 5 actors or more must indicate at least once a policy preference. However, in hypothesis two, both two actors (Petro Poroshenko and the separatists) must converge on the majority of preference choices.

Methodology and Results

To determine what the preferences for each actor are and if overlapping occurs, I gathered statements from each actor. I utilized Atlas. Ti, a qualitative software system, to gather, organize and analyze each actor's statements. Where statements came from varied because not every actor had statements readily available on their government website. For example, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel had an entire section devoted to her statements on the federal government's website. The separatist's only had leader statements from the Donetsk region, and

they were all from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the DPR Natalia Nikonorova, who speaks on behalf of the government. Though she is not a signer of the Minsk II, she is principal speaker for the government, as the DPR leader Alexander Zakharchenko does not make public statements. All of the statements for the DPR come from their official government website, and there is an entire sub-section devoted to statements on the Minsk II process. Statements from President Vladimir Putin came in the form of interviews, gathered through LexisNexis. Statements from President Petro Poroshenko also came from LexisNexis, but were a mix of statements and interviews. Finally, President Francois Hollande's statements came from the Agence France Presse, a highly reputable French news source, gathered through LexisNexis and translated by hand and with an online translator for assistance. Ideally all of the statements would have come from government websites, but the majority of governments did not make their statements accessible this way.

The next step was downloading all of the documents into the software, and coding them. I utilized the 'coding' ability on the software and reading each document for preferences. If a statement stood out as an actor specifically mentioning something as their preference, their demand, or their desire, the statement was coded. Initially, I had five codes that I thought would show up the most frequently: statements regarding protecting the territorial integrity of Ukraine, demands to keep and maintain a cease-fire, demands to respect international law, a desire to implement the Minsk agreements as-is, and support for the decentralization of Ukraine.

By the end of the coding process, I had 17 codes which included the above and the following: amend the constitution, amnesty for separatists, coordinate with separatists, defend against Russian aggression, free elections, political change in Ukraine, request financial support for reforms, request US/EU military aid, and adopt a special status for separatist regions. Once

coding was complete, I reviewed the codes and the connections between each actor, to find where preferences in their statements overlapped and where they did not. The codes and numbers of times each actor mentioned the code where uploaded into a chart (See Appendix C).

To analyze the results, I looked for areas where preference convergence occurred for the majority and for implementers. For majority of actors, all 17 codes were utilized, but I omitted 3 codes when it came to implementers, as neither actor had made a statement regarding those preferences, and that left the implementers with a total of 14 codes. In order for convergence to occur with the majority, 3 out of 5 actors must state the preference at least one time each for preference convergence to occur. It must be 3 out of 5 actors because this would indicate a majority as the hypotheses say. The theory behind this is that if a majority support the preference, then there will be enough to support signing. For implementers, both actors must indicate the preference for convergence to occur. The number of codes converged were then divided by the total number of possible codes to produce a percentage of convergence – anything below 50% indicates divergence and anything above 50% indicates convergence.

There are some limitations to this approach. First, and perhaps most importantly, this approach does not look at the domestic institutions and actors which theoretically could help shape preferences. This is due to the fact that preliminary research showed inconsistencies. A LexisNexis search on political parties in France found no major political party had formulated an opinion on the Minsk II. Some politicians in France and Germany made statements, but those statements cannot be proven to have had a direct impact on the preferences Angela Merkel laid out, especially since in Germany the statements came from her opposition party. Because there was no clear consistency with domestic actor's preferences, they were left out. Another issue was in coding similar words but with diverging preferences. For example, amnesty for separatists

looks like convergence but when the statements are examined they indicated divergence. These cases are outlined in the results for clarity.

The results are interesting. For the majority of actors, where 17 possible preferences existed, only 7 preferences indicated a majority convergence – amnesty for separatists, cease-fire, decentralization, respect for international law & institutions, and territorial integrity. The last two – free elections and implementing Minsk II – saw 100% (5/5) convergence of preferences. 7 codes converging out of 17 possible codes produces 41% convergence for the majority of actors.

For implementers, there were a total of 14 possible preferences, and only 4 saw convergences – free elections, implement Minsk II, amnesty for separatists, and decentralization. That represents 28% convergence of preferences for implementers. The caveat to this is in amnesty for separatists. In the quote used for Petro Poroshenko he says, "if they have killed people, they must be held responsible. Otherwise it is very simple: we will hold elections and there will be an amnesty law." However, the separatists speak in support of full and unconditional (and immediate) amnesty. While the coding suggests preference convergence here, it technically is not. Therefore, I find only 3 convergences – representing 21% of all possible preferences.

The second chart in Appendix C shows the top three preferences for each country, with matching colors to show where preferences came close to aligning. Here, we see a total number of potential preferences for all actors at 15, but only 7 converge (implement Minsk II with 4 and Russia must respect territorial integrity with 3). 7 out of 15 leads to a 46% convergence for the majority of actors. The total number of slots for implementers are 6, and 2 converge (implement

Minsk II), equaling 33% convergence. The second chart exists to see if only the top three preferences will converge or not.

Both charts provide unique information. The most important finding is that all actors show some preference for implementing Minsk II and free elections. They also care a great deal about the cease-fire succeeding, as well as the territorial integrity of Ukraine. High divergence also occurs. Support for amending the constitution, coordinating with separatists, defending against Russian aggression, principles and norms, financial support for reforms, requesting US military aid and special status for separatist regions all suffer from very low support from all but one or two actors.

Another key finding is not what is discussed as a preference but what *is not*. Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande do not discuss amnesty for separatists, decentralization, financial support for reforms, US military aid, or the special status for separatist regions. Francois Hollande is the most unvocal of all actors. The separatists do not discuss a cease-fire at all, and only Angela Merkel talks about respect for norms and 'European principles'.

For hypothesis 1, table 1 confirmed a majority of actor's preferences must overlap – meaning of the 17 codes, 9 out 17 should converge for signing to occur. The result indicates 7 out of 17 – only 41% convergence. Because the majority of actor's preferences do not overlap, signing should not occur. Hypothesis 1 fails, because signing does occur.

For hypothesis 2, principle implementers Petro Poroshenko and the separatists should converge on at least 7 preferences of the 14 they both mentioned. 4 preferences technically converged, but the coding for amnesty for separatists found that preferences there really diverged, therefore only 3 really overlapped. This represents 21% convergence. Since hypothesis

2 suggests implementation occurs only if principal implementers preferences converge, hypothesis 2 is confirmed.

I now interpret the results, separated into two distinct areas: preferences with high convergence and high divergence. I will also examine the potential power of silence from actors who did not choose some preferences.

One area of high preference convergence – 100% to be exact – is the discussion on having free elections in the separatist regions, a key component of the Minsk II Agreement. The part that all pay special attention to is the end of section 12, which states that based on the Law of Ukraine "on interim local self-government order in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions", "questions related to local elections will be discussed and agreed upon with representatives of certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk" (see Appendix A). In 2015, Donetsk and Luhansk were not allowed to participate in the national elections, but they also submitted (according to Putin) three different proposals on how to conduct the local elections but were ignored by the Ukrainian government. Both regions have postponed holding elections, but the Ukrainian government says no local elections can be held if the territory is not under their control (SputnikNews, 2016).

The issue with free elections thus has a sort of feedback loop. The separatists' proposals are being ignored, and the Ukrainian government refuses to accept any election if the territory is not under their control, but the separatists will not give up territory because their proposals are being ignored (among other unsolved implementation issues). Putin also complains the law on local elections that Ukraine passed (in accordance with the Minsk Agreements) states that no local elections are to be held in Donbass (against accordance with the Minsk Agreements). Francois Hollande stressed the importance of "elections under Ukrainian law", but if the law

says no elections can be held, then how can this issue be solved? Thus, while it may appear preferences converged, the specifics muddy the waters greatly.

The Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University found that priority should be given to demobilization of soldiers and demilitarization of politics – to transform warring armies into political parties – otherwise civil wars could not end (Stedman, 2001, p.3). As separatists have demanded, free elections could decrease their desire to remain a warring group.

