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Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications

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The current issue is the fourth of the ninth volume of the *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications (AJMMC)*, published by the [Mass Media & Communication Unit](#) of ATINER.

Gregory T. Papanikos
President
ATINER



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22nd Annual International Conference on Communication and Mass Media, 13-16 May 2024, Athens, Greece

The [Mass Media & Communication Unit](#) of ATINER organizes its **22nd Annual International Conference on Communication and Mass Media, 13-16 May 2023, Athens, Greece** sponsored by the [Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications](#). The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers of Communications, Mass Media and other related disciplines. Please submit a proposal using the form available (<https://www.atiner.gr/2024/FORM-MED.doc>).

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- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **15 April 2024**

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- **Dr. John Pavlik**, Head, [Mass Media and Communication Research Unit](#), ATINER & Professor, Rutgers University, USA.

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Introduction: An Inclusive Scholarly Perspective on Media and the War in Ukraine

*By John V. Pavlik**

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has proven to be among the world's greatest crises of the period and as such has been a major story for news media across the globe. This special issue of the *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications* is devoted to a diverse, international and scholarly examination of the media and communication implications of the war in Ukraine. This special issue is needed not only because of the magnitude of the topic. It is also vital that scholarly understanding of the war and its media and communication implications is advanced and in a timely and inclusive fashion. We are seeking with this special issue to not offer the typically western research viewpoint. Rather, in the spirit of global inclusion, we are offering research from a variety of scholars from a range of universities in not only in Europe and the U.S. but from other parts of the world including the global south. From Pakistan to Iran, Brazil to South Africa, the research vantage points offered in this article are a diverse collection. We are also seeking to give voice to research that utilizes multiple methodologies and theoretical perspectives, from the qualitative to the quantitative, critical and cultural as well as that grounded in conceptual approaches drawn from the social sciences and the humanities.

We live in an age where media are seemingly ubiquitous and impactful, with mobile media, Internet connectivity, drones and video surveillance often bringing nonstop news and information to a public with an oftentimes thirsty appetite for news. Yet, it is essential that understanding of the role of media, especially during times of conflict, serve as a central part of how we come to have that understanding. Scholarly research and inquiry provides a valuable window into the role of media in society, especially during times of war, in Ukraine or elsewhere. By making research on the media implications of the war in Ukraine available in a timely fashion, we hope that scholars, concerned citizens, journalists and other media professionals, as well as policy makers can make use of the insights offered in this special issue to better understand the complexities that arise from the war in Ukraine and the impact on and by media across the globe.

The eleven articles published in this special issue offer a unique vantage point on how media have responded to the conflict. Two articles provide a perspective from South Africa. In providing a contextualized view of media coverage of the conflict, three leading scholars from South Africa provide a quantitative analysis of Russia-Ukraine war reporting as framed by America's *New York Post*, China's *Global Times* and South African Citizen newspapers. Collaborating on this investigation are Prof. Oludele Akinloye Akinboade, of Africa Resources in Socio-Economics, Prof. Yunus Heske, Department of Communication Science,

*Professor, Rutgers University, USA.

University of South Africa, Muckleneuk Campus, and Prof. Victor Sannyboy, Molobi, all of Pretoria, South Africa. Together, this study reveals how the news media examined all use different news frames in their narratives but that six themes emerge in that coverage, including human impact, economic consequences, and attribution of responsibility.

Prof. Yolanda Sadie, University of Cape Town, provides another perspective from South Africa. In her study, Sadie reveals how South African print media presented the South African government's stance on the Russia-Ukraine war and accounts of the progress of the war. Sadie's investigation focused on the period of 24 February 2022 to 15 September 2022. Her qualitative thematic analysis of media reports used the key words "Russia", "Ukraine" and "war" drawing upon content included in SA Media, a press-clipping database service, which comprises 39 of mainstream publications in South Africa, including 19 daily publications, 17 weekend publications, two weekly publications and one monthly publication. The investigation reveals that there were 1,452 reports on the Russia/Ukraine war and 1,119 of these reports were largely from international news agencies such as Reuters. Most articles described the war with no connection being made to South Africa. But in nearly a third, or 333 reports, South Africa was mentioned, including noting the effects of the war on South Africa and South Africa's position with regard to the war.

Furthering the perspective from the Global South is S. Arulchelvan's examination of how Indian news media view the Russia and Ukraine War. Arulchelvan provides an analysis of news reports of two Indian newspapers, *The Hindu* and *Times of India*, during the first two months of the war, from 24 February 2022 to 30 April 2022. Drawing upon Galtung's Peace and War journalism theory, the content analysis looks at how the papers framed the war. Findings indicate the Russia-Ukraine conflict is reported largely using a peaceful frame and that the newspapers favored Ukraine over Russia.

Three articles provide a North American viewpoint. Prof. Margaret Cassidy, Adelphi University, United States of America (U.S.A.), offers a western viewpoint on how U.S. news media have covered the conflict. In particular, Cassidy considers the assault on the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theatre in Mariupol. Through an exploratory content analysis, Cassidy found patterns in the diverse sources used in covering of the incident, word choice, photos and video. Among the findings presented here is that during the early days of the bombing of the Mariupol theater, news organizations struggled not so much with what images and video to show, but whether any images were even available to provide an authentic visual report on the siege.

Prof. John V. Pavlik, Rutgers University, U.S.A., offers a complement to the above vantage, outlining a set of ten implications of the war in Ukraine for news media generally. Among the most vital of these are the pursuit of truth, maintaining independent journalism, freedom of speech and press, and utilizing emerging digital media forms that can expand news gathering and the accuracy of journalism about the conflict.

Prof. Gennadiy Chernov' School of Journalism, University of Regina, Canada, offers an examination of the Russian-Ukrainian war in terms of the persistence of

frames and media issue-cycles. Notably, finding that in addition to heightened interest, the Canadian news coverage reflects the nature of media systems in democratic and authoritarian societies.

One article provides a vantage point from a joint examination by scholars based in Germany and Iran. Collaborating on an analysis of the sociopolitical implications of the war are Prof. Amir Ekhlassi, ESB Business School, Reutlingen University - Germany and Prof. Amir Rahideh, Industrial Management, Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin, Iran. This paper offers a typology of the sociopolitical stance of international brands in the Ukraine war. Among the key insights gleaned in this study is that brands appear to have reacted to the Ukraine war because of a number of reasons including the influence of stakeholder pressure.

Several scholars provide research from European nations. Irena Femic, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Turkey (considered both in Europe and Asia) and Mina Medjedovic, The Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Montenegro offer a view of the war in Ukraine from the vantage point of Montenegro. Based on evidence garnered from content presented in media of Montenegrin and official views of the Montenegrin establishment, the primary conclusion is that it is a divided country regarding the war. Among these divisions are how the Embassy of Ukraine in Montenegro organized a support march in Cetinje while the city also has been home to protests in support of the Russian invasion. Likewise, while Montenegro joined European Union (EU) sanctions against Moscow in April, with a ban on Russian airlines in its airspace, it was not so until after three failed attempts arising from differing views within the government of Zdravko Krivokapić.

