



Prisoners in Armed Conflict

A Case Study of the Russian Objectives of Taking Civilians in
the Contemporary Conflict with Ukraine

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Abstract

This thesis set out to analyse the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, specifically the issue of Russia seizing civilian prisoners. The analysis builds its foundation upon the writings of Mary Kaldor, and more precisely on her theoretical framework of 'New War Theory'. To both understand the Russian objectives and test how well Kaldor's framework explains the behaviour I set out to answer the research question of; *What can be understood as the Russian objectives for taking civilian prisoners in the contemporary conflict with Ukraine, and to what extent do the findings fit within the framework of new war theory?* Two operational questions were also utilised to guide the analysis further. Through the gathering of a varied ambit of sources, ranging from interviews to articles by other scholars I found that one could not conclusively argue that all of the criteria for the Russian conduct and proposed objectives fall within the frame of 'New Wars' as only the 'goals' and 'methods' bore a striking resemblance.

Keywords: New War Theory, Russia-Ukraine War, Civilians in War, Prisoners in War, Deportation of Civilians

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List of Abbreviations

API	Additional Protocol I
CPA	Centre for Preventive Action
EU	European Union
GCIII	Geneva Convention III
GCIV	Geneva Convention IV
ICC	International Criminal Court
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
MIHR	Media Initiative of Human Rights
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OQ	Operational Question
PACS	Peace and Conflict Studies
POWs	Prisoners of War
ROC	Russian Orthodox Church
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States

1. Introduction

Since Russia invaded Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022, not only have Ukrainian combatants been captured, but also civilians, including children (Del Monte & Barlaoura, 2023). Many of them have either been held in detention or filtration camps or prisons on land owned or occupied by Russia (Government of Canada, 2024). The abducted children may also face the fear of being forcibly adopted by Russian families or sent to psychological ‘rehabilitation’ camps (Del Monte & Barlaoura, 2023, 3). The specific number of prisoners is impossible to account for yet many estimations, trustworthy or not, have been given. By the summer of 2022, Polish special services data estimated that over 1.5 million Ukrainians had been sent to prisons or filtration camps and later, in 2023, Russian media said the number of children was approximately 730.000 (Ibid.). Ukrainian authorities state the number of identified children to be around 20.000, however, they “believe the real number is probably 10 times that” (Walker, 2024). Whoever is closest to the correct number of prisoners is insignificant to this thesis. Instead, what brought this topic to mind was the fact that both sides of the conflict are stating that civilians, including many children, have been captured and sent to camps which is in turn, a war crime indicated in Articles 8(2)(a)(vii) and 8(2)(b)(viii) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC, 2021).

Taking prisoners in conflict has been a part of warfare for centuries (Richardson, 1970, 47f). Still, as Russian officials are not only holding Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) but also boasting about taking civilians, including children (Walker, 2024), there is a need to try and grasp the logic behind the Russian acts. Bringing insight into the understanding of these actions is not based on the fact that Russia seems proud of its actions, but on the action of not merely taking combatant prisoners. While investigating this, the main aim is to examine to what extent the Russian objectives fit within Mary Kaldor’s framework of new wars, a debated concept within PACS (Peace and Conflict Studies) which represents a shifting nature of armed conflicts at large, including civilians being more vulnerable to violence (Kaldor, 2013a). However, a new nature of imprisonment emerging in conflict, in line with Mary Kaldor’s theory on new wars, will not be tested as it would require research on more than one actor or conflict. Nevertheless, this thesis may hint at possibilities in future conflicts, at least those that involve Russian interests.

1.1 Research Problem

For many centuries it has been the nature of conflict to take prisoners of war (POWs) (Richardson, 1970, 47f). For example, not only was the Second World War the most brutal in terms of the number of deaths, but also due to the approximately 35 million soldiers and other military personnel who were held captive under mostly grim circumstances (MacKenzie, 1994: 487). The definition of POWs which will be used for this thesis, to distinguish combatant and civilian prisoners, is as follows: “A combatant who falls into the hands of an adverse party to a conflict in the course of an international armed conflict is a prisoner of war” (Bouchet-Saulnier, 2015a). The definition will be further addressed in Chapter Two, the Background of this thesis.

However, in more recent wars, or as Mary Kaldor describes them, new wars, the environment is changing and civilians are becoming more interconnected, harder to distinguish from combatants, and more frequently targeted by violence (Kaldor, 2013a, 53 & 125), further explained in Chapter three and four. As civilians are becoming more subjected to violence, one could also argue that they are more prone to becoming prisoners in conflict. After additional reading on the matter, I concluded that it would be a suitable research problem for exploration due to the small amount of previous research investigating the Russian-Ukraine war since 2022, from the perspective of new warfare. This further includes the lack of research on holding civilian prisoners in the armed conflict and how the actions of doing so align with the framework of new war theory. Therefore, this thesis will further address the issue of Russia’s objectives for taking civilian prisoners and to what extent they fit within the framework of the new war theory.

1.2 Aim

By conducting a qualitative constructivist case study, the thesis will attempt to apply Russia’s reasons for taking prisoners to the framework of new warfare, thus, the lens for investigation will be Kaldor’s new war theory (2013a). Additionally, the theoretical framework of the thesis will be based on Kaldor’s logic of new wars, introducing terms of actors, goals, methods, and funding further explained in the fourth Chapter. I find it challenging yet rewarding to see how Kaldor’s logic understands a more specific and focused aspect of warfare strategy, i.e. taking civilian prisoners. Thus, through the lens of Mary Kaldor’s new war theory, I aim to investigate Russian objectives for taking civilian prisoners in the conflict

with Ukraine since February 24th, 2022, to explore to what extent the interpretation fits within the framework of new warfare.

As both adults and children are held against their will, they will all be regarded as prisoners in this thesis, irrespective of whether they are held in camps, prisons, or ‘adopted’ by Russian families. When referring to prisoners throughout the thesis, I will not be talking about POWs unless clearly stated so.

1.3 Research Question

The aim is, as mentioned, to first investigate how the Russian objectives for taking civilian prisoners in Ukraine can be understood from the analytical framework of the logic of new war theory, engaging the terms of actors, goals, methods, and forms of funding. Thereafter, I aim to summarise the concluded interpretation in order to analyse to what extent it fits and communicates with the framework of new war theory on a larger scale i.e. new warfare. Therefore, the overarching conceptual research question follows:

What can be understood as the Russian objectives for taking civilian prisoners in the contemporary conflict with Ukraine, and to what extent do the findings fit within the framework of new war theory?

Two operational questions (OQ) will guide the analysis and address the research question above. The first serves as a base for the following one by identifying and describing Russia’s objectives for taking civilian prisoners from the framework of new war theory and its logic, which will be further explained in Chapters Three and Four. Thus, OQ1 is as follows:

- *How do the new war theory framework of a) actors, b) goals, c) methods, and d) forms of finance make sense of the Russian objective to take civilian prisoners?*

The purpose of OQ2 is to analyse the key themes and issues discovered in OQ1 including answering the second part of the research question. This further involves embarking on aspects of new war theory which engage civilian detail including civilians being more frequently targeted by violence and civilian versus combatant distinctions and

features of warfare. Additionally, this will test the sufficiency of the new war theory framework on a more specific action i.e. taking civilian prisoners. Accordingly, OQ2 follows:

- *To what extent does the interpretation of Russian objectives communicate with characteristics of new warfare?*

1.4 Relevance for Peace and Conflict Studies

To achieve peace we also have to understand armed conflict (Dar, 2017, 50), and to accomplish that as many perspectives as possible are preferable. This thesis only touches on a small piece of the larger puzzle of the complexities of civilians in armed conflict. Yet, I hope to contribute to the debate within Peace and Conflict Studies which tries to make sense of these complexities and the evolving concept of warfare and new war theory. More specifically, I aim to contribute to the debate of warfare regarding civilians' role in conflict and how they may be used or targeted by violence.

Looking at a state taking prisoners might not have direct relevance for Peace and Conflict Studies, however, when applying it to a setting of armed conflict it will communicate directly with theory and topics within PACS (Dar, 2017, 47ff). Not only communicate with new war theory and constructivism as used in this thesis, but also more fundamental thoughts and peace research such as how prisoners in armed conflict may relate to Johan Galtung's concepts of direct, structural (Galtung, 1969, 172ff), and cultural violence (Galtung, 1990). Direct violence which refers to prisoners' possible experience of physical harm when the act of taking them in the first place might be the consequence and objective of structural oppression legitimised as necessary by Russia through cultural ties and the 'de-Nazification' of Ukraine (Masters, 2023), i.e. cultural violence. Looking at peace as Galtung describes being the "absence of violence" (1969, 168), peace and violence are interconnected and therefore the thesis will also be relevant to peace research in general in the sense that it "concerns the question of violence" (Wallensteen, 2011, 15).