In terms of preference convergences, it is clear all wish to 'implement' the Minsk Agreements, with Vladimir Putin and the separatist's foreign minister being the most vocal that the Minsk Agreement is the only path forward. Francois Hollande and Angela Merkel speak in favor of implementation of the Minsk Agreements, but less frequently. With all being in favor of implementation, this leaves a rather large puzzle. Why hasn't the Minsk Agreement been implemented? I think of two issues here: first, because preferences do not really converge, all the rhetoric about implementing the Minsk II may be 'cheap talk'. Second, a status quo may exist that is favorable to all actors.

Support for the cease-fire portion of the Minsk II is talked about frequently with Angela Merkel, Francois Hollande, and Petro Poroshenko, and once with Vladimir Putin. The separatists never mention the cease-fire as a preference. This could indicate that there is an unforeseen benefit from cease-fire continuations. For separatists, who need to keep troops energized, consistent cease-fire violations may increase energy, boost their morale, and keep them on guard and well trained.

Angela Merkel, Francois Hollande, and Petro Poroshenko enjoy discussing the need to respect territorial integrity of Ukraine, and it appears to be one of Angela Merkel's top priorities.

This could be due to the fact that if Russia is willing to violate the territorial integrity of one country, there is no guarantee he would not do it to another country perhaps even within the European Union. Preferring that Russia go back to respecting the norm of sovereignty appears very important to the European signatories. In fact, this was most strongly supported by the French and German leaders, with Merkel stressing multiple times "the crisis cannot be resolved by military means." President Poroshenko is adamant that the Ukrainian military has done their part by pulling back, but cease-fire violations on the Ukrainian side still occur, with over 220 incidents a week according to the OSCE (Shalal and Siebold, 2017). It is worth noting that the OSCE considers the returning of fire a violation of the cease-fire agreement.

High divergence occurs when discussing amnesty. The separatists and Vladimir Putin strongly desire an amnesty law pardoning separatists be created. No amnesty law exists thus far. As previously mentioned, Petro Poroshenko mentioned that only separatists who have not killed could get amnesty. However, that is not exactly a 'simple' issue. Separatists have been engaging in a conflict where over 10,000 people have been killed. Who is to say who killed who? Without full and unconditional amnesty, separatists could be subjected to prosecution with little evidence in a court system filled with issues and corruption (GAN, 2017). On the flip side, separatists may find hypocrisy in the idea that they be prosecuted for killing Ukrainians but the Ukrainian military not facing any charges for killing separatists – most of whom are Ukrainian citizens. Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikonorova insists terms of amnesty can only be discussed when special status of the territory is guaranteed. Interestingly, this is one of many issues the German and French leaders have made no comment on, which is understandable considering how muddy the waters already are.

Another area where Russia and the separatists stand cornered is their demand that Ukraine coordinate with separatists as stipulated in the Minsk II. The other implementer in this issue, Poroshenko, makes no statement regarding coordination, indicating it is either not on his radar or a priority. It is very possible that Petro Poroshenko intends to implement the Minsk II without any consideration to the separatist's desires, he does not view the separatists as anything less than terrorists, so why would he ask their opinion? He views the separatists as terrorists. In a visit to the Dutch embassy in Kiev, he said in 2014, "We [Ukraine' and the Netherlands will make every effort […] so that the so-called Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics be declared terrorist organizations and so that any cooperation or support the terrorists receive is recognized as such under international law" (Mosendz, 2014). Therefore, when the Minsk II requires amnesty, and separatists and Vladimir Putin show strong preference for amnesty, words like Petro Poroshenko's indicate an unwillingness and strong contempt for the idea of giving separatists amnesty. Separatists will be unwilling to move towards implementation if their amnesty is not guaranteed, and with Poroshenko's claim that separatists are terrorists, they will be far less likely to trust that Ukraine will do what it signed up for.

Petro Poroshenko stands alone in his belief that Ukraine is the last line of defense against Russian aggression, and also in his request for military aid. Interestingly, this runs counter to his claims to desire a cease-fire and non-military solution since he advocates for lethal and offensive aid from the United States and even from the European Union. He stands alone for good reason – Germany and France are highly committed to the cease-fire/non-military option, and Russia would face direct contestation if US military landed in Ukraine, possibly provoking a proxy war.

Angela Merkel stands alone when it comes to respecting international norms, apparently. She talks at length about the "principles of Europe" and that Russia's actions in Ukraine buck the

'principles of co-existence'. However, she and Petro Poroshenko appear to believe that Russian military in Ukraine threatens the stability of Europe. Angela Merkel mentions this destabilization 10 times, and Petro Poroshenko mentions it 10 times. Petro Poroshenko's statements are far more unique and telling, he tells this story of his people stopping Russian aggression from entering Europe…that Ukraine is in effect saving Europe from a "global threat to world security". Here it is worth noting the key difference between Angela and Petro: Petro Poroshenko uses these statements as a method of building his base, rallying his people, and giving himself legitimacy. Angela Merkel uses her rhetoric on the issue to rally Europe, probably not to give herself legitimacy.

Petro Poroshenko also stands alone in requesting financial support to carry out the reforms he is supposed to implement. This could be another reason Minsk II is not implemented. If Poroshenko waits it out there's a chance he'll get the funding he wants.

Finally, the "hot button issue" of the special status of separatist regions is clear diverging preference. The separatists mention it 12 times, their number one preference. Poroshenko mentions it zero times. No other actor mentioned a preference for the special status law. This was the strongest preference for the separatists. This was a large divergence in preference for the two key principal implementers. If Poroshenko does not mention it, and he is the one who must implement the special status, will it ever occur?

Both the DPR representative and Vladimir Putin made several statements in support of the decentralization of Ukraine. This preference is notably absent from Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande's statements, and appears once with Petro Poroshenko, when he tries to reassure a journalist that the decentralization process is indeed occurring under his administration…although the evidence is lacking. The preference makes sense for the separatists

– a decentralized government gives them the autonomy they are seeking and gives them more choices when it comes to integration with Russia and the European Union. For Russia, decentralization could mean several things. It could benefit ethnic Russians in the region by allowing them the language protections they desire. A decentralized Ukraine also creates an opportunity for Russia to open deep trade agreements with decentralized regions and also could give them more political leverage in the region. Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande make no mention of decentralization probably because decentralization benefits Russia, not the European Union which they are active members of.

As mentioned earlier, what actors have said is important, but what they are not saying also provides insight. For example, the European duo make no mention of many key parts of Minsk II – amending the constitution, amnesty for separatists, coordinating with separatists, decentralization, political change in Ukraine, and the special status for separatist regions. These are all parts of the Minsk II that implementation requires, so why sign an agreement that includes these preferences if you want nothing to do with them? It could be that the duo does not want to tread into muddy water – these issues are complex and may not be the business of Germany or France. The issues may simply not be priorities and so they do not bring them up.

What I find more convincing is the idea that there is a status quo in place without implementation. This study does not look at domestic institutions in each country, mostly because domestic parties have not formulated a cohesive opinion on the crisis or how to handle it. Domestic institutions idleness could produce a status quo that is preferable to implementation occurring and conditions worsening. While there are cease-fire violations, the current environment is not terrible as far as civil wars go. All of these leaders may choose not to implement not only because preferences are not converging, but because a status quo is in place

that does not upset domestic institutions and parties at home. This would be a great area of further research.

Given the benefit of hindsight, we know that Minsk II was in fact signed. An explanation may still lurk in the evidence – with the code for implementing Minsk. All five converged on this singular issue, that this agreement was the only way forward. Perhaps in the grand scheme of things, all other preferences do not matter. Perhaps the actors in this set of evidence do not see the divergence of preferences, or maybe they do not care. Saying you've signed a peace treaty may hold more importance than signing one that everyone actually wants to see implemented. In this case, it is a possibility that the rhetoric coming from each actor is 'cheap talk'. Cheap talk is defined as communication that does not directly affect the payoffs – they are costless to send and receive, non-binding, and unverifiable (Farrell, 1987, 34).