Prof. Raquel de Caria Patrício, the University of Lisbon, Portugal, offers an examination of Brazilian media's coverage of the war. Focusing on reaction to and coverage of the war in Ukraine in the early days of the invasion the study provides a content analysis of Brazilian media presentations of the conflict. The content analysis includes three Brazilian daily newspapers during the period of 25th of February to 15th of September 2022. Patrício offers two major conclusions, notably that all newspapers studied condemned the invasion of Ukraine and criticized President Bolsonaro's political behavior. It's worth noting that subsequent to this investigation, the Brazilian presidential election has been held and Bolsonaro was defeated, perhaps in part due to his ideological stance relative to the war in Ukraine.

Dr. Gregory Papanikos, President of ATINER, provides findings from a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of three daily Greek newspapers' coverage of the conflict during the pre-invasion and day of phases of the invasion. His unexpected findings indicate that these newspapers unequivocally condemned the Russia-Belarus invasion. Moreover, despite Greece's long ties with Russia, these leading news media considered the invasion unacceptable.

Finally, one paper provides a perspective from the Netherlands, but is a study of Pakistani media. Dr. Muhammad Tarique, a Postdoc Fellow & Faculty, Media and Cultural Studies, is based at Utrecht University, NL. Tarique's investigation offers a critical discourse analysis of the Russo-Ukraine conflict as represented in the Pakistani elite national press. Based on a one-month examination of coverage

immediately before the war, the study reveals that Pakistani national journalism did not follow the rules of conflict resolution. Moreover, overall War Journalism (WJ) syntax ensued sometimes with meaningless hyperbole.

Taken as a whole, these eleven articles provide a diverse, international perspective on how media around the globe offer a complex account of the war in Ukraine. Although there are some general patterns in the coverage, there is also much range in how media report on the conflict, with some relying on international news services to give a general accounting of the conflict. Localizing the war by framing coverage in terms of each country's official governmental stance on the war, or in terms of how the war may be impacting each nation is another general trend. Still, media independence is often seen in coverage of the conflict, with news media often questioning or in conflict with federal governmental or political leaders and their stance on the war.

The articles included in this special issue offer important observations about the media and the war in Ukraine. In South Africa, research shows that the media employ different news frames in their narratives but that there are some common themes, including human impact, economic consequences, and attribution of responsibility of the war. Quantitative content analysis of South African media further reveals that most reports about the war are drawn largely from international news agencies such as Reuters. Most articles described the war without making a connection to South Africa, though almost a third of the reports do make a connection with South Africa, including noting the effects of the war on South Africa and South Africa's position with regard to the war. A study from the U.S. looked at how the war has been told visually. The study reveals that the first days of reporting on the bombing of the Mariupol theater, news organizations struggled not with what images and video to show, but whether any images were even available, limiting the role of visual news reporting. Analysis of news coverage of the conflict also supports the need for a continued dedication to the pursuit of truth, independent journalism, freedom of speech and press, and utilization of emerging media technologies to help ensure accurate reporting. Research from Canada finds that while there is strong heightened interest in the conflict during its early days, Canadian news coverage reflects the nature of media systems in democratic as contrasted with that of authoritarian societies. A study of Greek newspaper coverage of the conflict reveals that leading newspapers unequivocally condemned the Russia-Belarus invasion, despite Greece's long ties with Russia. An international collaboration between colleagues in Germany and Iran looks at how international brands reacted to the war. The study offers a typology of the sociopolitical stance of international brands in the Ukraine war, including the influence of stakeholder pressure. Research from Montenegro reveals that as may be evidenced elsewhere, viewpoints on the war demonstrate a divided country with no clear consensus on the war and its responsibilities, especially between those in government or with political power and the media. A study of Brazil's major news media reveals that newspapers both condemned the invasion of Ukraine and criticized President Bolsonaro's political behavior. A study on the period of build-up to the war shows that Pakistani national journalism did not follow the rules of conflict resolution. Moreover, overall War Journalism (WJ)

syntax ensued sometimes using meaningless hyperbole that does little to advance a truthful or factual discourse.

The papers included in this special issue of the *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications* underscore the importance that engaged scholarship and international voices can and will play in how scholars and others around the world understand the war and its consequences. We hope that the research presented here in a fashion that is both timely and systematic can help stimulate a discourse about the media and war in Ukraine as well as further study of this enduring international crisis. Importantly, while these ten papers and their authors represent multiple international venues and theoretical approaches, they are a far cry from a full or comprehensive representation of the globe and we hope that future studies of the media implications of the Russia-Ukraine war will ensue and contribute to a growing body of research that is both systematic and theoretically grounded. Although we all hope the war in Ukraine will come to a speedy conclusion and in a form that is least harmful for all those involved or affected, we know that future war in other places and times will likely occur. Perhaps the lessons learned and presented in this special issue devoted to media and communication and the war in Ukraine will resonate in a form that helps to shed more light than heat and can contribute to a more peaceful world. The outbreak of war in Israel-Gaza in October of 2023 underscores the continuing need for understanding how the world's media report on such complex and tragic conflicts. Scholarly research plays an essential role in providing systematic and reasoned assessment and analysis of not only news media reporting of such conflict, but also the role of citizens in producing and distributing video and other content to document the situation, acting as citizen reporters in complement to the reporting of professional journalists. Social media platforms play a key role in the production and distribution of news about the conflict, and there remains a great need for independent scholarly examination of this process and its consequences. Scholarly research can provide critically important insight into the content, methods of production, systems of delivery and nature and extent of public engagement with news of conflict in the Middle East, Ukraine and beyond.

Russia-Ukraine War of 2022: A Descriptive Content Analysis of War News Report Framing by America’s New York Post, China’s Global Times and South Africa’s The Citizen

By Oludele Akinloye Akinboade , Yunus Heske[±] &
Victor Sannyboy Molobi[°]*

This paper attempts to understand war reporting of the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict from Western, Asian and an African news media during the first two weeks of the war, from 24 February to 11 March 2022. A descriptive content analysis has been made of the war frames as reported online by New York Post (USA), Global Times (China) and The Citizen (South Africa). These communication entities used different news frames in their narrative of this international conflict dictated along differences in ideological orientation and considerations of their target audience. The themes of conflict, human impact, economic consequences, attribution of responsibility, sources and tonality serve as the basis for the content analysis. New York Post labelled the “invasion” as a “war” in which crimes were committed throughout Ukraine, South African Citizen news framing was less vicious, while Global Times simply characterized the invasion as a “crisis”. In general, the New York Post’s coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict largely emphasized the Ukrainian victims of the war and depict Russia as the aggressor. Global Times on the other hand promoted the China’s potential role as a mediator, while The Citizen of South Africa sought to maintain the country’s neutral stance.

Keywords: war reporting, journalism, framing, news media, political ideologies

Introduction

On the 24th February 2022, the world witnessed Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and a war erupted between two neighbouring countries. This event was shocking, newsworthy and well publicised throughout the world. The way in which the Russia-ukraine war was covered by different media organizations across the continents of Africa, Asia, and North America is therefore an interesting discussion. According to Laban et al. (2023, p. 1), readers increasingly access news through multiple channels as a means to complement their understanding of the political and world affairs. Media information has considerable power because it can shape discussions about and, to a certain extent, reality of the war. In the aftermath of the initial invasion, media outlets in various parts of the world covered the war in drastically different tones. In news reporting, Tuchman (1978)

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explained that perspective is inevitable and that it is a result of routinized, legitimized and institutionalized structures that favour certain ways of reporting the news. This means that though news report framing could manifest the intent of the reporter, but the motives could be unintentional (Gamson, 1989). This is because although journalists may follow guidelines for objective reporting, different cultural and political perspectives do filter into the news making process, leading to a dominant framing of the news event to the target audience.