1.5 Delimitations

The approach of this thesis has undergone several delimitations, however, I will start with one of the limitations I could not control. The data used for this thesis will be limited to English or English translations. As the conflict mainly involves Russia and Ukraine it would have been of interest to look into data such as news articles and government statements in the

languages of the warring parties without it being translated first. This limitation will be further addressed in Chapter Five.

The most consequential delimitation is that of the sole focus on Russian actions. By exclusively focusing on Russia and the more recent invasion in 2022, I will fail to offer insight into other areas of strategy and dynamics, including Ukraine, and the conflict evolution since its beginning in 2014 (Masters, 2023). Yet, I still acknowledge the fact that both sides are taking prisoners, however, regarding giving the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) access to prisoners and camps, Ukraine has been far easier to work with while their entry has been denied by Russia (Kaźmierczak, 2024, 67ff). Nonetheless, focusing on Russia alone makes it possible to dive deep into the specifics of Russia's objectives for taking civilian prisoners.

Another delimitation made is to understand the objectives through a theoretical lens instead of a comparison to previous Russian actions or actions of other states or conflicts. Therefore there is no need to investigate another party in this thesis. The delimitation of focusing on new war theory is not given as several other theories are relevant to the problematisation of civilians in war. However, limiting the thesis and research question to engage new war theory hopefully, as mentioned, makes it possible to contribute to the understanding of warfare under transformation discussed in Chapter Three. Including building on Kaldor's more recent article, 'Commentary on Kögler: Analysing the Ukraine war through a 'new wars' perspective' which states that many Russian tactics are "reminiscent of previous wars" (2023, 482), yet also states that if the war continues the environment for new wars will be created.

1.6 Thesis Outline

To guide the following Chapters in this thesis, all Chapters, apart from the conclusion, are divided into sections. The next and Second Chapter provides a background split into two sections, the definitions of POWs and civilians and a summary of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Chapter Three will continue with a three-section literature review, including a discussion of modern war, new war theory and the Russia-Ukraine war, and lastly the contribution of this thesis based on research gaps. Chapter Four will provide the theoretical and analytical framework of the new war theory while Chapter Five continues on the methodological approach, data selection, and ethical considerations for this thesis. Chapter Six embarks on the analysis which will be divided into two main sections based on the

operational questions. The first section will be split into four sub-sections based on the analytical framework in Chapter Four. Lastly, the research question, findings, and indications for research hereafter will be summarised in Chapter Seven, the conclusion.

2. Background

This Chapter will be split into two sections, starting with a short historical background to taking POWs, followed by a definition of POWs and civilians in war. The second section will include the historical relationship between Russia and Ukraine, a summary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and an explanation of filtration and re-education camps.

2.1 Who are the Soldiers and Civilians in War?

The explanation of POWs and civilians in war below will provide the reader with a distinction between the legal aspects of the two to better understand the severity of imprisoning innocent civilians.

2.1.1 Prisoners of War

Throughout history, adversaries in an armed conflict who did not suffer fatal injuries in battle, alternatively often found themselves captured. For many centuries it has been the nature of conflict to take POWs to reduce fighters and prevent enemies from imposing threats, along with the fact that prisoners are convenient tactical subjects (Davies, 1977: 624f). As stated in the introduction, the definition of POW used in this thesis is “A combatant who falls into the hands of an adverse party to a conflict in the course of an international armed conflict is a prisoner of war” (Bouchet-Saulnier, 2015a).

Under Article 4 of the Third Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (GCIII, 1949; Bouchet-Saulnier, 2015a), a POW is defined as any captured individual who is or used to be part of the armed force of one of the parties in conflict, or troops part of an organised volunteering crew, militia, or any resistance movement who are recognisable, carry arms openly, and have an accountable superior commander. This includes individuals who take up arms and resist the enemy on instinct when approached without having time to join any formal movement, “provided they carry arms openly and respect the laws and customs of war” (GCIII, 1949, Art. 4.A.6). Civilian individuals who are not official members of the armed forces, but who accompany them are also protected under the category of POWs. This includes staff of aircraft, “war correspondents, supply contractors, members of labour units or services responsible for the welfare of the armed forces, provided that they have received authorisation from the armed forces which they accompany” (GCIII, 1949, Art. 4.A.4). Further this embrace, any “members of crew, including masters, pilots and

apprentices of the merchant marine and the crews of civil aircraft of the Parties to the conflict, who do not benefit by more favourable treatment under any other provisions of international law” (GCIII, 1949, Art. 4.A.5).

Regarding the protection of POWs, Under Article 12 of the GCIII (1949) all categories mentioned above are by law protected in line with the detaining power’s responsibilities. This includes humane treatment and protecting POWs against violence, physical mutilation, and experiments that are not in the prisoner's interest. Endangering the prisoner’s health in any way is “a serious breach of the present Convention” (GCIII, 1949, Art. 13). Lastly, according to Article 16 (GCIII, 1949), all POWs should be treated with equal respect regardless of nationality, race, sex, political opinion, and religious belief.

2.1.2 Civilians in War

Civilians are defined as the opposite of combatants which is implicitly the same as POWs defined above, with the deduction of being imprisoned (Bouchet-Saulnier, 2015b). In additional contrast to civilians, as long as combatants conform to international humanitarian law (IHL), they can not be subjected “to criminal prosecutions for their participation in hostilities” (Ibid.). IHL is based on the foundation that civilian people and objects alike, should be distinguished from those of military features. Thus, under the Fourth Geneva Convention (GCIV, 1949, Art.13) and its Additional Protocol I (API, 1977, Art. 51.2) they are not allowed to be targets of acts or threats of violence and “have the right to receive the necessary assistance” (Bouchet-Saulnier, 2015b). Civilian people and objects may not be used to shield those of military interest or personnel (API, 1977, Art. 51.7 & Art. 52). The protection of civilian objects furthermore concerns interests “indispensable to the survival of the population” (API, 1977, Art. 54).

2.2 The Armed Conflict Between Russia and Ukraine

The current conflict is deeply rooted in historical bonds between the two states. The shared heritage goes back to Kyivan Rus, the first Slavic state, which came to be the beginning of Russia and Ukraine, more than ten centuries ago. Since then Russia has annexed Ukraine several times and pressured the Ukrainian people to conform to ‘Russification’ (Conant, 2023).

2.2.1 The Annexation of Crimea

When a former president of Ukraine rejected the Association Agreement with the European Union (EU) in 2013, in favour of economic and political bonds with Russia, the Euromaidan revolution of the Ukrainian people commenced as the majority of the people wanted to advance cooperation and become members of the EU (Sobolieva, 2022). Russian President Vladimir Putin said the Euromaidan was a “fascist coup” backed by the West (Masters, 2023). In March 2014 Russian soldiers took command over the Ukrainian peninsula, Crimea. With Russian soldiers present, the Center for Preventive Action (CPA) states that “Crimeans voted to join the Russian Federation in a disputed local referendum” (CPA, 2024). Shortly after, Putin gave the order to annex Crimea, on the justification that the revolution threatened the safety of the ethnic Russian majority (Masters, 2023). Following the annexation, a “buildup of Russian troops and military equipment near [Ukrainian] Donetsk and Russian cross-border” (CPA, 2024) was reported.

2.2.2 Russian Invasion in 2022

Since the annexation in 2014, the conflict and Russian deployment of troops have continued. As an answer, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has since 2014 deployed additional troops in neighbouring countries and increased collaborative exercises between the member states, hoping to deter Russian attacks elsewhere (CPA, 2024). The full-scale invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February, 2022, has only intensified these efforts. On the day of the invasion, the majority of the members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) made a last attempt to discourage Putin from giving the order. Since then, a majority of United Nations (UN) member states have condemned this invasion. Despite the UN resolutions condemning the invasion and providing vital humanitarian aid to the people of Ukraine, the Russian veto right stops them from imposing any sanctions as “the UN has been constrained by its institutional design” (Biersteker, 2022). However, over 16.500 sanctions on Russia have been imposed by organisations like the EU and NATO, along with states such as the United States (US), United Kingdom (UK), Australia and more (BBC, 2024). These include individual, economic, and diplomatic measures (Council of the European Union, 2024). Further, 278 billion dollars has been given as aid to Ukraine (CPA, 2024).