Why sign an agreement that includes things that are not preferable? For Ukraine, working with France and Germany might have been the key factor. Poroshenko has made harsh and volatile comments regarding separatists before (Mosendz, 2014). His priority may have been to signal to France and Germany that the Ukrainian government is willing to work with the European Union's most powerful members, and the EU itself by extension. Reforms in the Minsk II are very unpopular with his own party, therefore I suspect his ears are focused on what European countries are saying, and hoping this sort of appeasement will attract more support from the EU for the ultimate goal – membership. Francois Hollande and Angela Merkel came up with the majority of this agreement, but it's clear they show no preference for most of the specifics besides the cease-fire. They may not even care what direction Ukraine takes in dealing with separatists as long as the cease-fire is maintained and some semblance of security is reconfigured so close to the EU border. For the separatists, signing offered the hopes of amnesty

and political special status: two things they desire more than anything else. For the separatists, signing was an easy decision because their preferences existed in the agreement. The same goes for Vladimir Putin, he spoke more often about implementing Minsk II than anyone else. He also spoke the most about the specifics of the agreement. While some may fear Russia intends to invade Europe through Ukraine, or take Ukraine back (Rogan & Golovkin, 2017), the evidence provided here suggests the opposite. The evidence suggests that Vladimir Putin, more than anyone else, wants to see the Minsk II succeed. As with everything else, it could be 'cheap talk', but the rhetoric should not go unnoticed.

Something else could be at play in terms of preferences – hidden preferences and preferences outside the Minsk II. Military escalation could very well be a strong preference for the Ukrainian government, especially with Petro Poroshenko asking for lethal offensive aid against Ukraine *after* signing the Minsk II. Military escalation would be a preference outside of the Minsk II and thus outside the scope of this paper. Ukraine could also prefer to hide their preference of seeing the Minsk II fail. With little signaling from Poroshenko regarding many issues in the Minsk II, one could argue if he has not signaled these preferences, it is because he is in staunch opposition to those preferences. Porohenko would naturally want to hide the preference of seeing Minsk II fail because he should want to appear cooperative with Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande, two people who hold quite a bit of power in aiding a country in becoming an EU member or candidate at the very least.

This theory presented one confirmed hypothesis and one unconfirmed hypothesis. The unconfirmed hypothesis indicated preferences would converge and the agreement would be signed. Preferences did not converge with the majority but they did sign anyways. They didn't converge with even the two implementers either, but implementation did not occur. Moving on, I

looked at constructivism and how it could possibly explain the Minsk II's signing and implementation.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is not a traditional political or international relations theory. Constructivism, which focuses on social relationships, comes from sociology and only recently entered political science and international relations (Cristol, 2017). There are some general assumptions about constructivism. Constructivism focuses on 'agents' rather than 'states', and they are constitutive in nature, meaning they can give organized existence to something. Agents can influence identities *and* policy interests. Constructivism looks at the identities of actors and actions that are influenced by how actors view themselves in relation to other actors in the international community. There are four major concepts in constructivism: norms, rules, the constructed society, and socialization.

Norms

Norms do not have to be broken – an agent can use their resources to change the rule bearing in mind other agents may use their resources to keep the rule in place since they benefit from it. Still, an agent can break the rule, face the consequences, or have other agents use their benefits to enforce the rule. For example, Western countries benefit from the rule of sovereignty – they can build their armies but not have to use them. If a country breaks the rule of sovereignty the Western countries can turn this specific benefit onto the violator and attempt to enforce the rule and bring the violator back into step. In this case, the Western country loses the benefit because they must use their armies, but maintains the rule. This loss is theoretically going to be less than what they would lose if the rule completely fell apart.

Rules

In constructivism, people make society and society makes people (Onuf, 2013, p.4). An important notion in constructivism is the idea of rules: statements that tell people what they should do (with extreme emphasis on the *should*). Nicholas Onuf (2013) says rules tell us who active participants in society are, and constructivists call them agents (Onuf, 2013, p. 4). Most importantly, agents can have agency – being able to act on something – and rules give agents choices (Onuf, 2013, p.5). Rules are important when it comes to the behavior of agents. If rules are truly rules, one should see agents' behavior match the rules. Sometimes, agents will reconstruct the rules to condone their behavior…which then calls into question the importance of rules if agents will change them to make their behavior acceptable.

Onuf determines there are three kinds of rules: directive-rules, instruction-rules, and commitment-rules. Directive-rules are the rules we think of when we think of the law. Instruction-rules are the rules that tell us how to proceed if we receive the results we hope for – these rules are 'neither binding nor enforceable' (Onuf, 2014, p.3). Commitment-rules are 'like contracts reciprocally undertaken to assure of a mutually desired result' (Onuf, 2014, p. 3). We generally call these 'rights and duties', when one fails to perform their duty they can feel guilty (or not). Treaties comprise the majority of these types of rules. It is interesting that commitment-rules like treaties are undertaken to assure mutually desired results, yet so many treaties have failed to live up to their full expectation, like Minsk II. There are, of course, informal rules: rules that are not institutionalized or written down on paper, and have no system to ensure rules are followed. Formal rules have rulers – informal rules do not.

Rules play a crucial role in the constructivist's analytical approach. Sort of like norms, there are unwritten 'rules' which offer agents two choices – follow the rule or break the rule (for example, follow the norm and do not invade a country thereby respecting the norm of

sovereignty or do not follow the norm, invade a country and reject the norm of sovereignty). Given that there are only two options, the consequences are fairly easy to discern for agents. Rules eventually stop feeling like rules – once agents realize they should act as they always have and not just because they have always acted that way – the rule gains strength. So basically, in the end agents may end up following the norm not because they have good reason but because it's the norm and "why shake the boat"? Onuf breaks down rules in the general form of speech acts and puts them in three categories. First there are assertive speech acts, and the rule of sovereignty is the most popular example (Onuf, 2013, p.11). Assertive speech acts inform agents about the way things are – and show them what consequences will follow if they reject the rule. Assertive speech acts can also be very specific – like presenting diplomatic credentials. "Providing information is not normative, but telling agents what they should do with that information is" (Onuf, 2013, p. 11).

Constructed Society

Constructivist's also believe that the society in which we operate is constructed based on the way we perceive things. According to Alexander Wendt, there is no logic for anarchy, 'apart from the practices that create and instantiate one structure of identities and interests rather than another; structure has no existence or causal powers apart from process' (Wendt, 1992, p. 395). This is why Wendt says, "anarchy is what states make of it", and that power politics are institutions but not essential features of anarchy (Wendt, 1992, p. 395). Thus, the international system can be naturally anarchic but it can either be conflictual or cooperative depending on states behavior towards each other (Wendt, 1992).

Interactions

Finally, social constructivism believes that knowledge is constructed when we interact with others. An important concept in socialization is the social structure, the shared understanding, expectations and knowledge (Wendt, 1992, p. 73). The social structure matters whether relationships are cooperative or conflictual. To a social constructivist, an issue of security between two countries is a result of worst-case assumptions about intent, intersubjective understandings of distrust, and results in the countries defining their interests in self-help terms (Wendt, 1992, p. 73). Groups such as NATO and the Franco-Germany military alliance are security communities, where shared knowledge occurs and states trust one another to resolve disputes without war. With any relationship in the international system of security, the ideas and understandings in which assets (territories, populations, weaponry) are conceived, organized, and used, are more important than the simple physical element of having something. The physical assets of a country have no meaning without the thought or intent behind them.

Socialization is a wide topic, with much to discuss and study still. Information sharing and interpretation can depend on whether it comes from "people like us" or "others" (Kuklinski, Hurley, 1996, p. 127). Bargaining is more likely to lead to mutually beneficial exchanges because it elicits norms of honesty that increase trust (Valley, Moag, and Bazerman, 1998, p. 230). Norms and rules rely heavily on the socialization structure: first, there must a social structure or environment. Once a social environment is constructed, norms and rules are 'taught' and then mimicked through policies and practices (Johnston, 2008, p. 18).

Constructivism is deeply philosophical and dependent on human thought. Constructivism challenges realism by assuming anarchy is only anarchy if you decide it is. International institutions in liberalism are only important if you give importance to them. Thus, constructivism is a good theory to utilize when looking at multiple theories to explain a question.