Russia's decision to frame its aggression as a special operation, instead of a war, was necessary so as to avoid being treated as a side openly declaring war. It could also suggest giving the Russian populace the notion of a potential lesser scale of involvement of the Russian army as well as the

Russian superiority (and not equality) over Ukraine (Gorobets, 2022). According to Phillip (2022) the Western press characteristically labeled the "special military operation" as a "war crime" as it was an "unprovoked invasion" perpetrated by the Russian government. Russian outlets, in turn, have largely denied any war crimes, placing fault for the necessity of the "special military operation" on Western countries (Thompson & Myers, 2022). African as well as South East Asian countries very quickly called for more dialogues among relevant sides to seek a peaceful solution for the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

The lion's share of information content about events in Ukraine in modern mass media is made up of articles and photos (Kutsyk, 2022). According to Boydston et al. (2013), there are clear distinguishable positive, negative and neutral news reporting tones. In the case of New York Post which is the largest subscription-based news outlet in the United States, the news reporting style and editorial stance is regarded as conservative-leaning and has remained largely consistent over the years. Also, in reporting news about Russia-Ukraine war, the New York Post news outlet have joined other Western news organizations in condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, describing it as unprovoked. State media outlets in China, however, seem to advocate diplomacy while simultaneously blaming Western powers for sparking the conflict, claiming NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe was a provocation, and justifying Russia's claim that the invasion was a "defensive" one. News from Africa and other developing countries have tended to stay neutral and called for dialogue by affected parties.

Studies demonstrate that political ideology, diplomatic sensitivity, historical factors, and national interests play a crucial role in news framing of international conflicts (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Some news frames appear to be more suited to particular ideologies than others, implying that news organizations from various nations or countries with different ideologies would cover the same topic and the same issue using different news frames (Liu, 2017). As a result, African, Chinese and US media may use different frames to cover this conflict based on their different ideological persuasions.

However, despite the evident differences and the large impact these differences have had on different population's perception of the war, there are few systematic analyses of the narratives present in Western, Asian and African media news organizations. To report on the war, reporters have relied on a spectrum of

primary sources to get reliable and timely information. Research has shown (Dennis et al., 1991) that the character of how news media cover military conflicts, often depends on contextual factors such as whether a news organization is headquartered in the country of one of the combatants or within a country with a vested interest in the outcome. Only independent news media can hope to cut through the fog of war and possibly report the truth. State media are incapable of reporting the truth about the war, hence state media are regarded as instruments of government propaganda.

Soon after the invasion of Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin, instituted a new law restricting freedom of speech and press regarding the war. In particular, the law prohibits any reporting that does not conform to the official governmental position on what is the truth. This means that the use of the words “war” or “invasion” are prohibited in Russia, whether in print, on air, or online, on news sites or social media platforms (Tebor, 2022). Only descriptions of the conflict as a special military operation were permitted. Also, as they represent vastly different interests, Western, Asian and African media were expected to frame the Russian-Ukraine war differently. International newspapers are, however, an important part of public diplomacy strategies, as they involve ‘the use of electronic media by one society to shape the opinion of the people and leaders of another’ (Price, 2003, p. 53). Such media help deliver messages and images to foreign publics to the advantage of an international actor.

The Russian-Ukrainian War is a global event with implications for every country in the World; hence, it is also of interest to the South African public because South Africa has had historically strong ties with both Russia and Ukraine, when both formed part of the former Soviet Union. In addition, there has been a keen South African interest in Russia’s justification of this particular invasion, given that South Africa has an economic alliance with Russia through the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) grouping of middle-income countries. Also, pro-Russian sympathies, combined with economic motivations, have led to many Africans wanting to join Russian forces. Following social media rumours of a pay of \$2,000, possibly sparked by the news that Russia was exploring recruiting volunteers in the Middle East, hundreds of Ethiopians (including veterans) showed up at the Russian embassy in Addis Ababa in April 2022. Many are disillusioned by the high unemployment and economic situation in the country (Endeshaw, 2022). According to the Ukrainian ambassador to South Africa, Mozambique, and Botswana, Ukraine has been unable to take up offers of help due to the governments of these countries (Ali, 2022).

Furthermore, despite the geographical distance, there are important ties between Ukraine and Africa, including more than 8,000 Moroccans and 4,000 Nigerians studying in Ukraine. There are over \$4 billion in exports from Ukraine to Africa. About 90% of this is wheat, and 6% is sunflower oil. Major importing countries are Egypt, which accounts for nearly half of the imports, followed by Sudan, Nigeria, Tanzania, Algeria, Kenya and South Africa (IOL, 2022).

This paper firstly aimed to describe how differently Western, Asian and South African online newspapers framed the Russian-Ukrainian war between 24 February and 2 March, 2022 in the first period of the study and again at a later

period that covered from 3-11 March. The study then explored the message characteristics (tone) such as words, phrases and statements about the 2022 Russian-Ukraine war as contained in the selected online newspapers. It follows in the tradition of newspaper content analyses of the framings between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian online communities regarding the East-Ukrainian conflict in 2014 (Makhortykh & Sydorova, 2017), the study of Papanikos (2022) and of Henley et al. (2022, p. 1) and others who are regarded as pioneers in the study of Russia's "special operation" in Ukraine. Section one of the paper is introductory, while section two presents the literature of newspaper frames and associated propaganda. Research methods are in section three followed by the presentation of results in section four. The last section concludes the paper.

Study Aim

In order to understand and trace the contours of China's response to the Conflict thus far (Greitens, 2022) , the paper seeks to explain the observed differences in war report framing by New York Post, Global Times and The Citizen news of the Russia-Ukraine war, 2022. Two reporting periods are compared viz: the first and second weeks of the war.

News Framing

The importance of framing by news organizations cannot be under-estimated. This is due to the fact that the words they use to communicate the message(s) of a text about an individual, a group of people, an event, a process, a state of affairs or any of the other subjects and themes of newspaper texts, inadvertently frame the story in direct and unavoidable ways (Richardson, 2007, p. 49). According to Entman (1993, p. 52), framing can be regarded as the process of selecting certain parts of reality and making them more salient. The literature, hence, suggests that frames that are adopted and projected through news media can increase the prominence of certain events in ways that may impact audience perceptions and interpretations (Entman, 2007), which are helpful in simplifying complex information and events (Entman, 1993). Such frames also make information "accessible to lay audiences as they play to existing cognitive schemas" (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 12). It is the view of De Vreese (2005, p. 55) that frames can be categorized as 'issue-specific' frames, which tend to focus on the particularities of certain topics, or 'generic' frames, which deal with broad, wide-ranging contexts. De Vreese (2005) further noted that a news frame usually has distinguishable, identifiable, observable, and recognizable elements or framing devices, such as headlines, phrases, images, keywords, sourcing, leads, and metaphors. It matters because framing conflicts and actors make other options seem natural and others unfathomable. Newspaper "lexical choices of words or labels" can impact audience interpretations (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 62).