Putin’s stated goal of this invasion was similar to stopping fascism in 2014, to save the Russian people, this time to “de-Nazify and de-militarize Ukraine” (Masters, 2023). By July 2024, Russian airstrikes and fighting between the states had caused over 30.000 civilian

casualties, including at least 11.520 deaths and 23.640 injured (OHCHR, 2024). According to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, 31.000 Ukrainian soldiers and 180.000 Russians (Armstrong, 2024). In contrast, the death of Ukrainian soldiers by US officials is estimated to be around 70.000 while the UK's defence ministries estimate 350.000 Russian losses (Ibid). As of April 2024, 6.5 million people have fled Ukraine, 3.7 million are internally displaced, and 14.6 million need humanitarian aid in Ukraine (CPA, 2024). By the same month, Russia occupied 18% of Ukrainian territory and Ukraine had taken back 54% of its previously occupied territory (Ibid.).

2.2.3 Filtration and Re-education Camps

Assistant Secretary-General for the UN Human Rights Office and Head of the OHCHR, Ilze Brands Kehris, states that Ukrainian civilians are subjected to “a system of security checks and personal data collection” (Kehris, 2022) by Russian troops. By July 13th 2022, Russia “had interrogated, detained, and forcibly deported” (Blinken, 2022) as many as 1.6 million people from Ukraine. The process of filtration includes restraint and possible interrogation and torture, but also separating children from their parents and issuing Russian passports while confiscating the Ukrainian ones (Ibid.). Russia's deportation includes several cases of relocating, pro-Russian re-educating and adopting Ukrainian children into Russian families. (Kaveh et al., 2023; Urbancik & Artemova, 2024). In 2023, 43 hosting facilities had been located, both on Ukrainian territory occupied by Russian forces and on official Russian territory and 78% of those involved systematic re-education (Kaveh et al., 2023, 5). A year into the conflict, Yale Humanitarian Research Lab confirmed over 6000 children were held at camps and that at least 20 had been placed in Russian families in Moscow. However, they estimate the number to be significantly higher (Ibid.).

3. Literature Review

This Chapter will review some of the leading arguments on modern war with the concept of new warfare in focus along with its opposers. The first section will shortly describe and review Mary Kaldor's theory on new wars and the debate of whether it applies to conflicts after the Cold War. Thus, it equally serves as a review of the attitudes of the theory and provides background information essential to understanding the analysis. However, the theory will be further developed in the next Chapter. The second section focuses on the adaption of new war theory to the contemporary conflict between Russia and Ukraine, while the last section provides information on what the preferable contribution will be.

3.1 Thoughts on Modern War

Since Mary Kaldor's concept of new wars debuted in the first edition of her book *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era*, in 1999, the definition has sparked quite a discussion. Kaldor's side of the debate discusses how globalisation since the late 1980s has affected warfare as the world constantly becomes more interconnected. Thus, "the new wars have to be understood in the context of the process known as globalisation" (Kaldor, 2013a, 4), i.e. the blur of local and global, and internal and external, meaning that new wars not only include states but also numerous non-state actors. This differs from former civil and conventional wars, including Clausewitz and his famous military book *On War* which focuses on wars between states and gaining territory and political pursuit (Robinson, 2022, 70; Kaldor, 2013a, 15f & 23f), thus the need for a new definition. The opposing side, however, fears that the theory generalises civil wars (Berdal, 2003, 490ff) and exaggerates the differences between the alleged new and old wars (Newman, 2004, 185ff).

Kaldor argues that after the Cold War, armed conflicts and organised violence changed, although she does not speak of the new wars simply as war, but more as a new way of violence. She also discusses other scholars' definitions of contemporary conflicts, one of them being John Mueller who argues for a general decline of old wars and therefore the possible need for a new definition (Kaldor, 2013a, 3.) Kaldor's description is further described as "blurred lines between war, organized crime, and large-scale violations of human rights" (2013a, 2). One argument she portrays is that defining these conflicts as a 'Civil War' is not sufficient anymore due to the global interconnection of actors, goals,

methods, and financing in conflict (Kaldor, 2013b, 2), which the thesis will return to in the next Chapter.

The opposing side of the debate argues that the new wars are not as new as Kaldor describes them, yet both sides agree on the fact that the old wars mainly included the military of the states in conflict and that the more recent wars have increased diversity in terms of organisations, interconnected relations, and other actors. Edward Newman agrees that literature on new wars efficiently explains systems in contemporary conflict, yet he also disapproves of it being classified as new. Newman argues that factors of Kaldor's new wars were present before the First World War (2004, 179). Kaldor somewhat agrees with this too, that parts of the ways of new wars can be traced back to modernity. However, she further argues that the focus is to change the "prevailing perception of war" (2013a, 3) discussing the distinction between new and old ways. Kaldor states that she believes that new wars "reflect a new reality" (Ibid.), however, her main intention is more directed at changing "the way scholars investigate these conflicts and thus to change the way policy-makers and policy-shapers perceive these conflicts" (Kaldor, 2013b, 3).

A similar concept also constructed to explain more recent conflicts is Frank Hoffman's theory on hybrid warfare. Both new and hybrid warfare include global interconnections and blurred lines between actors. Notably, they are also alike in the sense that violence in many cases aims to destabilise and weaken states, societies, or organisations (Hoffman, 2007, 7; Hoffman et. al., 2024; Kaldor, 2023, 480ff). However, the theory of hybrid warfare still has a lot more focus on military strategy, the involvement of the state, and territorial conquer rather than societal (Kaldor, 2013a, 2; Hoffman, 2007, 7 & 13ff). Further, as Kaldor also states, hybrid warfare lacks the new war theory's logic of new ways of policy and warfare in the sense that new warfare is new and hybrid warfare is more of a conjunction of war (Kaldor, 2013a, 2) and "does not represent the end of traditional or conventional warfare" (Hoffman, 2007, 9). The logic of new warfare will be further addressed in the next Chapter on Theory.

Returning to Clausewitz's theory and more conventional warfare, Jasmin Čajić like many other scholars discusses how Clausewitz is still relevant to contemporary strategists regardless of the theory's old age and lack of global interconnectedness. Despite Čajić's argument for Clausewitz's relevance for understanding organised crime and terrorism, from the perspective that "war is an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will" (Clausewitz, 1989, 75, as cited in Čajić, 2016, 73), he still emphasises the need for adjustments in terms of how technology, politics, geography, and religion have developed (Čajić, 2016, 77).

Nevertheless, Clausewitz's focus is still on the "centrality of combat" (Čajić, 2016, 74), yet again distinct from new warfare (Kaldor, 2013a, 23f), although with similarities to Hoffman's theory.

3.2 New War Theory and the Russia-Ukraine War

Researchers have previously studied new war theory in several settings. However, there is little literature on new war theory analysing the contemporary conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and even less so on the aspects involving civilian prisoners. Instead, the conflict has mostly been investigated from the perspective of hybrid or conventional warfare. However, there still are a few, for example, Robinson (2022, 84), who is building on new war theory, stating that many of today's wars are intra-state. This is not the whole truth, as Kaldor's description of new wars stretches beyond the intra-state in the sense that they include a large network of transnational connections (Kaldor, 2013a, 2). This does not only include the blur of local and global, and internal and external as previously stated, but also makes attacks of repression within and aggression from outside the state hard to distinguish (Ibid.).

In contrast to the theory, however, Robinson states that the "Russia-Ukraine war shows that inter-state war fought between heavily armed militaries is far from extinct" (2022, 84). He further argues that there's "minimal evidence of the "privatization" of war predicted by Kaldor" (Ibid.). As previously mentioned, this is something Kaldor agrees on. Her argument of the Russia-Ukraine being an 'old war' is further made clear in an interview with the New Lines Magazine, where Mary Kaldor in June 2022, states that "This is not really a new war at the moment, let us be clear, this is a conventional invasion" but that it "could end up constructing a new war" (Wilson, 2022, 21.19). A year later, in her article Commentary on Kögler: Analysing the Ukraine war through a 'new wars' perspective (2023), Kaldor still believes the war to be "reminiscent of previous wars" (2023, 482) and that the condition of a new war is yet to be created.

Opposing Kaldor and Robinson, Delanty argues that the war and new warfare already share many traits. Some of them are the Russian strategy of "destruction of cities and deployment of mercenaries and private armies" (Delanty, 2023, 432), also mentioning the forced displacement, prisoner's execution, and "kidnapping of children for 're-education' in Russia" (Delanty, 2023, 433). The deployment of mercenaries and the privatisation of war is not something Robinson or Kaldor emphasises to connect new warfare and the Russia-Ukraine war. However, both of them speak of the Wagner Group whereas Kaldor on

the one hand, describes them to be the most known Russian private military group (Kaldor, 2023, 481) while Robinson on the other, argues it to be much less independent and more as part of the Russian army (Robinson, 2022, 84).