Hypotheses

Constructivism has many concepts, with the most common being norms, rules and socialization. Interactions between states can help them form their identities, and those with identities that are similar are more likely to trust one another given that they are more likely to find 'common ground'. Distrust can turn into trust through the interaction. If treaties are commitments made within a social structure, based on the relationships of those negotiating, signing and implementing, then successful treaties can be viewed as examples of a successful relationship and successful interaction. Treaty negotiations and implementation can be seen as bargaining, which lead to mutually beneficial exchanges that increase trust. What could be key to the bargaining process, and the successful implementation of the treaty could be the quantity of interactions between all of the agents (in this case state leaders). Based on the notion that more interaction improves relationships, I generated the following hypotheses:

H1: If leaders spend more time interacting in-person about negotiating a peace agreement, then Minsk II will be signed.

H2: If leaders spend more time interacting in-person about implementing the Minsk II, then Minsk II will be implemented.

These hypotheses assume in-person interaction has a higher quality than over the phone. In-person meetings are known to be productive and insightful – the bulk of EU foreign and defense policy is formulated in the working parties and committees of the Council of the EU and the majority of decisions in the field are made by the national diplomats working in the 35 groups of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and CSDP (Chelotti, 2016). There is also an assumption that high levels of interactions will decrease the perception of threat. The more leaders meet and interact, the more likely they are to perceive each other as less of a threat.

From a purely business standpoint, in-person meetings should be more productive than phone calls. With phone calls, there can be disconnections, poor service, poor translations, interrupting speakers (especially on a conference call), and most importantly: distractions. Leaders are less likely to provide undivided attention on a conference call with four other leaders. Their staff are typically in the room, writing notes, passing papers, and requiring the leader to multi-task. In meetings, leaders have each other's undivided attention.

Two things need to be defined for this study. First, 'interactions' will be defined as any event occurring where the leaders of the "Normandy Four"[1] – Ukraine, Germany, Russia, and France – speak in person. The second issue is defining what 'more' interactions should look like. Is it more time or more meetings? More time means more interaction, and more meetings does not guarantee more time. For the purpose of the thesis, leaders must have spent more time meeting in person than speaking over the phone for the hypotheses to be correct.

Methodology and Results

For this study, I analyzed the number of times leaders interacted *together* during the Minsk II negotiation and implementation process. I also analyze the amount of time each interaction occurred for when available. Time is analyzed because more time in-person than on the phone should equal more success when negotiating or implementing. While the foreign ministers of each country – Ukraine, Russia, France, and Germany – meet more frequently, only the meetings between the leaders of the states will be included. This was selected this way to analyze only one agent from each country. It is worth noting that negotiations and implementing talks (also known as the Normandy Format) occur between 4 nations, but do not include separatists although they did attend the negotiations and were signatories to the agreement.

[1] The Normandy Four meet in the "Normandy Format", entitled that as the originally met in Normandy and the format requires that the leaders of all four nations be present.

The number of meetings for the negotiation process and the number of meetings for the implementation process were compared to see which process took more interactions what type of interactions occurred. If the times were available, they were included (see Appendix D). I created a chart of all of the information I could find via searches in the Kremlin, Ukrainian Government website, and reputable news sources which include the BBC, RFERL, and Der Tagesspiegel (translated by KyivPost). I included the meeting date, time (when available), the type of meeting (in-person or over the phone), and the link to both the meeting confirmation and the time source (when available). Unfortunately, sources did not exist to confirm the time spent for one in-person meeting and one phone call meeting between the leaders. I also utilized a LexisNexis search under the date of the meeting, the key words 'Minsk' and 'negotiation' for hypothesis 1, and the key words 'Normandy format' and 'lasted' for hypothesis 2, and came back with the same results that the BBC, RFERL and Der Tagesspiegel produced.

To analyze the results, if more time is spent negotiating or discussing implementation than time spent on the phone, both signing and implementation should occur. While the sample is small, that does not mean a large sample is necessary. There are some limitations to this study, primarily the fact that 50% of the time data for implementation is missing. If time data was not published right away, it is likely we will never know how long the talks lasted. The quality of the talks can only be assumed as well, there are no notes or transcripts of what was discussed in any of the meetings.

The results are limited (see Appendix D). One meeting occurs for negotiations – it is in person and lasts 16-17 hours. Four meetings occur for the implementation stage – known as the Normandy format. The only confirmable times were 5 hours in person and a 2-hour phone call. No meeting for 2018 has happened or is planned, and it has been almost a full calendar year

since the year meeting. It was certainly surprising to find that only five interactions had occurred between the Normandy Four, and even more surprising to find that only one occurred in 2016 and none have been secured for 2018 although violations of the agreement continue.

The key finding here is that prior to signing, an exhaustive negotiation day occurred. For negotiations, 16-17 hours were spent meeting in-person, with 0 phone calls to negotiate the peace process. Hypothesis 1 is confirmed because more time was spent in-person than on the phone and holds true because the Minsk II was signed immediately following the 16-hour negotiation. The key finding for hypothesis 2 is that a 5 hour in-person meeting regarding implementation occurred and was longer than the 2-hour phone call. However, hypothesis 2 suggests the more time in-person, the more likely they are to implement, which did not occur. Hypothesis 2 fails to correctly predict this.

16 hours is actually a short period of time for an agreement. For example, the Paris Peace Accords took 1,723 days to negotiate, and 823 days to implement (BBC News). The Treaty of Versailles that officially ended World War I took 229 days to negotiate and ultimately failed (U.S. State Department Archives). Mirnes Osmanovic determined three years was insufficient time to negotiation and implement a peace agreement (Osmanovic, 2015, p.4). Having the Minsk Accords of 2014 as the precursor to the Minsk II may have assisted in the negotiation process – leaders had already worked together before and had points quite similar including a cease-fire. 16 hours in a room with other world leaders may also be an exhausting process, but one that may lead to lower threat perception, more trust, and a deeper understanding of what each agent truly wants.

Implementation does not appear to be as clear. Although the hypothesis suggests implementation *should* occur, it has not (even partially). 3 years in may not be long, depending

on who you ask. The Free Trade Agreement with Panama took 8 ½ years from launch to implementation (Freund & McDaniel, 2016). Leaders are also in disagreement as to what steps are to be done first and what specifically the amnesty and special status laws should look like. With other agreements taking much longer to solidify, perhaps the Minsk II is a viable solution *if* agents spent more time in-person and being more specific about how certain portions should be handled by the Ukrainian government and separatists. While phone calls certainly are more convenient, if implementation is a high priority for the leaders of these countries, they should view in-person meetings as an investment.

A 16-hour negotiation is promising though. A 16-hour negotiation is promising, though. It indicates no one was willing to leave the table until something was signed, sealed, and delivered to the people. It means the leaders came with an agenda – and got it done. To negotiate an agreement in under a day is no small feat, regardless of opinion on the viability of the agreement. The negotiating of the Minsk II is evidence enough that in-person meetings can work.

Suppose I stretched the information available and suggested that in the Normandy Format – both in-person meetings lasted 5 hours each and both phone calls lasted 4 hours each. That would mean there was 10 hours of in-person interaction and 4 hours on the phone, which means they should still be implementing. Why is implementation not occurring if they spend more time in-person?

First, implementation might not occur because the quality of meetings are low – leaders may be discussing issues that have no easy solution or there may be an impasse they cannot break through. It could also be that there simply has not been enough time given to discuss the implementation and be specific – there are many areas in the Minsk II that do not stipulate what specifically special laws and elections should look like, nor does it provide an exact timeline for

when each action should occur and which country makes the first move. In regard to time, 3 years just might not be enough time, but this is less convincing. If not now, then when? What purpose does delaying the Minsk II's implementation really achieve for any of the actors? This puzzle is not solved here.

From here, I move on to discussing my findings, determining why some hypotheses failed, and alternative explanations that could help explain the puzzle. I will also go in-depth regarding the limitations of these studies.

CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS

The questions I wanted to answer were simple: why sign but not implement an agreement? I selected three theories to examine these questions: realism, liberalism and constructivism. Specifically, in each theory, I utilized the concepts of power, preferences and interaction, respectively. The findings I thought I would find are not the ones I have in the end. I initially thought I would balancing occurring, with France, Ukraine and Germany increasing their military sizes to try and catch up with Russia's. The reality is that the Russia military started the year of the agreement only 30% larger and ended this year, 2018, 45% larger than the three countries *combined*. The evidence does not even suggest they purposefully increased their expenditure to catch up – at times their expenditures decreased and increased.