News Framing and Imagery

Analyses of news media coverage of previous wars indicate that each current war is greatly informed by images, symbols, language, and experience associated with previous wars, including the demonization of the enemy, the virtues and necessity of waging war, and the social and political benefits for doing so (Altheide, 1995). According to Seo (2014) images can be weaponized as propaganda items. Also, others, like Zannettou et al. (2018) suggested that Russian state-sponsored Twitter accounts had a marked influence on the memes or images that appeared on Reddit and the alternative social media platform Gab. In addition, Russian bots and troll accounts are also known to be spreading Russian propaganda and disinformation, within Eastern Europe, about Ukraine since Russia's 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea (Hellman & Wagnsson, 2017).

In the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict, the Russian military inadvertently created a key symbol in the non-Cyrillic letter Z painted on invasion vehicles that came to embody Russian forces and the operation in general. The Z symbol became a sign of support, throughout Russia, for the claimed effort to "liberate" fellow Russians in Eastern Ukraine. It is also aligned with the liberation theme, denazification efforts, and other propaganda claims (Courter, 2022, p. 8).

News Framing Themes (Patterns)

A number of studies that have evaluated Western media framing of violent conflicts and the framing of war language, generally point to marginalized and stereotypical coverage patterns in their reporting of conflicts taking place in non-Western, black or brown countries. In the case of the Russia-Ukraine war which has received widespread reporting on various issues, similarly coverage of middle-east conflict and specifically the Iraq war was shaped by themes of (1) victims and suffering (including heroism and compensation), (2) retaliation, (3) the war on terrorism, (4) fear, (5) homeland security, (6) surveillance, and (7) the conduct and preparation for the wars with Afghanistan and Iraq (Altheide, 2004). The Iraq War, like Grenada, Panama, and the first Gulf War, was very oriented to news management. The major theme of the "enemy as terrorist" pervaded news coverage. The studies by Griffin & Lee (1995) and Youssef (2009) both posited that American newspapers tended to neglect Iraqi casualties of war.

Also, In the case of Africa, Patrick (2016) and Gruley & Duvall (2012) analyzed Western news coverage of violent conflicts in Africa and found that Western newspapers generally neglect the issues and exhibit stereotypical war reporting patterns. On the other hand, Patrick's (2016) analysis of American and British newspaper coverage of the Rwandan genocide (1994) showed that reportage of Rwanda was both comparatively scant and grounded in stereotypes about Africa. Again, Gruley & Duvall's (2012, p. 38) examination of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* coverage of the war in Darfur, Sudan also suggests that coverage lacked contextual background on the origins of the conflict, and highlighted 'the stereotype of tribal conflict in Africa'.

Correlation between News Frames and Propaganda

Authors such as Zhondang & Kosicki (1993), and Chiricos et al. (2000) suggest that news frames of news organizations and their selection of dominant themes structure the selection, presentation, and emphasis of news reports. Authoritarian regimes tend to employ state media to play the role of government lapdog and act as a propaganda mechanism for their regime. For example, Russia has reportedly weaponized its state media as a tool of propaganda. This is apparently was designed to achieve multiple goals which included influencing public opinion in support of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and to deflect blame for the atrocities committed by the Russian military especially on Ukrainians. Such propaganda also has an international objective of delivering a clear message to adversaries. Russian news organization's messaging has traditionally exploited the psychological effects of military exercises to influence internal and external targets, and to demonstrate possession of a credible military, and to deter opponents (Courter, 2022). In April 2022 Russian television's Rossiya-1 news channel, threatened Britain with nuclear annihilation by airing a simulation of nuclear strikes by air and by sea destroying Britain and Ireland (Ilyushina et al., 2022). Disinformation and propaganda campaigns are also sometimes aimed at sowing division (Badawy et al., 2018).

Social media platforms also can be used as an effective vehicle for propaganda dissemination. Russian state TV has been reported to have turned to the video sharing social media platform Rumble to distribute its propaganda. Rumble is a platform favoured generally by conservatives and the far right and has not been banned by Russia (Fuchs, 2022).

Researcher have examined news organizations that use images in the spread of narratives, especially images appearing in the contents of social media misinformation.

Visuals published by news organizations have also been an essential part of recent modern propaganda efforts, as images are often more effective than words in capturing the attention of the public and crystalizing sentiments (Goldstein, 2009; Rose, 2012). This is because visual content generates the most engagements in social media spheres (HubSpot, 2011).

Resources and Method

During the first week of the war, five articles from New York Post, 3 articles from China's Global Times, and 9 articles from South Africa's Citizen newspaper were studied. This period also coincided with the United Nations General Assembly adopting Resolution ES-11/1 on March 2, 2022 describing the conflict as an aggression against Ukraine (Chernov, 2023, p. 1).

In addition, the study extended its coverage to publications from these news outlets from 3-11 March 2022 which increased the number of articles to include five additional news articles from New York Post, 63 from Global Times and 4 from The Citizen. The substantial increase in articles of Global Times was due to

the fact that a continuous online news update on events in Ukraine were published (Global Times, 2022).

Along the lines of Miller, Andsager and Riechert (1998), this study conducted computer assisted frame mapping, a technique based on the notion that frames are manifested in the use of specific words (Entman, 1993). This study identified frames by examining specific vocabularies such as “suffering”, “refugees”, “casualties”, “infrastructure” “schools”, “hospitals” as they portray the themes identified by De Vreese (2005, p. 55). This approach is advantageous for its objectivity in frame extraction, given that frames are not “found” by the researcher but “computed” by the computer program.

This study used content analysis to examine how Western, Asian and African news reporting framed the early stages of the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022. The early stages of the Russian-Ukrainian war coverage could be explored by content analysis and framing (Vrba, 2022).

Chernov (2023) employed content analysis as descriptive statistics to quantitatively measure and compare the number of key terms and articles related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

A descriptive content analysis is a quantitative research technique that enables researchers to systematically examine descriptive of the content of media outlets and make inferences from them. Content analysis research on publications of news organizations show how their news frames can shape the discourse and how the language they use conveys the dominant message (Weiler & Pearce, 1992) in the process of assessing the relative extent to which news organizations’ specified references, attitudes, or themes permeate a given message or document (Weber, 1985).

Data Collection Process

Our news article dataset consists of published news from English language Western, Chinese and South African news websites. Following the approach of Henley et al. (2022), the study adopted multi-stage sampling process to select online newspapers that satisfy the criteria of regional visibility, availability in English, and to eliminate non-relevant publications. Newspapers that report in English inevitably have an international audience rather than just a national or regional one. The comparison between the war reporting of Western, Asian and African newspapers is also valuable in itself due to the contrast they provide.

For our list of Western outlets, we manually selected six highly popular mainstream news websites from across the political spectrum (Zannettou et al., 2017). There are seven English-language Chinese news websites identified by the US State Department as Chinese “foreign missions” (Ortagus, 2020), while South African media mainly published in English medium.

The study used Google online engine to search for items such as, “Russian-Ukrainian war”, “propaganda”, “Russia-Ukraine war 24 February - 2 March, 2022” and “Russia-Ukraine war 1 - 2 March 2022”, to produce the total population of all online newspapers from various regions. This stage of the search

effort produced approximately 562 searchable newspaper items for 24-28 February 2022, and 187 searchable items for 1- 2 March 2022. This was to analyse news reporting during the initial stage of the war leading to the adoption of United Nations General Assembly resolution describing the conflict as an act of aggression.

However, during the second stage of the research, the study searched for the same search items for the period 24 February - 31 March 2022. During this time, export disruptions in Ukraine resulted from port closures and uncertainties regarding Russian export capacity. There were also increases in energy prices triggered by the war’s escalation in late February (FAO, 2022). This justify analysing the coverage of the war during this time.