Pär Gustafsson Kurki's report from the Swedish Defence Research Agency (2024, 8ff, 54), describes both the Wagner Group and the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and Saint Andrews Center to be private mercenaries. However, he further claims the ROC, to be primarily a tool and not as much a mercenary due to their focus on religious and militaristic propaganda and strengthening the morale of soldiers and recruitment (Gustafsson Kurki, 2024). Similarly, Delanty describes the ROC as a "growing tie between religion and militarism" (2023, 437).

In a special report from 2023, Jack Watling et. al. describes the Russian activities leading up to the invasion in 2022, as a long intentional campaign. They state the conflict to be conventional and inter-state, however, they argue that there are many overlooked unconventional features (Watling et. al., 2023, 1ff). The report builds on the arguments that the Russian unconventional campaign before 2022 is essential to understanding the invasion. This further includes the argument that the "unconventional operations during the war have often been critical to Russia's successive theories of victory, even as its conventional forces have failed to achieve their objectives on the battlefield" (Ibid.).

3.3 Contribution

Kaldor does not focus on the possible increase of new wars nor its casualties but on the need to understand the new way of warfare, similarly, the intention of this thesis is not to focus on the number of prisoners but to what extent the objective of taking them reflects new warfare. Despite Kaldor's statement that the contemporary conflict is more similar to conventional wars, in the same article, she also states that if the war continues the environment for new wars will be created (Kaldor, 2023). As the article was published a year ago, this thesis will somewhat test whether Kaldor's argument still holds, building on the hypothesis that conditions of new warfare might already be detectable in line with Delanty's argument and what Watling et. al. touches upon.

However, the main contribution of focus will be somewhat the other way around. Not to test whether the environment has been created nor changed since Kaldor's argument, but rather to test if there are conditions of the environment that have been overlooked or not already clearly stated in the theory. I.e. to investigate the Russian objectives for taking

civilian prisoners to see to what extent the findings align with the new war environment. First of all, this focus is based on the hypothesis that new warfare is already present. Secondly, it is equally situated on the research gap regarding the Russia-Ukraine war from a new war perspective, including the lack of civilian focus. Lastly, the focus is established on how new war theory somewhat fails to bring clear attention to more specific actions such as the imprisoning of both combatants and civilians. Nevertheless, new war theory still discusses aspects that indirectly include imprisonment, such as civilians being more frequently targeted by violence and how it becomes harder to distinguish them from combatants (Kaldor, 2013a, 6ff & 208ff). It should therefore not be excluded as a feasibly valuable perspective to achieve greater insight into a possible new way of warfare.

4. Theoretical Framework

The first section of this Chapter will provide further background information on the theory and the specific aspect of civilians, building on what is already stated in Chapter Three. The second Chapter will include an explanation of how new war theory will serve as the theoretical framework, further clarifying the logic of new wars which serves as the framework for analysis. Lastly, the selected theoretical aspects of focus within the theory will be discussed along with how it all applies to constructing the analysis and answering the research question.

4.1 New War Theory

In all three writings by Kaldor used in this thesis, she stresses the theoretical framework of new war theory as a lens to understand conflicts after the Cold War. Not in the sense that new war theory fits all conflicts, but rather as a tool for gaining information about complex situations. One of her main arguments is that policymakers need to take into account the new elements of warfare when interpreting contemporary conflicts to get a nuanced outcome. By doing this the efforts of predicting and constructing efforts of peacebuilding, humanitarian aid, and the dynamics in a conflict et cetera, have a much better chance of success (Kaldor, 2013b).

Kaldor's article 'In Defence of New Wars' (2013b) continues on the new war debate and addresses much of the criticism, stressing that the theory's logic moves "beyond specific components of contemporary conflicts" by also providing "an integrative framework for analysis" (Kaldor, 2013b, 2). The focus of having new war theory as the theoretical framework is not to actively argue for new warfare, but rather to use Kaldor's idea of new warfare as a framework for analysis due to its focus on multiple dimensions of warfare. As mentioned, the thesis will instead test to what extent a more specific action fits within the environment of new warfare and build on the way of understanding the theory and armed conflict within PACS. However, the thesis will hopefully uncover reasons for the theory's adequacy or inadequacy in understanding the Russian objectives.

Apart from new wars being part of globalisation and interconnectedness, Kaldor describes the binary distinctions of "on-state, public and private, external and internal, economic and political, and even war and peace" to be "both a cause and a consequence of violence" (Ibid.). Kaldor describes new wars to be organised and often privatised violence

occurring “in situations in which state revenues decline because of the decline of the economy as well as the spread of criminality, corruption and inefficiency” (2013a, 6). Organised violence further includes asymmetrical warfare, violations of human rights, and the destabilisation and decline in the economy and political legitimacy (Ibid.; Kaldor 2013b). Compared to the old wars, the new wars are not set on winning, conquering, or state construction, but rather associated with the contribution “to the dismantling of the state” (Kaldor, 2013b, 3). The zones where new wars most easily occur involve states with weak governance, ethnic divisions, a history of violence including colonial pasts, and those that are rich in natural resources. This has proven to include states in Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East where many instances of violence have occurred since the 1990s (Kaldor, 2013a).

4.1.1 Civilians in New Wars

New war theory does not specifically debate prisoners in armed conflict but rather addresses the issue between the lines of statements. Thus, Kaldor embarks on topics where imprisonment is somewhat included. For example, how civilians in new wars are more frequently targeted by violence and involved in it as civilians and combatants are harder to distinguish (Kaldor, 2013a, 53 & 125). The violence often targets civilians and civil society including that of both internal displacement and seeking refugees in other places. However, it also includes civilians being targets of direct violence and the increase of civilian casualties in war. Kaldor describes the techniques used for attacking civilians to be based on destabilisation to deepening division by fear and insecurity in order to sustain the hate of the ‘other’ (Kaldor, 2013a, 104f). This further includes ethnic cleansing and mass murder of the ‘other’ based on identity, and displacement by making a territory uninhabitable. Similarly to using scapegoats, it is in many cases stated that civilians are collateral damage or that they have been caught in the crossfire, despite them being the actual target (Kaldor, 2013a, 60).

The tactic of making a territory uninhabitable further includes the targeting of civilian objects such as markets, hospitals, houses, landmarks, water sources et cetera. It also includes targeting the civilians' way of income, for example by pillage, sieges, blockades and checkpoints, leaving the people to die due to lack of water and food, or forcing them to leave. Additionally, it often includes psychological aspects of violence such as kidnapping and the destruction of landmarks i.e. historical, cultural, or religious sights “that define the social

environment for particular group” (Kaldor, 2013a, 105), “erasing all traces of cultural claim” (Ibid.).

4.2 Analytical Framework: The Logic of New Wars

Continuing on her new war description from ‘New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era’ (Kaldor, 2013a, 7f), Kaldor states the logic of new wars to be divisible into four categories; actors, goals, methods, and forms of finance (2013b, 2f), further providing the framework for analysis.

4.2.1 Actors

As previously stated, the new wars are built on interconnected relations of both state and non-state actors. State actors include those of governmental organisations, leading politicians, and the regular army et cetera. The non-state actors include NGOs (non-governmental organisations), religious groups or organisations along with “private security contractors, mercenaries, jihadists, warlords, paramilitaries“ (Kaldor, 2013b, 2) and so on.

4.2.2 Goals

Compared to the old wars, geopolitics, and ideology, goals in new wars are based on identity politics. However, identity politics have somewhat grown from divisions created by previous geopolitical aspects and ideology and replaced them as the new main reason and goal for conflict (Kaldor, 2013a, 7f, 104). The reason for violence in the name of identity can be based on nationality, religion, ethnicity, clans, tribes, or linguistics (Ibid; Kaldor, 2013b, 2). The goal regards the claimed right to power based on identity, differing from the old wars where Kaldor argues that state interest shaped the identity. “Thus political mobilisation around identity is the aim of war rather than an instrument of war” (Ibid.). Further, the strategic goal can be described as mobilising “extremist politics based on fear and hatred” (Kaldor, 2013a, 9) along with the hatred of the ‘other’ (Kaldor, 2013a, 104). Relating to global interconnectedness, political mobilisation and identity politics thrive in the 21st century due to the much-developed and easily accessed communication tools of media and options of travel (Ibid.).

4.2.3 Methods

As previously stated the old wars used the method of military means to physically conquer territory. In new wars, physical combat is rare as areas are obtained through social and political means, i.e. controlling the population of the territory (Kaldor, 2013b, 2f). Population displacement based on differences in opinion or identity is one of the methods most frequently used. The methods further include violence largely being “directed against civilians as a way of controlling territory rather than against enemy forces” (Ibid.). This involves methods of psychological, economic, and political tormenting to spread terror, fear, and hatred both through the destabilisation of societies, but also through “mass killing and forcible resettlement” (Kaldor, 2013a, 9).