More surprising to me were the results for liberalism – I assumed leaders would make their preferences clear and that they would change. Things had changed in-between signing and implementing – there was an increase in fighting for a key airport as an example. However, leaders demand that Minsk II be implemented do not change over time. Each actor remains consistent in their preferences and does not change or waver in their preference. One of the areas I thought I might see change is with Petro Poroshenko and amnesty for the separatists. I imagined a leader who signs an agreement that requires amnesty for separatists would cave in and either grant the amnesty or at least stop talking about it. Poroshenko does no such thing, even stipulating he will not grant amnesty to those who have engaged in fighting, which would be the people who are supposed to be granted amnesty under the Minsk II. Section 5 of Minsk II (see Appendix A) clearly states, "ensure pardon and amnesty by enacting the law prohibiting the prosecution and punishment of persons in connection with the events that took place in certain

areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine." Poroshenko makes no indication he is even willing to abide by this section of the agreement.

I also assumed leaders had signed the agreement just to say they signed a peace agreement, but that idea gains traction with these results. Preferences do not converge – they do not converge with the leaders negotiating the agreement or with the parties responsible for implementation. The preference that did converge was for the cease-fire, and while violations occur regularly, at least leaders can say they support a cease-fire if people on the ground do not follow or abide by it.

I assumed constructivism would be problematic, data on how long meetings last is not something regulated or typically broadcasted. I assumed the 16-hour negotiation was too long and exhaustive to not produce results, and I believe that is supported by the data. It is interesting that no meetings have occurred for 2018, and the last meeting was in August 2017. No in-person meeting on the issue has happened since 2016, and that is unsual in the sense that the crisis is still going on and something must have changed to give leaders the idea that meeting in-person is not necessary. It is unclear what that change is. In the end, only two hypotheses are supported are liberalism 2 and constructivism 1.

The strongest hypothesis by far is the second liberalism hypothesis – that principle implementers must have preference convergence to implement. They didn't converge on virtually any issue and they didn't implement. This I expected based simply on Petro Poroshenko's comments when he claims separatists are terrorists. It does not explain why he signed, but it does explain why he's not willing to implement. There is also an abundance of statements from both Poroshenko and the separatists Minister of Foreign Affairs, making the hypothesis well supported.

Constructivist hypotheses end up the weakest simply because there was not a lot of data – 50% of time information was missing for the implementation period. The leaders also didn't meet regularly or consistently. While their Ministers meet regularly either in-person or on the phone, I assumed leaders get more done and quicker and therefore they would meet more often. Perhaps the failure to implement is because Ministers meet more routinely – if leaders can be more expeditious then their meetings would get more done in smaller amounts of time. This is certainly a theory that should be looked into.

The realist hypotheses do not work because Germany, France, and Ukraine do not try to balance. I believe this is directly and specifically because they do not have to. When I added the US in just as a comparison, the data changes completely. The alliance then became the larger military…and the larger threat. It does not totally prove that Russia is trying to balance either though. The Russian military decreases, then increases, and then decreases again their total weaponry and expenditure. They do increase their total number of active military members, missiles, and anti-tank/anti-infrastructure…things that would become important if they needed to attack. On the whole, the US increases their military size routinely and made a large increase in 2017 – increasing their total number of weapons by a whopping 93% (Russia increased that year too by 103%). I believe the realist results indicate the US has a much larger role to play than merely not being a signatory to the Minsk II. When it comes to whether or not Germany, France and Ukraine will balance, it seems to depend entirely on if the US is willing to balance or not.

There are limitations with some of the data and evidence. For realism, one could argue having to double the size of the military in order to be considered balancing is problematic….and too large a number. A military 20% smaller could perhaps still balance and effectively defend (if not fight) another military. Number of weapons and expenditure both come with caveats as well.

Number of weapons does not indicate if they are new or old, or if the other military has weaponry that can effectively fight those weapons. Expenditures for one year usually include buying contracts for weapons the country will not receive for 2-10 years, so it does not impact power right away.

The COW data set examining shares of total power between countries only went to 2012 unfortunately. Had it gone through at least 2017, I would have included it without a doubt. That data set is robust, tested and re-tested multiple times, looks at several factors that contribute to 'power' as we know it, and looks at more than just the capacity of the military and has solid theory behind it. If they continue to do the testing and data through to the present, it would be highly interesting to see what results they find.

With liberalism, what leaders say in the public may not always be what they mean or say behind closed doors, but there is no way to measure or find out if that change occurs. I believe what is more relative to this study is how frequently they discuss the issues related to Minsk II. France especially does not talk about the Minsk II a lot which could signal how far removed he is from the process. In the Franco-German alliance, the frequency of mentioning the Minsk II is much larger with Angela Merkel and I wonder if that alliance is equal in terms of power and stature. I didn't look at interviews with Angela Merkel, and I wonder who gets asked more questions about the Minsk II and what that says about the power dynamic between the two. That would be an interesting study.

The largest missing piece in the preferences is that of the domestic actors – and it was shocking that statements didn't exist for French, German and Russian political parties. For everyone but Petro Poroshenko, it appeared like the leaders had a lot of say in what policies they put forward. It would be unwise to do a preference chart of domestic actors, simply because 2/3

of the domestic actors do not have consolidated opinions on virtually every issue mentioned in this preference chart. It would also be unreliable for Russia…if we could even say they have different political parties that Vladimir Putin listens to and would impact his policy preferences.

Constructivism just simply lacked the data. It makes sense, the data is not something anyone could get access to unless they work in those offices of the leader. We also cannot conclude what the quality of each meeting was because transcripts are not available. We know the 16-hour meeting was a productive and successful one, and the infrequently meetings since have not produced desirable results, so what changed?

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS

There are some conclusions to be made about why the Minsk II was signed. Even if the cease-fire is not routinely adhered to, fighting has decreased. It is not as if there are bombings and deaths every day and maybe that is a success and a result of signing which would align with the preferences of the leaders. Signing produced a slightly successful result in terms of decreasing violence. If you want a cease-fire, you will sign for a cease-fire, but that does not mean you will get a cease-fire. For future (and past) peace agreements, that idea can apply. Leaders can genuinely want something and sign for it to happen, but the ability to implement that policy could be limited. If we consider the constructivist data to be enough, it suggests meeting in-person and not stopping until you have an agreement is the best way to do a peace agreement. Be exhaustive in your negotiations, and ensure that everyone comes to the table willing to stay all night to work on it. 16 hours negotiating also signals to me that these leaders really wanted a peace agreement, even if it has not worked out.

I believe the most important conclusion I could have possibly found was in the liberalism hypothesis about implementation. Germany, France, and Russia were not considered implementers because they had no legal grounds to change anything politically. The people empowered to make changes through this agreement were separatists and the Ukrainian government. The truth is that based on the evidence they did not want to implement. The opinions of non-implementers made no difference on whether or not Ukraine and separatists would comply. The strongest hypothesis is the implementation hypothesis through the liberalist theory.

The take away is that outsider preferences will not equate to compliance by implementers. “Influence”, it appears, can only go so far. This may especially true for Ukraine.

Poroshenko asks for military aid and money to help reform his country, and he does very little reform probably because he didn't get any money. Countries will sign an agreement but still hold their hand out for money, and withhold reform when they do not receive the money, based on the preference chart. President Poroshenko also speaks about military aid from the US, which tells us peace is not the only solution he is still eyeing. For other peace agreements, monitors should not assume a peace agreement means peace is going to happen. If there is a preference to fight, fighting may still occur.

Not being a party to the Minsk II should mean that your role in solving the conflict is limited, but that may not be the case for the United States. With Petro Poroshenko still clinging to hope that the US will arm Ukraine lethally, it supports the claim that the Poroshenko may not implement because other options remain open. In the end, the preferences that may matter most to Petro Poroshenko may be preferences that lie outside of the Minsk II, and thus outside of the scope of this paper.