To perform a comparative analysis of the attitudes, narratives, and topics discussed by Western, Asian and South African newspapers, the study selected New York Post, Global Times and The Citizen news published during the first two months of the war. Frequency of language frames became the data obtained by extracting relevant categories used in the selected newspapers invariably used to support the study’s quantitative content analysis.

Table 1. News Source Sampling Profile

News medium	News sources	Audience reach	Political orientation or bias	Source of Political orientation
New York Post	APN AFP Kyiv Independent Sputnik Reuters	422,000 daily readers in 2016 (Statista, 2023) Attracts over 80 million monthly visitors to its websites.	Slightly to moderately conservative Far-end of Right-Center bias rating	Mediabias facts check (2023)
Global Times	APN Xinhua, Reuters CGTN Sputnik	1.5 million daily readers (Chinese version) and 200 000 readers (English version) in 2019 (Euro-Topics, 2023)	Exhibits a frequent nationalistic tone Leftist bias rating	Mediabias facts check (2023)
The Citizen	AFP Al Jazeera euro news	276000 daily readerships (PAMS, 2019).	Displays Impartiality Slight to moderate bias rating	Mediabias facts check (2023)

Language Frame Data Analysis

In keeping with the conventions of quantitative research, data were analysed deductively (Svensson, 2009). Following the approach of Simon and Xenos (2000), prior to data analysis, the study pre-coded data to be collected, reviewed the pre-codes, and later adjusted them before the final data were compiled. The main reason for using a coding scheme is to convert newspaper publication content into data that can be analysed (Du Plooy, 2013, p. 219), to uncover specific attitudes, ideologies, and worldviews, in the language of a transcript when conducting a content analysis (Adampa, 1999, p. 3). In this context, the researchers searched selected newspaper articles for ideas or themes, which are necessary for coding ‘contexts units’ with an eye for ascertaining direction of treatment, and pay due sensitivity to hidden meanings, attitudes etc. While the use

of specific words with strong emotional connotations are associated with Russian fixation on the “Great Patriotic War” (World War II) that still weighs heavily on the national psyche (Courter, 2022, p. 11), the study sanitized such words from the search items and identified and extracted, codes that consisted of words and phrases (for example, “suffering”, “casualties”, “refugees”, “invasion”, “hardline stance”, “impose sanction”, and so on), which are believed to be closer to neutral war reporting frames. These were then analysed in terms of sentiment intensity and the type of message (attitudes) embedded in the codes which were identified in the newspapers selected. This enabled the study to categorize the words, phrases and images for eventual quantitative analysis. This is in line with the process of determining news frames inductively by generating them from media content, or deductively by constructing them prior to the analysis (De Vreese, 2005).

Neuman et al. (1992) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), cited in de Vreese (2005, p. 56) identified six war reporting frames namely: conflict, human impact, economic consequences, attribution of responsibility (blaming), information sources and tonality, which form the basis of the quantitative analysis. The coding scheme sought to measure prominence, humanization, dominant frame, links to the West, Asia and Africa, and sourcing. Framing is dichotomously coded. The first code, *conflict frame*, described a battle between individuals, groups, institutions or countries. In this instance, a war between the countries of Russia and Ukraine.

The second code involved *human impact* and described the human suffering involved and how deprivation of normal existence caused by the war has been differently covered by the selected news outlets. Information that connects with group identities or familiar narratives, or that arouses emotion can be particularly persuasive (Christopher & Mathew, 2016). The third code of *economic impact*, focused on infrastructure damaged caused by the war and its consequences for the Ukrainian and Russian people. The fourth code, *attribution of responsibility*, established the proponents of the Russia-Ukraine war and the decision behind their action. The fifth code covered *sources*, these represented the people or institution that contributed to the information contained in the newspaper article. This frame underlined the information authenticity reported about the war and to give credibility to the news outlet. Also, the conventional wisdom is that communication from government or defense sources, is more effective, influential, which traditionally emphasizes the importance of truth, credibility, and the avoidance of contradiction (Christopher & Mathew, 2016). The success of any news frame in affecting audience evaluation “increases when it comes from a credible source, resonates with consensus values, and does not contradict strongly held prior beliefs” according to Chong & Druckman (2007, p. 104). The sixth frame involved tonality which covered two aspects: the strength of words and expressions used, and the inclusion (exclusion) of images by the selected newspapers that was used to amplify reporting of the Russia-Ukraine war.

Western, Asian, African Media War Coverage Comparison

The study performed a descriptive content analysis of the shared and distinctive narratives and topics discussed within the Russian, Chinese, and Western ecosystems. Our study was inspired by the observed differences in the tone used to present news regarding the Russia-Ukraine war in Asia, the West and South Africa during the researched period. Research results are subsequently explained and presented by means of two graphs that represent one week reporting as compared to a one-month news cycle.

Descriptive Data Analysis

Our discussion of data analysis is presented in two phases viz: a description of data analysis during the first week of the war and in the second week covering 24 February to 11 March 2022 in all. Following the approach of Haque et al. (2022, p. 3) descriptive statistics have been used to analyse the data collected. A total of eighty-nine articles were sourced from the three-news media, comprising of 17 articles during the first week and 72 articles during the second week of the Russia-Ukraine war.

Table 2. Articles Sampled During First and Second Weeks of Russia-Ukraine War

Phase of research	Periods for which online articles were available	New York Post	Global Times	The Citizen	Comments
1-First week of war	24 February- 2 March, 2022	5	3	9	The Citizen published over one article per day
2-Second week of war	3 -11 March 2022	5	63	4	Global Times news ran at least one story every 1,7 Hours
		10	66	13	

Source: Authors' compilation.

Discussion

Coverage of the First Week of the War, 24 February - 2 March 2022

Results of the news coverage of the first week of the war are shown in figure 1. Within the theme of the conflict frame, New York Post accounted for 44% of war coverage, Global Times 22% while The Citizen accounted for one third. The conflict frame coverage highlighted the extent of the humanitarian crisis that demonstrated instability as people fled their homes to take shelter under difficult conditions. This is in line with the findings of Papanikos (2022) that the news on the Russian-Ukrainian war had a coverage of 57% on the front page of two of the

news media examined. Thus, simple news amounted to 36% of the total issues published, while headline news at 21%.

News coverage on the human impact frame were also very differently covered. Many of the war coverage quantified an overall description of unimaginable tragedy in this frame.

The New York Post and The Citizen contained news reports on the number of Ukrainian refugees who fled to other countries and the number of injured people or those tragically killed. Therefore, the human impact frame coverage by America's New York Post which was indicated at sixty percent (60%), was twice the coverage by South Africa's The Citizen and six times that of the Chinese Global Times.

During the first week of the war, the tone and language (75%) of New York Post and their attribution of responsibility (60%) clearly pointed to Russia as the aggressor, while Global Times joined other Chinese state media outlets to advocate for diplomacy simultaneously blaming Western powers for sparking the conflict (Hanley et al., 2022). During the first week of the war, Global Times' share of attribution of responsibility was only at 20%, while the language of war framing was moderately and diplomatically expressed. The Citizen news on the other hand propagating for negotiation and dialogue, ascribed a limited attribution of responsibility of (2%) and a tonality of (25%) during the first week of the war.