4.2.4 Forms of Finance

As the network of finance is globally interconnected it is hard to trace where the funding is coming from. In both new and old wars funding from both state and non-state actors such as banks, private organisations, or people is based on political, territorial, or economic gain (Kaldor, 2013a, 4ff, 20, 99). However, there is also the aspect of funding in terms of peace and grass-root initiatives based on helping people and communities to become free from the spiral of new war characteristics and violence-based income (Kaldor, 2013a, 129f). However, it can easily end up in the wrong hands (Kaldor, 2013b, 3).

The differences in funding and finance between the old and new wars are significant. In the old wars funding for military personnel, weapons et cetera came mostly from taxation of the population or loans from other states and compared to the new wars the participation was high (Ibid.). Both funding and participation are mostly low in new wars and the income and gathering of equipment are dependent on the black market and violent acts of “loot and pillage, ‘taxation’ of humanitarian aid, Diaspora support, kidnapping, or smuggling in oil, diamonds, drugs, people, etc. (Ibid.). The economic control within areas troubled by new warfare also often involves the control of markets and goods, including blockades and checkpoints (Kaldor, 2013a, 51 & 108).

4.3 Theoretical Adaptation

The four terms explained above will be used to guide the first part of the analysis and research question, ‘*What can be understood as the Russian objectives for taking civilian prisoners in the contemporary conflict with Ukraine*’. Analysing this part of the research

question by first defining the actors, goals, methods, and forms of finance should make it possible to understand the Russian objectives and ensure the interpretation is based on the new war perspective. Due to the focus on Russian objectives, the term of primary focus is goals. Therefore, this makes it possible to see to what extent Kaldor's integrative framework for analysis is sufficient in understanding a more specific aspect of new war theory and to address the latter part of the research question, “*To what extent do the findings fit within the framework of new war theory?*”. The method by which the terms will be identified and interpreted in the data will be addressed in the next chapter.

5. Methodology and Data Selection

This first section of this Chapter will start by identifying the design used in this thesis and the reason for the chosen conduct. Secondly, the relationship between the chosen theoretical framework and the methodology will be explained. In the second section of this Chapter, the selected sources will be presented as well as the sampling for analysis. Lastly, in the second section ethical considerations taken into account when selecting data and conducting the thesis will be explained.

5.1 Research Design

The initial use of the methodological framework will be that of a qualitative constructivist case study of the Russian objectives. The purpose of conducting a case study is based on John Creswell's definition of how "Case study research involve a detailed description of the setting or individuals, followed by analysis of the data for themes or issues" (2009, 148). A case study design allows for a deeper understanding of Russian activities in the event of the Russia-Ukraine war (Creswell, 2009, 22). As case studies are bound by time (Ibid.), the focus will be the start of the invasion, February 2022 until the present. However, as mentioned the friction between the states goes back in history (Conant, 2023) and aspects previous to the war can therefore not be fully excluded.

A research problem in line with Creswell's definition of a case study could be that of a two-sectioned research question. Thus, the detailed description of a setting adapts well with the first part of this thesis's research question '*What can be understood as the Russian objectives for taking civilian prisoners in the contemporary conflict with Ukraine*', which aims to explain the issue. Secondly, analysing the data for themes and issues is exactly what this thesis intends with the latter part of the research question, '*to what extent the findings fit within the framework of new war theory*'. The analysis of themes is the Russian objectives and the terms of actors, goals, methods, and finance stated in the first operational question and further explained below. The issue would instead both be that of the act of taking civilian prisoners and the extent to which the new war theory is sufficient in understanding the objectives.

The purpose of a qualitative constructivist approach is to provide insight by helping reveal different interpretations of the Russian objectives of taking civilian prisoners when analysing language in discourse based on social perception (Walliman, 2010, 22).

Additionally, the approach is extensive considering possible data selection which will be addressed in section 5.2. Depending on what is applied to and studied through constructivism, limitations include the theory being subjective in the sense of social context and how understanding is shaped by personal perceptions in the social context, based on ideas and values (Walliman, 2010, 21f). Compared to a positivist approach, however, the research role of constructivism is “to reveal different interpretations of the world as made by people” (Walliman, 2010, 22). Subjectivity is, therefore not necessarily a weakness or limit, but rather the ideal tool to understand influences or personal beliefs, yet again all depending on the research question. In the case of this thesis, the weakness of subjectivity is a fact if not considering and basing the analysis on several perceptions and beliefs. Acknowledging this limit, the analysis will conduct a triangulation of sources not only to avoid bias of certain perceptions but to stay as objective as possible, improve the accuracy of the framework and research question, and avoid misleading conclusions (Öberg & Sollenberg, 2011, 50f; Walliman, 2010, 21f).

5.1.1 Data Analysis Method

The choice and use of constructivism is not only central to the methodological approach but also has to work well with the theoretical framework. As both constructivism and new war theory are based on understanding through perception and interpretation (Walliman, 2010, 22; Kaldor, 2013b), the partial conjunction of new war theory and constructivism is not an issue. For instance, both theories appeared at the end of the 20th century, partly as a result of the Cold War (Kaldor, 2013a; Barnett, 2020, 193). Constructivism is an extensive social theory which serves as an umbrella for various theoretical frameworks. However, as constructivism is not essential to the theoretical framework approach of the logic of new wars, choosing a framework within constructivism is not necessary. This thesis will therefore only use the constructivist methodological approach based on Nicholas Walliman’s (2010, 22) description which concerns the procedure of the theoretical interpretation, i.e. data analysis method.

Using constructivism as the procedure will help analyse language in discourse based on social perception (Walliman, 2010, 21f). In this case, it will allow for an investigation of different actors, journalists, military and political leaders, scholars, and private individuals' perceptions of the Russian objectives of taking civilian prisoners. Triangulating these perceptions will make it possible to contextualise themes and issues to determine the actors, goals, methods, and finance from the perspective of new war theory as stated in section 4.1.3.

Further providing the description of the setting in line with the case study approach (Creswell, 2009, 148). After completing this in line with the first part of the research question, the methodological procedure, qualitative constructivist case study, follows that of investigating the key themes and issues previously discovered (Creswell, 2009, 148). Using the four terms of the logic of new wars as the theoretical tool to guide the analysis, makes it possible to keep to the framework of new wars (Kaldor, 2013b). Thus, heightening the accuracy of the framework will further add to the validity of this thesis.

5.2 Data

5.2.1 Sources and Sampling

Taking data selection into account, I will make use of both primary and secondary sources, mainly ones in writing. The sources include scholarly research and journal articles, newspaper articles, podcasts, interviews, statements from governments, and reports from different organisations and institutions such as the EU, Royal United Services Institute, and more. The newspapers, interviews, and similar will be used to look into themes during an event, while reports, journal articles and such provide more focused problematisations and argumentation about an issue. Using different kinds of sources with different audiences is preferable to minimise selection bias (Öberg & Sollenberg, 2011, 72). By drawing lines between that and other written data, making a comparison between the data as well as to Kalor's theory and Russia's constructed identity and interests, I hope to connect lines and draw conclusions on Russian motivations for taking prisoners.

The strategy for sampling data will be to mainly search for sources using focused aspects and keywords of Ukrainian civilians in the conflict, civilian prisoners, the adoption of children, and re-education camps. A limitation of the sampling and sources is that I do not understand Russian or Ukrainian, and therefore the use of sources will be those in or translated to English. Another limitation is the lack of access to Russian data (Kaźmierczak, 2024). This then creates the issue of possible Western and Ukrainian bias by, for example, not using as many native Ukrainian let alone Russian sources. However, as the focus of this thesis is to investigate Russia's objectives of taking civilians, something that Russia states not to be involved in (Langrand, 2024), there already is a certain bias considering the clear indications in Western, including Ukrainian, data. Regarding the translations, there is also the

limit of it not being exact due to linguistic differences (Dulić, 2011, 40ff; Öberg & Sollenberg, 2011, 50f, 72).

I acknowledge this issue and will, as best I can, not ignore the Russian viewpoint by only focusing on sources from Ukraine and the West. Additionally, especially when interpreting Ukrainian and Russian sources, there is a need to consider bias to a larger extent in terms of exaggerating or understating information. Having all this in mind, I will to the best of my ability, be objective and avoid reinforcing biased information and stereotypes. To minimise selection and source bias and to gain reliability in consistency, triangulation of sources will be constant to understand the Russian objectives in terms of actors, goals, methods, and forms of finance (Ibid.; Walliman, 2011, 22f).