What can we say about the European Union as a whole? Maybe this agreement would have looked differently had it been the European Union negotiating instead of two member states. The Ukrainian government is heavily invested in the idea of becoming an EU member, and maybe they would have been keener on implementation if it meant appealing to the broader EU community and appearing as a capable and willing partner. In the end however, we know the European Union only wants to deal in sanctions, and that indicates an EU lacking one voice, because sanctions are relatively easy to get behind and implement. For a union that talks about peace as a principle, it showed very little willingness to enforce that principle with states inside the Neighborhood looking at membership in due time. For the Common Security and Defense Policy – it would appear that national governments are more willing and capable of putting forth

effort, time and resources into negotiating peace in their region especially. The Ukrainian Crisis is perhaps one of the only issues that occurred so close to the European Union's border that the Common Security and Defense Policy should have been activated, but was not. The power of the intergovernmental community is diminished when it cannot reasonably activate and act collectively in situations where it should have been expected to. Even more troublesome is that very few expected the European Union to respond to this crisis as one body, signaling not only a lack of power, but lack of legitimacy to act.

The primary goal of this study was to fill a huge gap in scholarly work on the Minsk II. It is still astounding that limited work has been published specifically regarding this peace agreement, mostly coming from think tanks. I believe this work has laid a foundation for future research. The starting point should not be with military capabilities, as here that was an utter disappointment. The starting point should not be with interactions either, as the data is really lacking. Preferences, the liberalist point, will be increasingly relevant, especially comparing implementers versus non-implementers. I would argue even going back to old and failed peace agreements where there were these two groups of actors would be an interesting research topic. There is still a large gap in literature – one study of three theories is not enough. I hope this foundation encourages more scholarly work on the subject.

This research also offers new and compelling questions. What is the impact of the US on the implementation of peace agreements they have not signed yet have a military presence near? What is the impact of US military aid on peace agreements (even ones they have not been signatories to)? What impact do non-implementers have on implementation? How can nations encourage other nations to successfully implement peace agreements? Is there a connection between not signaling a preference in a signed agreement and that preference not occurring? For

the Ukrainian issue, what impact do the far-right parties have on implementation? How much power and control over the separatists does Putin really have?

In terms of theory –liberalism and constructivism have other concepts that can explore this agreement. Liberalism has bargaining theory and could even look at the impact of international institutions or the OSCE to find an impact. Constructivism has many avenues of looking at this agreement – rules, norms, constructed society, etc.

I am left with more questions than answers, and more rejected hypotheses than confirmed ones, and while one may consider 2 out of 6 a colossal failure, I am reminded that scientists should celebrate failure. Not all studies solve world hungry or end wars. This study opened more avenues for study not less. Null results are still results, and this research may help other political scientists avoid avenues such as power (or power, at least in the way I studied it) that are virtual dead ends. I am reminded that 65% of studies in our field with null results are never written up, and this paper is one that will buck that norm (Kluger, 2014). There is no such thing as a failed experiment – what does not work is a necessary step to learning what does.

For the Minsk II, we have seen that not all preferences are equal, and who is signaling (or not signaling) the preference matters. I have shown that a bigger military does not mean they will not argue for peace (in fact by the realist and liberalist explanation combined we see that the person with the largest army is the most vocal signer), There are many new avenues to explore the Minsk II and relate it to the Ukrainian crisis at large. I think looking at the Ukrainian people as a whole, setting aside what the Europeans think and feel, will be monumentally important to answering the numerous questions surrounding the Ukrainian crisis.

I originally asked, why sign and not implement? I have found preliminary answers. Leaders can prefer peace and have no intention of implementing steps to peace. Leaders can sign

an agreement and have very different conceptions of what implementation looks like (a lesson to future negotiators: be as specific as possible so that leaders do not assume to know what implementation looks like). Leaders can sign because they took the time to negotiate an agreement, as simple as that sounds. Why sign – because you want to sign. Why not implement – because you do not want to. Yes, it does take an experiment such as compiling over 200 pages of statements from leaders to get that simple of an answer, but then again it is science and the simplicity of an answer hides the months it takes to find that answer.

For the people of Ukraine, I am less optimistic. There are many issues beyond the Minsk II that plague them. Seeing how many preferences the separatists and Ukrainian President has, and how little those preferences meant to Angela Merkel, Francois Hollande, and Vladimir Putin brings me back to where literature on the Ukrainian Crisis started – as a geopolitical fight for Ukraine. I am not convinced by any means that Ukraine has any intention of being used as a toy in a geopolitical fight, but for three world leaders to ignore the preferences of the Ukrainian President and separatists fighting what they believe to be a just fight for political rights, is astounding. For those who have written on the Ukrainian Crisis as if it is a geopolitical fight – I will argue and my data has proven these people are more than puppets in the game of geopolitics. These people will not do merely what is demanded of them by other world leaders, and their voices matter just as much as their actions do. The German, French and Russian leader, clearly need to do more listening and less talking in what few meetings they do have together with Petro Poroshenko and separatists, otherwise this crisis and the fighting will not end and their preference of implementation will not happen either.

I am also left thinking of a darker theory – what if the Minsk II was designed to fail? Preferences clearly diverged, and parties to the agreement are spending less time discussing

implementation together (and have yet to meet or schedule a meeting for 2018), it is not a far reach to suggest these nations simply did not believe in peace as an option. Russia violated the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and Crimea was not an issue listed on the Minsk II. Parties to this agreement may be unwilling to give Russia any further leverage in Ukraine, and may truly believe peace is not possible unless Russia backtracks (something very unlikely to occur). While I strongly doubt that Germany and France are interested in pushing Russia out militarily, the Ukrainian government still is and as this paper just proved that nothing in Ukraine will be done without the Ukrainian governments desire. Especially if the United States' eyes turn back towards Ukraine, military intervention and escalation is not off the table.

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APPENDIX A: MINSK II AGREEMENT FULL TEXT

Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements[2]

1. Immediate and comprehensive ceasefire in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine and its strict implementation as of 15 February 2015, 12am local time.

2. Withdrawal of all heavy weapons by both sides by equal distances in order to create a security zone of at least 50km wide from each other for the artillery systems of caliber of 100 and more, a security zone of 70km wide for MLRS and 140km wide for MLRS Tornado-S, Uragan, Smerch and Tactical Missile Systems (Tochka, Tochka U): -for the Ukrainian troops: from the de facto line of contact; -for the armed formations from certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine: from the line of contact according to the Minsk Memorandum of Sept. 19th, 2014; The withdrawal of the heavy weapons as specified above is to start on day 2 of the ceasefire at the latest and be completed within 14 days. The process shall be facilitated by the OSCE and supported by the Trilateral Contact Group.

3. Ensure effective monitoring and verification of the ceasefire regime and the withdrawal of heavy weapons by the OSCE from day 1 of the withdrawal, using all technical equipment necessary, including satellites, drones, radar equipment, etc.

4. Launch a dialogue, on day 1 of the withdrawal, on modalities of local elections in accordance with Ukrainian legislation and the Law of Ukraine "On interim local self-government order in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions" as well as on the future regime of these areas based on this law. Adopt promptly, by no later than 30 days after the date of signing of this document a Resolution of the Parliament of Ukraine specifying the area enjoying a special regime, under the Law of Ukraine "On interim self-government order in certain areas of the

[2] United Nations Peacemaker 2015

Donetsk and Luhansk regions", based on the line of the Minsk Memorandum of September 19, 2014.

5. Ensure pardon and amnesty by enacting the law prohibiting the prosecution and punishment of persons in connection with the events that took place in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

6. Ensure release and exchange of all hostages and unlawfully detained persons, based on the principle "all for all". This process is to be finished on the day 5 after the withdrawal at the latest.

7. Ensure safe access, delivery, storage, and distribution of humanitarian assistance to those in need, on the basis of an international mechanism.

8. Definition of modalities of full resumption of socio-economic ties, including social transfers such as pension payments and other payments (incomes and revenues, timely payments of all utility bills, reinstating taxation within the legal framework of Ukraine). To this end, Ukraine shall reinstate control of the segment of its banking system in the conflict-affected areas and possibly an international mechanism to facilitate such transfers shall be established.

9. Reinstatement of full control of the state border by the government of Ukraine throughout the conflict area, starting on day 1 after the local elections and ending after the comprehensive political settlement (local elections in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions on the basis of the Law of Ukraine and constitutional reform) to be finalized by the end of 2015, provided that paragraph 11 has been implemented in consultation with and upon agreement by representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group.

10. Withdrawal of all foreign armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine under monitoring of the OSCE. Disarmament of all illegal groups.