War Reporting During 3-11 March 2022 (Second Week)

During the period 3-11 March 2022, Russia-Ukraine war report framing changed. Within the theme of the conflict frame, the share of New York Post increased to just around 46% of war coverage, while the share of Global Times rose from 22% to 35%. The share of The Citizen news in this war reporting frame declined from one third to 19%. Also, with respect to human impact frame, the share of New York Post in war reporting dropped from about 60% to around 34%, while the share of Global Times now rose from 10% to 58%. Similarly, the share of The Citizen in human impact frame war reporting dropped from 30% during the first week of the war to 8% over the two weeks of the war. News reporting of the economic consequences of the war also followed a similar trend of fluctuation during the second week under consideration. The share of New York Post of economic impact frame reporting dropped from 78% to 20%, while the share of Global Times rose from 22% to 72%. The Citizen news picked up some gain in this war reporting from rising from zero in the first week to 8% when the second week. As for the attribution of responsibility frame, over the second week, the share of both New York Post and Global Times was roughly the same between 45-47%, a shift from the substantial dominance of New York Post of 60% during the first week of the war. Similarly, the dominance of New York Post in both the source as well as tonality frames during the first week were reversed during the second week of the war as Global Times picked up gains in war reporting and The Citizen news also dropped its shares.

This change in war reporting frames during the second week of the war can be attributed to China focusing more on its domestic impact of the war during this

time. China's Foreign Affairs Ministry carefully positions China for improved global importance in the event of a protracted Russia-Ukraine conflict. This is based on the anticipation that protracted conflict could drive a wedge between the United States and other frontline NATO states which are vulnerable to serious energy deficiencies and the burden of the influx of millions of refugees (Hoffman-Martin, 2022). China is regarded as the largest importer of global about 70% of crude oil and 40% of its energy needs. The rising commodity prices, especially of energy and agricultural products, directly affected China which resulted in increased production costs and higher consumer prices for the Chinese State. The Russia-Ukraine war also brought extreme uncertainty to the global stock market, that culminated in global stock market volatility, such that the Chinese stock market sharply declined on 10 March 2022, reaching the lowest level since the 2008 financial crisis (Bo, 2022).

As the Chinese economy felt the negative impact of the war (as shown in Figure 2), Global Times daily war reporting changed such that it emphasized more of each of the reporting frames. The number of Global Times articles reporting the war increased significantly as compared to New York Post and The Citizen. As such, the word frequencies of war reporting codes used in each of the frames increased significantly for Global Times.

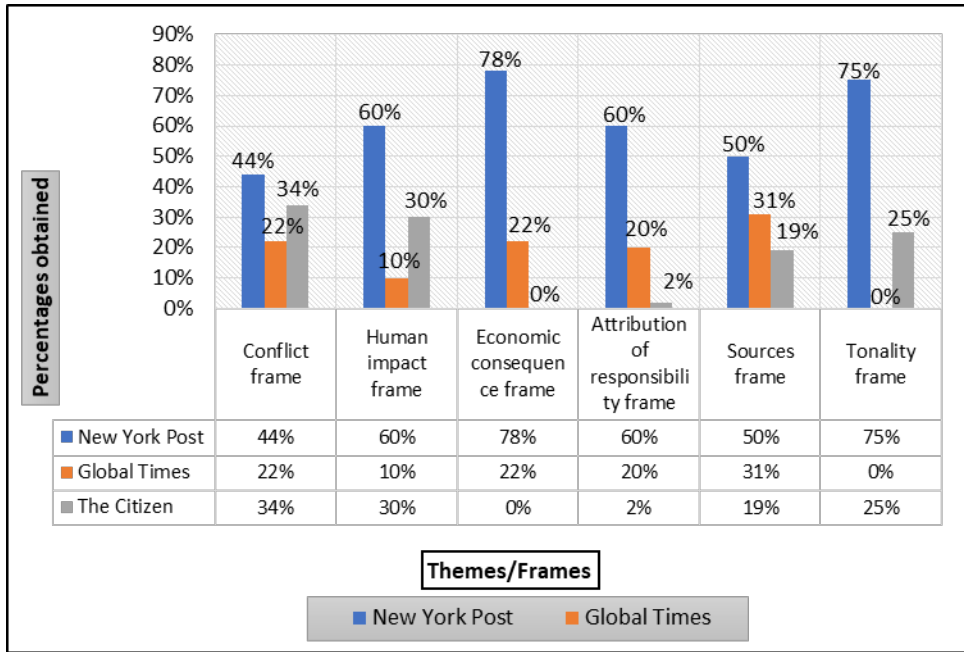
Additionally, New York Post, reported seventy-eight percent of the economic consequences while the Chinese Global Times reported only twenty-two percent of this frame.

In terms of attributing responsibilities New York Post is resolute that Russia is responsible for the war, with a coverage of 60% reporting. Global Times only attributes responsibility for the war through indirect attribution of the conflict to NATO's expansionary ambition, similar to South Africa's Citizen newspaper. Regarding the coverage of the conflict frame, New York Post covers forty-four percent of Russia-Ukraine war reporting. South African Citizen newspaper surpassed the Chinese Global Times by reporting roughly one-third of the conflict frame while the Chinese Global Times reported just above one-fifth of the frame.

Finally, whereas, the war reporting language was initially absent in Figure 1, Global Times accounted for 60% of the war reporting tone in Figure 2, increasing blaming the West and NATO for the escalation of the crisis. China's State media coverage tend to be dominated by a moral evaluation frame with consistent attention to the United States. In most coverages, America is framed as the destroyer of the current international order even though America itself created it (Sun, 2022).

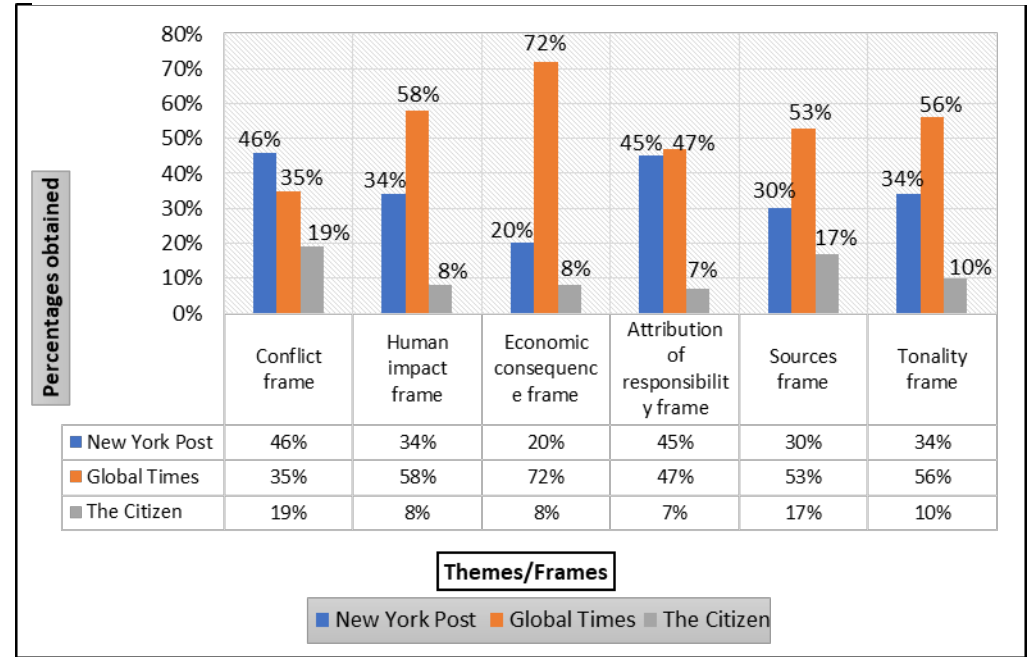
Similarly, the human impact, economic consequences, attribution of responsibilities frames as well as sources reporting frames were higher in Global Times compared to New York Post and The Citizen news. The Citizen news maintained its neutrality as its share of tonality of war reporting dropped from 25% during the first week to 10% in the second.