5.2.2 Ethical Considerations

As no interviews have been conducted nor the use of participants in other ways in the thesis, there are not any major research ethics to take into account in terms of informed consent and protecting sensitive data. However, there are still important ethical anticipations to take into account. Considering that ongoing conflict is a sensitive topic for many who have been and are still affected by it, the information used in this thesis is carefully chosen along with the presentation of it. Not only in the sense that the thesis provides a sufficient amount of information to investigate and identify key narratives and themes, but also to check the accuracy to the best of my ability, and to display it fairly (Creswell, 2009, 72ff). This further includes the ethical aspect of citing whenever another person's work is used or quoted as well as to contextualise it fairly.

Despite not conducting any interviews, testimonies from other sources will be used, including both private and public people. Therefore there is a need to acknowledge the sensitivity of material, especially that of private individuals (Brounéus, 2011, 141). This is especially true if the interviewee for example has been imprisoned or similar. Despite checking whether consent was given for the interviews in the first place, the statements and interviews used regarding private individuals will not state the name of the interviewee. This is based on the fact that the interview may have been conducted in a different context than this thesis. Nevertheless, there is still the need to cite the source of the interview being the article or such, so one can always go back to the primary source and name of the interviewee, thus finding it in the correct context.

6. Analysis

This Chapter is split into two sections based on the two operational questions. The first section is further split into four sub-sections to investigate and interpret the actors, goals, methods, and forms of finance separately in line with the analytical framework OQ1 *‘How do the new war theory perspectives of a) actors, b) goals, c) methods and d) forms of finance make sense of the Russian objective to take civilian prisoners?’*. The first section corresponds with the case study approach in the sense that the description of the setting of the Russian objectives is based on the four terms that will be provided. The second section of this Chapter will not be split into any sub-sections. Instead, an analysis of the themes and issues investigated and displayed in the previous section will be conducted, in line with the methodological approach, including the analysis of OQ2, *‘To what extent does the interpretation of Russian objectives communicate with characteristics of new warfare?’*.

6.1 How Do the New War Theory Framework of a) Actors, b) Goals, c) Methods, and d) Forms of Finance Make Sense of the Russian Objectives to Take Civilian Prisoners?

6.1.1 b) Who are the Russian *Actors* Responsible for Taking Civilian Prisoners?

Despite Putin as the president and his central authority being the main actor responsible, many people and groups are doing their bidding (Kottasová & Voitovych, 2024; Delanty, 2023; Kaveh et al., 2023). Despite knowing this, few sources are investigating who the people and groups doing the groundwork are, i.e. who is taking and deporting the civilians on behalf of Putin’s orders. Yet, it is still possible to account for people working for Putin and Russia. For example, there are several cases of Russia using private mercenaries or armies (Delanty, 2023, 432). These include the Wagner Group and Rosgvardia units, as well as other “Military Contractors of varying allegiance, volunteer formations, and forces from non-recognised states” (Kaźmierczak, 2024, 70). According to Krzysztof Kaźmierczak, approximately 27 units of private military contractors are or have been active in Russia since the invasion, “the majority of which participated to some extent in the war” (Kaźmierczak, 2024, 70).

The Russian National Guard and Federal Security Service are by Defence Intelligence officials of Ukraine stated to be the main actors in detaining civilians of Ukraine, (Kottasová

& Voitovych, 2024). Despite the limited data, the OHCHR has confirmed that it is not only the general Russian armed force that is deporting civilians including children, but also hired armed groups and individuals (Kheris, 2022). There are also sources reporting that Russian paramilitary groups and contractors “such as Yunarmia, the Movement of the First, and the Young Guard” (Havrylov, 2024) are involved in the process of re-educating, russification, and militarisation of Ukrainian children (Ibid.).

The Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health reports that the operation of re-education camps “is centrally coordinated by Russia’s federal government and involves every level of government” (Kaveh et al., 2023, 5). This includes the identification of “federal, regional, and local figures directly engaged in operating and politically justifying the program” (Ibid.) some of which are listed in international or US sanction lists. The identified actors in the report include individuals managing and promoting the re-education camps, transporting children, supply collectors, and fundraisers. Additionally, two education camps have also been identified to have “hosted children alleged to be orphans who were later placed with foster families in Russia” (Ibid.), twenty of which are placed in or around Moscow.

Other actors who have been responsible for the adoption of or themselves adopting Ukrainian children include the Commissioner for Children’s Rights under the President of the Russian Federation Maria Lvova-Belova (Havrylov, 2024) and Putin ally and politician Sergei Mironov (Walker, 2024). Mironov adopted a stolen infant “issued with new documents with a changed name claiming she was born in Russia” (Ibid.). The head of the Moscow region, Andrey Vorobyov, is subjected to several sanctions due to his financial support for deporting children (Ibid.).

6.1.2 a) What are the Russian *Goals* of Taking Civilian Prisoners?

In a press conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2023, he stated that the main goals of the war were to de-Nazify and demilitarise Ukraine (Guardian News, 2023, 0:12). This statement may be short yet clearly in line with the speech Putin gave in 2022 when he announced the invasion on February 24 as a “special military operation” (Atlantic Council, 2023). The speech also includes the following statement;

The purpose of this operation is to protect people who, for eight years now, have been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kyiv regime. To this end, we will seek to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, as well as bring to trial those who

perpetrated numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including against citizens of the Russian Federation. It is not our plan to occupy the Ukrainian territory. We do not intend to impose anything on anyone by force (Ibid.).

In this speech, Putin emphasised the need to protect civilians which one could interpret as the objective of taking civilians as a way to protect them from the war. However, the West's perception of the objective is quite the opposite. Delanty for example, argues that Putin tries to justify his invasion by stating the goal of de-Nazifying Ukraine to save the civilians, when in fact the process of “‘De-Nazification’ thus effectively means forcible de-Europeanization” (Delanty, 2023, 445). Putin's operations include filtration camps, forced deportation, and imprisonment further explained in section 6.1.3, however, the perception of the Russian goal of doing so includes the “apparent effort to change the demographic makeup of parts of Ukraine” (Blinken, 2022). This further includes the goals of getting rid of those who oppose Russia and Putin, such as civilians with connections to media, civil society and not least the Ukrainian army and the government (Ibid.; Pylypenko, 2023). However, several witnesses speak of the process and method of ‘security’ screening civilians, many of which are later being detained without charges (Kottasová & Voitovych, 2024)

Volodymyr Pylypenko (2023), Del Monte & Barlaoura, (2023, 2ff), and Kaveh et. al. (2023,6ff), among others, argue that the mass and forced deportation of children and other civilians, torture, and killing is easily perceived as genocide under international law, thus also a “broader genocidal policy of the Russian state against Ukraine” (Urbancik & Artemova, 2024). Pylypenko (2023) further reports that as of May 2 2022, Darya Herasymchuk, President of Ukraine for Children's Rights and Rehabilitation stated that 181.000 children had been deported to Russian-controlled territory (Ukraine Media Center, 2022). On the same matter, Pylypenko (2023) also reports that a much similar number, 183.168, was given by the head of the National Center of the Russian Federation only a few days before (Lepekha, 2022). In an interview with CNN, Dmytro Lubinets, the human rights commissioner of Ukraine argues that another goal of taking and holding civilians hostage is to use them as POWs for prisoner exchange (Kottasová & Voitovych, 2024).

Others argue that the goal and objectives of taking civilian prisoners, especially children, were planned before the invasion with the goal to strip the civilians who have not yet turned 18 of their Ukrainian identity (Del Monte & Barlaoura, 2023, 2f; Pylypenko, 2023, Kaveh et al., 2023; Walker, 2024). Hence, the method of speeding up the process of issuing Russian passports (Blinken, 2022; Kehris, 2022). The goal is not only to get rid of the

Ukrainian identity but also to re-educate the children by promoting “cultural, historical, societal, and patriotic messages that serve the political interests of Russia” (Kaveh et al., 2023, 14).

The Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health reports that 43 re-education facilities were identified in Russia and territory occupied by Russia by 2023, some being more than 800km away from the Ukrainian border (Kaveh et al., 2023, 5ff). However, they fear the number of facilities to be significantly higher (Ibid.). Based on interviews and official documents, in 2024, the Media Initiative of Human Rights (MIHR) had reported over 130 facility centres including penal colonies, pre-trial detention, and official prisons detaining Ukrainian civilians, some as far away as Russian Siberia (Kottasová & Voitovych, 2024). Apart from re-education, data further confirms the perceived Russian goal of changing demographics (Blinken, 2022; Havrylov, 2024), using Ukrainian children as a Russian army reserve for future mobilisation (York, 2024), and the goal of “militarization through paramilitary organizations like the “Young Army” (Havrylov, 2024).