11. Carrying out constitutional reform in Ukraine with a new constitution entering into force by the end of 2015 providing for decentralization as a key element (including a reference to the specificities of certain areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, agreed with the representatives of these areas), as well as adopting permanent legislation on the special status of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in line with measures as set out in the footnote until the end of 2015.

12. Based on the Law of Ukraine "On interim local self-government order in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions", questions related to local elections will be discussed and agreed upon with representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group. Elections will be held in accordance with relevant OSCE standards and monitored by OSCE/ODIHR.

13. Intensify the work of the Trilateral Contact Group including through the establishment of working groups on the implementation of relevant aspects of the Minsk agreements. They will reflect the composition of the Trilateral Contact Group.

APPENDIX B: REALISM MILITARY DATA

Russia	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Expenditure	$84b	$66.4b	$57.2b	$61.7b	
Total Weapons	23,366	17,234	17,597	35,753	30,856
Total Weapons per 100,000	16.24	11.95	12.19	25.13	
Increase/Decrease that Year (Weapons)		-26%	2.10%	103%	-13%
Separatists Weapons	N/C	N/C	N/C	34	33
Ukraine					
Expenditure	$4.39b	$3.6b	$2.55b	$2.73b	
Total Weapons	4,613	3,426	3,557	5,697	5,750
Total Weapons per 100,000	10.18	7.5	7.9	12.93	
Increase/Decrease that Year (Weapons)		-25%	3.80%	60%	1.10%
Germany					
Expenditure	$46.20	$39.8b	$41.6b	$44.6b	
Total Weapons	3,585	3,093	2,775	5,766	4,228
Total Weapons per 100,000	4.42	3.78	3.35	7.15	
Increase/Decrease that Year (Weapons)		-13%	-10.20%	107%	-26%
France					
Expenditure	$52.1b	$55.3b	$44.2b	$46.1b	
Total Weapons	5,964	5,658	4,720	7,716	7,149
Total Weapons per 100,000	8.99	8.49	7.05	11.42	
Increase/Decrease that Year (Weapons)		-5%	-16%	63%	-7%
United States					
Expenditure	$654b	$596b	$664b	$683b	
Total Weapons	28,562	28,260	28,679	55,572	55,745
Total Weapons per 100,000	9.0	8.8	8.9	17.15	17.06
Increase/Decrease that Year (Weapons)		-1.05%	1.48%	93.77%	.31%
U/F/G Alliance					
Total Weapons	14,162	12,176	11,052	18,639	17,127
Size Compared to Russia	-40%	-30%	-38%	-48%	-45%
U/F/G/US Alliance					
Total Weapons	42,824	40,436	39,731	74,211	72,872
Size Compared to Russia	54%	42%	44%	48%	42%
Russia/Separatists					
Total Weapons	23,366	17,234	17,597	35,787	30,889
Size Compared to U/F/G Alliance	40%	30%	38%	48%	45%
Size Compared to U/F/G/US Alliance	-54%	-42%	-44%	-48%	-42%

Russia	2014[3]	2015[4]	2016[5]	2017[6]	2018[7]	Net Change (+/-)
Active	845,000	771,000	798,000	831,000	900,000	6.50%
Reserve	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	0%
Submarines	64	59	63	62	62	-3.10%
Destroyers	18	18	18	15	15	-16.60%
Frigates	9	10	10	12	13	44.40%
Landing Ships & Crafts	39	45	47	47	47	20.50%
Aircraft Carriers	1	1	1	1	1	0%
Cruisers	5	6	6	5	5	0%
Non-Nuclear ICBMs	0	12	132	132	156	156%
Nuclear ICBMs	356	378	332	324	313	-12.07%
Armored Vehicles	10,500	6,800	7,112	25,134	19,617	86.82%
Maintenance Vehicles	25	26	26	24	25	0%
Anti Tank/Anti Infrastructure	16	127	117	27	25	56.25%
Artillery	5,837	5,845	4,581	4,916	5,293	-9.31%
Mine Warfare	53	53	45	45	43	-18.86%
Air Defense	3,540	2,328	2,800	2,632	2,646	-25.25%
Aircrafts	1,571	334	1,352	1,327	1,468	-6.55%
Helicopters	1,254	1,097	854	937	1,009	-19.53%
Drones	6	8	8	6	6	0%
Satellites & Radars	72	87	93	107	112	55.50%

[3] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2014
[4] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2015
[5] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2016
[6] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2017
[7] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2018

Ukraine	2014[8]	2015[9]	2016[10]	2017[11]	2018[12]	Net Change (+/-)
Active	129,950	121,500	204,000	204,000	204,000	56.98%
Reserve	1,000,000	1,000,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	-10%
Submarines	1	0	0	0	0	-100%
Destroyers	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Frigates	1	1	1	1	1	0%
Landing Ships & Crafts	5	4	4	4	3	-40%
Aircraft Carriers	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Cruisers	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Non-Nuclear ICBMs	0	0	90	90	90	N/C
Nuclear ICBMs	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Armored Vehicles	670	628	642	3,125	3,179	374.47%
Maintenance Vehicles	58	58	57	7	7	-87.93%
Anti Tank/Anti Infrastructure	3	3	4	6	6	100%
Artillery	2,080	1,980	1,980	1,857	1,857	-10.72%
Mine Warfare	5	4	1	1	1	-80%
Air Defense	1,260	324	325	326	326	-74.12%
Aircrafts	235	207	234	155	156	-33.67%
Helicopters	293	206	217	123	122	-58.36%
Drones	0	9	0	0	0	0%
Satellites & Radars	2	2	2	2	2	0%

[8] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2014
[9] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2015
[10] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2016
[11] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2017
[12] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2018

France	2014[13]	2015[14]	2016[15]	2017[16]	2018[17]	Net Change (+/-)
Active	222,200	215,000	208,950	202,950	202,700	-8.77%
Reserve	29,650	27,650	27,650	28,100	32,300	8.93%
Submarines	10	10	10	10	10	0%
Destroyers	12	11	11	12	11	-8.33%
Frigates	11	11	11	11	11	0%
Landing Ships & Crafts	45	43	42	41	38	-15.55%
Aircraft Carriers	1	1	1	1	1	0%
Cruisers	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Non-Nuclear ICBMs	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Nuclear ICBMs	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Armored Vehicles	3,311	3,310	2,657	5,142	5,158	55.78%
Maintenance Vehicles	312	219	189	193	193	-38%
Anti Tank/Anti Infrastructure	325	325	325	326	297	-8.61%
Artillery	532	323	298	263	263	-50.56%
Mine Warfare	18	18	18	18	18	0%
Air Defense	16	20	20	22	22	37.50%
Aircrafts	685	727	436	427	424	-38.10%
Helicopters	588	540	599	604	593	0.85%
Drones	24	26	29	31	35	45.83%
Satellites & Radars	74	74	74	75	75	1.35%

[13] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2014
[14] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2015
[15] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2016
[16] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2017
[17] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2018

Germany	2014[18]	2015[19]	2016[20]	2017[21]	2018[22]	Net Change (+/-)
Active	186,450	181,550	178,600	176,800	178,600	-4.20%
Reserve	40,320	45,000	31,700	27,600	27,900	-30.80%
Submarines	4	5	5	6	6	50%
Destroyers	0	7	7	7	7	0%
Frigates	11	9	8	8	7	-36.36%
Landing Ships & Crafts	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Aircraft Carriers	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Cruisers	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Non-Nuclear ICBMs	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Nuclear ICBMs		0	0	0	0	0%
Armored Vehicles	5,780	1,576	1,406	4,422	3,014	-47.85%
Maintenance Vehicles	925	342	222	201	237	-74.37%
Anti Tank/Anti Infrastructure	448	86	64	65	102	-77.23%
Artillery	2,884	298	223	223	214	-92.57%
Mine Warfare	58	34	34	33	26	-55.17%
Air Defense	1,322	26	24	40	40	-96.97%
Aircrafts	1,135	458	243	217	219	-80.70%
Helicopters	1,285	128	365	326	131	-89.80%
Drones	40	16	85	129	136	240%
Satellites & Radars	184	108	89	89	89	-51.63%

[18] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2014
[19] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2015
[20] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2016
[21] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2017
[22] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2018