Figure 1. Descriptive Content Analysis of the Propaganda Frames by New York Post, Global Times and The Citizen Newspapers 24 February- 4 March 2022 (n=17)



Source: Researcher's compilation.

Figure 2. Descriptive Content Analysis of the Propaganda Frames: News Reporting: New York Post, Global Times and The Citizen - 24 February - 11 March 2022 (n=72)



Source: Researcher's compilation.

Results

Like Henley et al. (2022, p. 1), this study finds that while the Western Press, such as New York Post, has focused on the humanitarian and day-to-day military aspects of the war, the Chinese outlet, Global Times, have concentrated on the diplomatic and economic fallout of the invasion.

In terms of tonation, this study finds that sentiment expressed by the Western media, like New York Post, in their insistence on referring to the Russo-Ukrainian conflict as a “war” and an “invasion” contributes the most to portraying the war in its relative negativity.

This is in line with the findings of Henley et al. (2022, p. 5). Papanikos (2022) reports that the newspaper “Kathimerini” used very soft language to argue that borders do not change using violence. Papanikos (2022) also finds that the newspaper which usually echoes the left ideas in Greece and anti-US feelings used the strongest language to condemn the Russia-Ukraine invasion.

The other two newspapers, especially the one which is allegedly pro-US, used softer language and a sort of blame game on the US’s past behaviour of invading countries thus setting a bad example and essentially a “go-ahead” message to Russia.

The *EFSYN*, a newspaper that was expected to play a blame game, surprisingly did not attach any strings to its front page’s total and unequivocal criticism of Russia. During the second week of the war, the share of tonality of reporting was reversed in favour of Global Times while the attribution of responsibility for the war is shared in almost equal measure, though Global Times split the attribution of responsibility between USA and NATO. The Citizen news remained neutral in war reporting during the second week.

Study Limitation

This study’s focus on media that news media that cover stories from English-written news sources is inherently limiting. It is fair to consider, though, being English medium newspapers, our selected newspapers might appeal more to pro-Ukrainian and hence anti-Russian readers. Their war reporting might have so impacted on them accordingly. Media that cover diverse international topics are more likely to publish news from non-English news sources, which might enrich the pool from which frames could be extracted. Also, this study has not examined effects of news coverage of Russia-Ukraine war of 2022 and cannot make any definitive statements about how readers might interpret sampled news articles.

Conclusion

This study has provided a snapshot of war report during the first two weeks of the Russia-Ukraine war of 2022, by *New York Post*, *Global Times* of China and South Africa’s *The Citizen* news. It has been shown that the three news media

adopted different degrees of reporting frames to cover the war with careful consideration of the audience, affecting not just the choice of story but also the tone and style of its presentation (DeWerth-Pallmeyer, 1997, p. 5). One of the key tones of Russian messaging of Russia-Ukraine conflict is the idea that Ukraine itself, the language, and culture are simply just products of Russian history and culture. This tone is targeted at Ukrainians themselves (Courter, 2022, p. 9).

While the American New York Post covered more of pro-Ukrainian, anti-Russia war reporting, Global Times elected for a neutral reporting style and blamed the third party, namely the US and NATO. Interestingly, China, on the one hand, does not seem to openly voice direct support and approval of Russia's "special operation", but in effect tries to demonstrate its neutrality and independence in the Russia and Ukraine conflict. On the other hand, China is indirectly supporting Russia by expressing its understanding of Russia's interpretation of the origins of this conflict (Trush, 2022) in line with their jointly shared view of regional security challenges posed by both Ukraine and Taiwan (Denisov, 2022).

As a whole, the tone of the New York Post and the attribution of blame clearly points to Russia as the aggressor during the war's first week, while Global Times, like other Chinese state media outlets, advocate diplomacy while simultaneously accusing Western powers of sparking the war (Hanley et al., 2022). During the first two weeks of the war, Global Times' share of attribution of responsibility rose in the second week, while the language of war framing was moderate and diplomatic. During this time, The Citizen news ascribed partial blame and used neutral language while calling for cooperation and discussion between affected countries.

The framing differences uncovered in this study, might point to important regional ideological differences between Western, Asian and African news organizations. Stories or accounts that create emotional arousal in the recipient are much more likely to be passed on, whether they are true or not. Angry messages are more persuasive to angry audiences (Christopher & Mathew, 2016). Russian officials have carefully labelled the attack on Ukraine as a *special military operation* rather than an invasion. Though, most in the West rejected the distinction, but widespread media reporting suggests that large numbers of Russians, the domestic audience of the message, appeared to at least initially accept this framing of the invasion, a possible indicator of the effectiveness of Russian influence on domestic populations.

This study underscores that performing analyzes during different research phases, across multiple platforms and media ecosystems is imperative for understanding the nuances of how global events are framed and also how different populations interpret and digest world events.

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The South African Government's Stance on the Russia-Ukraine War as Reflected in the South African Newspaper Media

*By Yolanda Sadie**

This paper analyses reports in the printed media in South Africa on the Russia - Ukraine war in the period 24 February 2022 to 15 September 2022. It aimed to establish the major issues covered in the media on the war which have a bearing on South Africa in particular. Those reports which provided factual detail on the war (mostly drawn from international media companies such as Reuters) were not included in the analysis. From this qualitative thematic analysis of a total of 524 reports relating to South Africa, several themes were identified. Firstly, the South African government's abstentions on three UN General Assembly resolutions condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the reasoning behind its decision; secondly, critiques on and support for the government's so-called 'neutrality' stance; thirdly, explanations for the government's stance as reflected in the media; and, lastly, the ways in which the war has an impact on South Africa. The government's stance on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, particularly its abstention from voting on the UN resolutions and its pro-Russian bias, can be traced back to four important principles of its foreign policy. The first of these is its independence or non-aligned stance, and the second, its stress on the peaceful mediation of conflicts, which it has been emphasising throughout the war. Thirdly, there is its solidarity with parties and countries which supported the governing party in its national liberation struggle against apartheid (which explains its pro-Russian bias) and lastly, there is its anti-imperialist drive, which sometimes takes precedence over its commitment to human rights and democracy.

Keywords: printed media, South Africa, Ukraine, Russia, war

Introduction

Unlike other devastating wars elsewhere in the world, the Russia-Ukraine war that started on 24 February 2022 has featured prominently in the South African media. Although the atrocities of recent wars in countries such as Afghanistan have been reported in the South African media, these have not generated debates and conflicting views. The media merely provided accounts of the wars and their devastating effects on the citizens. However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine resulted in more than just reporting on the course of events in the war and the subsequent reaction of, *inter alia*, Europe, other Western nations and China. The question then arises why the Russian invasion of Ukraine has sparked considerable attention in the media even though it is a war taking place a remote distance from

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South Africa. South Africa is not threatened by an overflow of refugees, which has been the case in several European countries, nor is it in proximity for a possible spill-over effect of the war. The aim of this chapter is therefore to establish the major issues covered in the South African media on the war which have a bearing on South Africa in particular. By doing so, the considerable media attention in South Africa to the Russian invasion of the Ukraine will become evident.