In a routine review in January 2024, The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child urges Russia to answer to the act of illegally transporting Ukrainian children. The answer from Alexey Vovchenko, Russia’s deputy minister of labour and social protection, said that “Russia has not been involved in the deportation of citizens of Ukraine” (Langrand, 2024) Further criticising the accusations,

Vovchenko told the experts that some 3,000 children had been “evacuated” from orphanages and care centres from the self-proclaimed Luhansk and Donetsk people’s republics for their own safety to protect them from the hostilities while accusing Ukrainian authorities of not previously caring for the children (Ibid.)

Vovchenko additionally stated that there had been “no cases of Ukrainian children adopted by Russians, and guardianship was just temporary, downplaying it as a simple matter of language misinterpretation” (Ibid.). However, the statements of Vovchenko on behalf of Russia are by the West perceived as an excuse to legitimise the verified Russian act of transferring Ukrainian children (Langrand, 2024).

6.1.3 b) What are the *Methods* Used to Take and Hold Civilian Prisoners?

Despite Putin stating that “It is not our plan to occupy the Ukrainian territory. We do not intend to impose anything on anyone by force” (Atlantic Council, 2023), the invasion itself and the methods of capturing civilians indicate enforced actions with involuntary repercussions for Ukrainian citizens (Kheris, 2022; Delanty, 2023, Kaveh et al., 2023). In a press statement from the US Secretary of State, Anthony J. Blinken (2022), he reports that various sources have concluded indications of interrogation, detention, and forced deportation of civilians. The statement was given on July 13th 2022, stating that the deportation to Russia has affected “between 900,000 and 1.6 million Ukrainian citizens, including 260,000 children” (Blinken, 2022). Now two years later, the total number is likely much higher.

The interrogation, detention, and forced deportation further include filtration facilities. By late spring 2022, at least 18 facilities were confirmed (Del Monte & Barlaoura, 2023, 3). Including the US Secretary of State (2022), evidence from several reports, news articles, and interviews with survivors show that civilians, including children, are filtered out and detained, adopted by Russian families, tortured, raped, or murdered. This is indicated to be a result of Russian negligence to rain in rampaging Russian troops or as a consequence of deliberately condoned or ordered actions resulting from civilians being seen to pose a potential threat. (Delanty, 2023; Kheris, 2022; Del Monte & Barlaoura, 2023 2f; Pylypenko, 2023). The threats are perceived to include people with connections to civil society, media, the Ukrainian army and the government, the media and those who refuse to abide by Russian rules. The method of getting rid of these people who due to their knowledge or connections differ from the Russians is likely based on the goal of changing demographics and controlling society (Blinken, 2022; Havrylov, 2024).

The UN has confirmed credible allegations on the forced transfer of children to Russia and is “concerned that the Russian authorities have adopted a simplified procedure to grant Russian citizenship to children without parental care, and that these children would be eligible for adoption by Russian families” (Kehris, 2022). Based on the Russian plans to move Ukrainian children to Russia, according to Putin, to protect them from the war, in 2022, the UN stated that it worries that the transfer of children does “not appear to include steps for family reunification or in other ways ensure respect for the principle of the best interests of the child” (Ibid.)

Concerning filtration facilities, civilians who are or have been held prisoners while being 'filtrated' by the Russian army or hired armed groups, have additionally been subjected to;

body searches, sometimes involving forced nudity, and detailed interrogations about the personal background, family ties, political views and allegiances of the individual concerned. They examined personal belongings, including mobile devices, and gathered personal identity data, pictures and fingerprints. In some cases, those awaiting 'filtration' spent nights in vehicles, or in unequipped and overcrowded premises, sometimes without adequate access to food, water and sanitation (Kheris, 2022).

This is confirmed by several other sources such as Del Monte & Barlaoura (2023, 3f), Blinken (2022), and Delanty (2023). When the filtration process is done most civilians are set free again, however, there is documentation stating that the method of filtration camps is a tool to find the civilians with anti-Russia perceptions or civilians who secretly work for Ukraine to further detain, torture, or enable their disappearance (Kehris, 2022; Blinken, 2022, Del Monte & Barlaoura, 2023, 3f).

Additionally, there is documentation proving that civilians are being transferred to pre-trial detention centres and penal colonies, providing limited or no information to the prisoners' families. One of the confirmed locations used for such measures and for detention is located near Oleniavik and Donetsk, Ukrainian cities occupied by Russian troops (Kehris, 2022). Other documentation that provides proof of penal colonies includes reports from the MIHR, which have confirmed the colonies in the Russian regions of Mordovia and Vladimir (Kottasová & Voitovych, 2024). Some have been released after one or two months while other prisoners do not yet know their fate (Kehris, 2022; Del Monte & Barlaoura, 2023, 3f).

The method of abducting or filtering out children for the goal of russification, militarisation, and stripping them of their Ukrainian identity has been conducted in several ways (Del Monte & Barlaoura, 2023, 3; Kaveh et al., 2023; Havrylov, 2024). Not only through adoption to Russian families as previously mentioned but also by transferring them to Russian-run orphanages, and residential facilities like 'summer camps' (Del Monte & Barlaoura, 2023, 2f; Pylypenko, 2023; Blinken, 2022; Kaveh et al., 2023, 4f; Urbancik & Artemova, 2024) or monasteries of the ROC (Havrylov, 2024). The abduction includes cases where children have been separated from their parents in filtration camps and children being

lost and alone (Ibid.). However, there are several documented cases where children have been taken from orphanages, institutional care facilities, schools and similar facilities (Ibid.).

A witness and previous prisoner interviewed by Johanna Urbancik and Daria Artemova (2024), explained that when she among others, according to Russia ‘evacuated’, children arrived at a Crimean re-education camp, they were all stripped of their documents including passports. The interviewee further explains that the daily routines included constant guarding by Russian armed police and the singing of the Russian National Anthem. Apart from life in the camp, she also speaks of the time of the war before she was taken, mentioning a period of intense firing where they had to live without food as truck deliveries could not get through (Urbanick & Artemova, 2024). In line with the interviewee’s perception, Urbancik and Artemova (2024) state that the camps “served the purpose of ensuring the majority of children ended up going to Russia. The classes could therefore only be described as propaganda, she [the interviewee] remembered, adding that learning Ukrainian at the school was not an option”. Another witness, who was not forcibly taken to Russia, to begin with, but instead later on, was separated from her family and forced into a Russian children’s home and school where she was told that “Ukraine doesn’t exist, that it never existed, that we’re all Russians“ (Walker, 2024).

The goal and method of detaining civilians can be traced back to before the actual invasion in 2022. It is argued that Russian security agents’ forced detention and disappearance of civilians as a part of an intentional large-scale campaign which was set in motion already with the annexation of Crimea in 2014, later intensified by the 2022 invasion (Kottasová & Voitovych, 2024; Cotovio et. al., 2024; Watling et. al., 2023; Urbancik & Artemova, 2024).

6.1.4 b) What are the *Forms of Finance* Correlated to the Goals and Methods?

Many sources are reporting on themes of finance correlated to the goals and methods of taking civilian prisoners. One of these is the use of Ukrainian children as cost-free and forced labour, making trench candles for the Russian army (York, 2024). Many children are further stated to be forced into military training with the perceived goal of eventually joining the Russian army (Ibid.; Havrylov, 2024; Del Monte & Barlaoura, 2023, 3). The statement of Lubinets (Kottasová & Voitovych, 2024) concerning the goal of taking civilian prisoners and identifying them as POWs additionally concerns the form of finance they provide by being used as bargaining chips, i.e. payment for example for Russian POWs held by Ukraine. Yulia,

a relative of a detained civilian argues that there is much talk of POWs but little of imprisoned civilians, further “adding that she sometimes feels frustrated about the Ukrainian government’s decision not to acknowledge civilian detainees as prisoners of war, as Russia has demanded” (Ibid.). However, Lubinets argues “that recognizing Ukrainian civilians as prisoners of war would be both illegal and dangerous because it would put Ukrainians in occupied areas at higher risk of being detained to be used as bargaining chips” (Ibid.).

According to the report by the Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health, it is identified that funding for re-education camps is arriving from both federal, regional, and local individuals and groups, with no proof of Ukrainian families being forced to pay for their children’s stay (Kaveh et al., 2023, 5 & 11). In 2023, the governor of the Murmansk region in Russia, Andrei Chibis, was stated to supposedly use funds from the region to finance the deportation of children (Havrylov, 2024).