United States	2014[23]	2015[24]	2016[25]	2017[26]	2018[27]	Net Change (+/-)
Active	1,492,200	1,433,150	1,381,250	1,347,300	1,384,400	-7.22%
Reserve	843,750	854,900	840,500	865,050	857,950	1.68%
Submarines	72	73	71	68	68	-5.55%
Destroyers	62	67	62	62	64	3.22%
Frigates	14	11	4	8	9	-35.71%
Landing Ships & Crafts	290	290	298	353	315	8.62%
Aircraft Carriers	11	11	11	11	11	0%
Cruisers	22	22	22	23	23	4.54%
Non-Nuclear ICBMs	0	0	0	3	2	200%
Nuclear ICBMs	450	0	450	450	409	-9.11%
Armored Vehicles	4,559	4,559	4,559	32,407	32,296	610.83%
Maintenance Vehicles	1,654	1,654	1,654	1,808	2,212	33.73%
Anti Tank/Anti Infrastructure	1,617	1,607	1,607	1,239	1,239	-23.37%
Artillery	7,405	7,429	7,429	6,833	6,894	-6.90%
Mine Warfare	13	11	11	11	11	-15.38%
Air Defense	1,296	1,207	1,207	1,103	1,186	-8.48%
Aircrafts	3,946	3,925	3,967	3,880	3,998	1.31%
Helicopters	6,074	6,051	5,777	5,741	5,402	-11.06%
Drones	627	883	1,057	1,116	1,139	81.65%
Satellites & Radars	452	460	493	456	467	3.31%

[23] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2014
[24] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2015
[25] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2016
[26] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2017
[27] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2018

Definitions[28] & Abbreviations[29] for Military Balance Tables

Active – also known as active duty – full time duty in military service

Reserve – group of military personnel who are not committed to battle initially, units that are available to address unforeseen situations.

Submarines (SS) - all vessels designed to operate primarily under water.

Destroyers (DD) – a fast, long-endurance warship intended to escort larger vessels in a fleet and defend them against powerful short-range attackers.

Frigates (FFG) – ships used to protect other warships and merchant-marine ships, especially as anti-submarine warfare combatants.

Landing Crafts (LUC) - a craft employed in amphibious operations, designed for carrying troops and their equipment, and for beaching, unloading, retracting and resupplying.

Aircraft Carriers (CV) – a warship designed to support and operate aircraft, engage in attacks on targets afloat or ashore, and engage in sustained operations in support of other forces.

Cruisers (CA/CL) - a type of warship

Non-Nuclear ICBMs (ICBM) – a long range ballistic missile with a range capacity greater than 3,000 nautical miles.

Nuclear ICBMs (NBC ICBM) – a long range ballistic missile with nuclear properties.

Armored Vehicles (AIFV) – armored combat vehicles with a combat weight of at least six metric tons.

Maintenance Vehicles (AEV/ARV/VLB/MW) – Also known as engineering and maintenance vehicles, includes armored engineer vehicles, armored repair and recovery vehicles, assault bridging and mine warfare vehicles.

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[28] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2018 & Department of Defense 2018
[29] International Institute for Strategic Studies 2018

Anti-Tank/Anti-Infrastructure (AT) – Guns, guided weapons and recoilless rifles designed to engage armored vehicles and battlefield hardened targets.

Artillery (ARTY) – weapons (including guns, howitzers, gun/howitzers, multiple rocket launchers, mortars and gun/mortars) with a caliber greater than 100mm for artillery pieces and 80mm and above for mortars, capable of engaging ground targets with indirect fire.

Mine Warfare (ML/MH/MC) - all surface vessels configured primarily for mine laying (ML) or countermeasures. Countermeasures vessels are either: sweepers (MS), which are designed to locate and destroy mines in an area; hunters (MH), which are designed to locate and destroy individual mines; or countermeasures vessels (MC), which combine both roles.

Air Defense (AD) – guns and surface-to-air-missile (SAM) launchers designed to engage fixed-wing, rotary-wing and unmanned aircraft. Missiles are further classified by maximum notional engagement range: point- defense (up to 10km); short-range (10–30km); medium-range (30–75km); and long-range (75km+). Systems primarily intended to intercept missiles rather than aircraft are categorized separately as Missile Defense

Aircrafts (AC) – a machine capable of flight

Helicopters (HEL) - a rotorcraft that lifts and thrusts, allowing the helicopter to take off and land vertically, as well as to hover.

Drones (UAV) – remotely piloted or controlled unmanned fixed- or rotary-wing systems.

Satellites (SAT) & Radars – Radar is an object detection system that utilizes radio waves. Satellites are any object placed within the earth's orbit.

APPENDIX C: PREFERENCES CHARTS

	Angela Merkel	Francois Hollande	Petro Poroshenko	DPR/ LPK	Vladimir Putin
Amend Constitution	0	0	0	0	1
Amnesty for Separatists	0	0	1	1	2
Balancing/Stability	10	0	9	0	0
Cease Fire/Non-Military Solution	5	6	4	0	1
Coordinate w/ Separatists	0	0	0	4	6
Decentralization	0	0	1	3	4
Defending Against Russian Aggression	0	0	4	0	0
European Union Actorness	1	0	0	0	0
Free Elections	1	1	3	2	2
Implement Minsk	3	3	5	7	8
International Law/Institutions	6	0	3	0	1
Political Change in Ukraine	0	0	3	0	3
Principles/Norms	5	0	0	0	0
Request Financial Support for Reforms	0	0	1	0	0
Request US/EU Military Aid	0	0	1	0	0
Special Status for Separatist Regions	0	0	0	12	0
Territorial Integrity	8	1	4	0	1

Total Number of Codes: 17
Total Number of Codes with Majority Convergence: 7/17 (41%)
Total Number of Codes for Implementers: 14
Total Number of Codes for Implementers with Majority Convergence: 3/14 (21%)

Country	**Germany**	**France**	**Ukraine**	**Separatists**	**Russia**
Preference #1	Stability in Ukraine	Cease-fire	Stability in Ukraine	Special Status for Separatist regions	Implement Minsk
Preference #2	Russia must respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine	Implement Minsk	Implement Minsk	Implement Minsk	Ukrainian government must work with separatists
Preference #3	Russia must respect International Law	Russia must respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine	Russia must respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine	Ukrainian government must work with separatists	Decentralization

Total Number of Slots: 15
Total Number of Majority Convergence of Preferences: 7/15 (46%)
Total Number of Slots for Implementers: 6
Total Number of Majority Convergence of Preferences for Implementers: 2/6 (33%)

APPENDIX D: MEETING EVIDENCE

Meeting	Date	Time (If Available)	Type (In-person or phone)
Minsk II Negotiations	11-Feb-15	16-17 hours[30]	In-person[31]
Normandy Format (Leaders)	2-Oct-15	5 hours[32]	In-person[33]
Normandy Format (Leaders)	19-Oct-16	N/A	In-person[34]
Normandy Format (Leaders)	24-Jul-17	2 hours[35]	Phone
Normandy Format (Leaders)	22-Aug-17	N/A	Phone[36]

[30] RadioFreeEurope 2016
[31] BBC 2015
[32] RadioFreeEurope 2016
[33] Kremlin 2015
[34] Kremlin 2016
[35] Interfax-Ukraine 2017
[36] Official Website of the President of Ukraine 2017

APPENDIX E: HYPOTHESES TABLE

Theory	Hypotheses	Result	Supported/Rejected
Realism 1:	If Ukraine, France, and Germany balance against Russia, then Minsk II will be signed	U/F/G do not balance against Russia	Rejected
Realism 2:	If Ukraine, France and Germany balance against Russia, then Minsk will be implemented.	U/F/G do not balance against Russia	Rejected
Liberalism 1:	If majority of actors' win-sets overlap, Minsk II will be signed	Majority of win-sets do not overlap	Rejected
Liberalism 2:	If majority of implementers' win-sets overlap, Minsk II will be implemented	Majority of win-sets do not overlap	Supported
Constructivism 1:	If leaders spend more time in-person interacting about negotiating an agreement, Minsk II will be signed.	Majority of time spent in-person	Supported
Constructivism 2:	If leaders spend more time interacting in-person about implementing the Minsk II, Minsk II will be implemented	Majority of time spent in-person	Rejected