6.2 To What Extent Does the Interpretation of Russian Objectives Communicate with Characteristics of New Warfare?

Despite Kaldor’s argumentation (2023) that a new war environment is yet to be created in the conflict, she also stresses that the theoretical framework of new war theory is a lens to understand conflicts after the Cold War (2013b). Bearing this in mind, according to Kaldor the theory almost certainly sheds additional light on the conflict circumstances, the depth of its application and its proficiency in providing enhanced valuable explanations do however necessitate further investigation and subsequent discoveries. The data and to some extent analysis provided above have described the setting of the Russian objectives in detail in terms of actors, goals, methods, and forms of finance. The analysis will now continue building on these terms along with key themes and issues discovered in comparison to the analytical framework, Kaldor’s description of the logic of new wars. Starting with Delanty’s (2023) discussion of how the theory applies to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Delanty argues that the conflict in large shows tendencies of new war but that everything is not new warfare. Does this in fact then indicate a so-called new war, or can it only or primarily be classified by means of other theories of unconventional warfare? Well, despite Kaldor’s focus being more “on civil wars, ethno-politics and predatory warlords which are the main features of new wars, the techniques of warfare employed by the armies of the Russian Federation [...] are very similar” (Delanty, 2023, 432).

Firstly, the theoretical applications in her book ‘New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era’ may mainly discuss case studies on conflicts that include civil wars, ethno-politics, and predatory warlords. Nevertheless, the clear description of the analytical framework of the logic of new wars involves far more. Secondly, the findings in the first section of the analysis do demonstrate that the conflict does include the theme of ethno-politics in the sense of the deporting, re-education, and russification of Ukrainian children (Conant, 2023; Del Monte & Barlaoura, 2023, 3; Kaveh et al., 2023; Havrylov, 2024), thus on this aspect, a clear connection can be drawn to new war theory.

Preferably indicators of all four terms of actors, goals, methods, and forms of finance as displayed in the findings of the analysis above, need to show a clear connection to the description of each corresponding category in the analytical framework as stated by Kaldor (2013b, 2f). Therefore the analysis continues by addressing the terms one by one.

Starting with the actors responsible for taking civilian prisoners, it is clear that most of them are perceived to be working directly under Putin (Kottasová & Voitovych, 2024; Delanty, 2023). However, it is evident that the actors involve more than twenty-five units of private military contractors (Kaźmierczak, 2024, 70), thus, the number of which are accountable for deporting civilians is difficult to account for. Yet, additional data from the OHCHR has shown that both the Russian armed forces, contracted armed groups, and individuals have been part of the deportation of Ukrainian civilians (Kheris, 2022). Furthermore, individual actors such as governors have proved to be parts of both the deportation process, and the forced adoption of Ukrainian children into Russian families (Havrylov, 2024; Walker 2024). The fact that most of the actors are part of the Russian Federation, indicates show that both state and non-state actors such as the Wagner Group and other mercenaries are interconnected with regard to Russian objectives (Kaldor, 2013b, Kaźmierczak, 2024, 70).

Moving on to the Russian goal of taking civilian prisoners, seen from a Russian perspective, the goals are stated to include the de-Nazification and demilitarisation of Ukraine (Guardian News, 2023) to save the [Russian] civilians. Russia’s publicly stated goal furthermore includes evacuating Ukrainian children for their safety reasons (Langrand, 2024). The goal of de-Nazification is by non-Russians mainly seen as a tool to legitimize the Russian action, however, which is well in line with new war theory. This can furthermore be seen as a reason for violence in the name of identity. This can be perceived as a Russian creation of ‘us’ the ‘saviours’ and ‘them’ the ‘Nazis’, i.e. Russians and Ukrainians (Kaldor, 2013b, 2, Guardian News, 2023). From the Western perspective, many argue that the Russian

acts reflect genocide of the Ukrainian people. This is based on the forced deportation and adoption of children, re-education camps promoting Russian interests, and the killing and deportation of civilians as a Russian response to those expressing pro-Ukraine views or views that in other ways conflict with Russia's intentions or perceptions (Urbancik & Artemova, 2024; Pylypenko, 2023; Del Monte & Barlaoura, 2023, 2ff); Kaveh et. al., 2023,6ff), corresponding to identity politics as stated by Kaldor (Kaldor, 2013a, 7f & Kaldor, 2013b, 2).

The perception of Russian goals furthermore includes the statements of militarisation of Ukrainian civilians, including children, for the Russian purpose of creating a future army reserve, also seen as either forcing detainees to detention camps, death or becoming the Russian 'us' i.e. their 'other' (Kaldor, 2013a, 104). This further includes Ukrainian civilians being used as POWs for the goal of prisoner exchange (York, 2024; Havrylov, 2024; Kottasová & Voitovych, 2024).

As civilians and combatants have become harder to distinguish (Kaldor, 2013a, 53, 98, & 125), one could argue that the same applies to the reality of prisoners. In other words, it might not be easy to determine whether someone is held as a POW or a civilian prisoner in Russia. This further includes the aspects where one party, in this case, Russia, make use of scapegoats as a method, stating that an individual is a POW when the person is in fact a civilian (York, 2024; Havrylov, 2024; Kottasová & Voitovych, 2024). However, this also has the possibility of going the other way around, that the opposing party, in this case, Ukraine, knows that their citizen was a combatant and now is a POW, but in media portrays the individual to be a civilian prisoner to gain support and sustain the picture of Russia as the 'other' (Kaldor, 2013a, 7f).

Russia further tries to control the Ukrainian population (Kaldor, 2013b, 2f) through filtration camps where civilians have to go through screening and in some cases torture. This is a method used by Russia to filter out individuals who are working for Ukrainian civil society, army, government, or simply not pro-Russian. However, many cases have been reported of Russia detaining civilians without a clear reason, thus innocent (Delanty, 2023; Kheris, 2022; Del Monte & Barlaoura, 23; Pulypenko, 2023). The goal of the Russification of children further includes the methods of deporting them from Ukraine and their families and putting them in re-education camps, military camps, adopting them into Russian families, and stripping them of their Ukrainian identity through Russian education, and forcing Russian citizenship upon prisoners (Kheris, 2022; Blinken, 2022; Delanty, 2023). It is quite clear that this corresponds with the method of new wars which includes the social and political control

of the population of a territory. However, Russia is also known to control the population by physical means, thus using old warfare (Kaldor, 2013b, 2f).

The forms of finance displayed correlate to the goals and methods of detaining Ukrainian civilians according to new war theory (Kaldor, 2013b, 2f). Not only is the deportation of civilians financed through federal, regional, local and individual funds and sponsors (Kaveh et. al., 2023, 5 & 11; Havrylov, 2023) but the imprisoned civilians are also used as an economic gain in terms of free labour and forcibly making prisoners join the Russian army with little or no reimbursement (York, 2024; Havrylov, 2023; Del Monte & Barlaoua, 2023, 3). The goal and objective of detaining civilians are also perceived as a method and form of finance to be used as bargaining chips and payment and in line with Russian interests such as for the exchange of Russian prisoners (Kottasová & Voitovych, 2024).

Apart from the civilian prisoner aspects of being used as bargaining chips having a clear connection to new war theory, other forms of funding sufficiently corresponding to the logic of new wars have been harder to prove, for instance with regards to looting and pillaging, black market commerce et cetera (Kaldor, 2013a, 51 & 108; Kaldor 2013b, 3).

7. Conclusion

So to what extent do the findings of Russian objectives displayed in the previous section communicate with new warfare? The findings show that the Russian objectives of taking civilian prisoners from the perspective of actors, goals, methods, and forms of finance differ in terms of how well they correspond with new war theory. Actors responsible correspond with the new war elements and the framework, such as Putin and his government as well as hired non-governmental groups. The extent, however, can be debated as despite a clear correlation, the main actors are still mostly state-related. Similarly, the forms of finance do include themes of the framework regarding Russian checkpoints such as filtration camps and using hostages and prisoners as bargaining chips (Kaldor, 2013b, 3). However, the finding still misses the important framework of aspects of funding and participation mostly being low and the economy being dependent on aspects of looting, taxation of humanitarian aid, and the black market (Ibid.).

The categories of financing and actors reflect aspects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict whose nature and correspondence with new war theory is hard to verify with utmost certainty. Nevertheless, the similarities between the analytical framework and the described setting of goals and methods should be stressed. Additionally, goals and methods can be argued to be the key themes in investigating Russian objectives due to the corresponding meaning of goals and objectives. Goals and methods as criteria are of greater significance than actors and funding when it comes to the research question. Therefore it can be argued that together with the vast evidence of data, the summarised interpretation of the Russian Objectives corresponds well with the characteristics of new warfare.

Considering the conflict at large, Kaldor's argument that the new war environment is yet to be created in the conflict is likely still valid. However, when looking into a more specific theme within the conflict, it is clear that the environment regarding actors, goals, and methods is to some extent already created. Thus, Kaldor's analytical framework proves valuable. Embarking on possible further research, it would be of interest to conduct the same study post-conflict and compare it to the findings of today, further verifying empirical data on civilian prisoners. Another study of interest would be to use the same analytical framework and methodology, but focus the research question on prisoners of war and then compare the findings to that of this thesis.

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