It is widely accepted, that the South African media have been playing an important political and social role since the end of apartheid in 1994. While playing a watchdog role to keep political power to account through investigative journalism, the media have also contributed to a culture of democratic debate. It has benefitted from strong Constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression and a vibrant civil society (Wasserman, 2020, p. 451). South Africa's media freedom is ranked 35th of 171 countries (RSF World Press Freedom Index, 2022). The media can publish and broadcast freely, while regulating itself through various mechanisms such as the Press Code.

The current media landscape in South Africa consists of three tiers: public media, commercial media and community media. The public media consists of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (radio and television). No publicly owned newspapers exist. The commercial media is concentrated in the hands of a few big conglomerates. These are Naspers with its news business Media24, an umbrella for a wide variety of newspapers, magazines and online news platforms; Independent Media, which publishes a number of newspapers and magazines nationally, and Arena Holdings, which also publishes some major newspapers in addition to owning broadcast channels. Digital publishing has also been implemented by the news media. Most newspapers have online versions¹. News publications such as *Vrye Weekblad Daily Maverick* and *GroundUP* only exist online (Wasserman, 2020, pp. 454–455). These are run by independently owned private companies with no affiliation to any other media group.

Method of Research and the Main Themes Distinguished

In analysing the major issues resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine as they relate to South Africa, media reports in this chapter are drawn from the commercial media (explained above). Newspaper reports in South Africa on the Russia-Ukraine war in the period 24 February 2022 to 15 September 2022 have been analysed.

A search was conducted on SA Media, a press-clipping database service, using the key words "Russia" and "Ukraine" and "war". This press-clipping database covers 39 of the mainstream publications in South Africa. Currently it covers 19 daily publications, 17 weekend publications, two weekly publications and one monthly publication (Sabinet, n.d.). A total of 1452 reports on the Russia/Ukraine war were found on the database in the above-mentioned period. Around 1119 of

¹South Africa's internet penetration is quite high, ranking third on the African continent (following the more populous Nigeria and Egypt). In 2022, the share of the total population of South Africa using the internet was 78.6%. (Statista Research Department, 2023).

these reports, drawn mainly from international news agencies such as Reuters, provided a general account of the war with no relevance to South Africa,² while the remaining 333 reports incorporated South Africa (of which 213 centred on the effects of the war on South Africa and an additional 120 on South Africa's stance on the war).

A further search of the media database was conducted using the Afrikaans translation of the three keywords mentioned above (Rusland en Oekraïne en oorlog) to cover the Afrikaans newspapers. In the Afrikaans papers 126 reports (of around 213) pertained to South Africa. *The Daily Maverick* (a South African daily online publication and weekly print newspaper) is not covered by the SA Media database. A search was therefore conducted in its archives (available online) covering the same period as the above searches. In the mentioned period, 321 reports focused on the war, with 65 of these concentrating on South Africa and the war. A total of approximately 524 reports relating to South Africa were analysed.

Through a qualitative thematic analysis of the media reports on the war (pertaining to South Africa), four main themes could be distinguished. Firstly, South Africa's abstentions on voting on three UN General Assembly resolutions condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its reasons for doing so; secondly, critiques on and support for the government's stance; thirdly, explanations for the government's stance as reflected in the media; and, lastly, the ways in which the war has an impact on the continent and South Africa in particular.

Given the fact that the government's stance on the Russia-Ukraine war and much of both the critiques and support for the government's stance can be traced to South Africa's foreign policy, the next section provides a brief overview of the main principles of its foreign policy.

Main Principles of South Africa's Foreign Policy

Over the years, there has been a continuity in the foreign policy outlooks of the governments of Presidents Mandela, Mbeki, Zuma and Ramaphosa and the influence and impact of the ANC on the country's foreign policy (Zondo, 2017). The focuses of South Africa's foreign policy can be demarcated in the form of concentric circles (Zondo, 2017). The centre of the ANC's framework for international relations is regional (Southern Africa) and African solidarity co-operation and integration. The second concentric circle is South-South cooperation, thus the strengthening of the global South agency and its commitment to building multi-lateral fora for addressing issues facing the South. The third circle is relations with the global North driven by economic interests rather than shared values, ideological orientation, or affinity. In this regard, strategic partnerships exist with key countries such as the UK, US, France and Germany. Strengthening

²Themes covered in these reports include: a daily account of the Russian attacks on Ukraine (Mariupol etc.); the advances of Russian forces; sanctions against Russia (by for example, Europe, the UK and the USA); the Ukrainian need for weapons; Western aid to Ukraine, war crimes by Russians; Finland and Sweden wanting to join NATO; the issue of grain not leaving Ukraine harbours; and McDonald's exiting Russia.

global governance and multilateralism is the fourth circle. Effective global governance is pursued at, for example, the UN, the G20 and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), while the ANC has also pushed for their reform to become more inclusive and representative (particularly the United Nations Security Council and the global financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank) (Zondo, 2017, pp. 182–185). The primacy of a circle is determined by the ANC leadership and the contingencies of the time, with, for example, South-South cooperation and Africa emphasised during the Mbeki years, while during the Zuma years, matters related to economic benefits through partnerships with BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China) were prominent (Zondo, 2017, p. 184). A strong intensification of economic diplomacy is a major thrust of South Africa's foreign policy under Ramaphosa (Nganje and Ayodele, 2021, p. 19).

South Africa's foreign policy also consists of key principles. The first is independence and non-alignment. It therefore resists in becoming embroiled in great power conflicts. South Africa also joined the non-aligned movement (NAM) after the ANC came into power in 1994. A second principle is the peaceful resolution of disputes and its involvement in several mediation initiatives as demonstrated by its efforts to resolve several African conflicts, including those in the DRC, Burundi and South Sudan/Sudan (Sidiropoulos, 2022). South Africa's conviction is that positive change in problematic regimes is more likely to be induced through diplomatic engagement rather than through condemnation and coercive measures. The then Minister of Foreign Affairs Nkosozana Dlamini-Zuma stated in 2007 that this thinking influenced South Africa's votes in the Security Council in 2007 (Nathan, 2008, p. 4). In its most recent (2022) policy document the ANC criticises international sanctions against Cuba, Russia, Venezuela and Zimbabwe (ANC, 2022, pp. 81–82).

Another core element of the government's foreign policy is that of solidarity with parties and countries that supported the national liberation struggle against apartheid or that are still fighting for their independence (such as Western Sahara and Palestine). Solidarity is therefore "a major part of the strategic calculus by which the country takes its key decisions" and "what the government does in the international environment" (Sidiropoulos, 2022). Zondi (2017, p. 187) elaborates on the element of solidarity and calls it solidarity against "global coloniality that manifests in new forms of imperialism and global asymmetry", which is ingrained in critical institutions in the global South (including liberation movements). The anti-imperialist drive revolves around several themes, including the political and economic imbalance between the North and the South to the detriment of the poor and the need to transform the UN and other international bodies to address global inequalities and South-South cooperation and solidarity. Anti-imperialism sometimes takes precedence over the government's commitment to the promotion of human rights and democracy (Nathan, 2008, p. 5).

The protection of human rights is a fourth important principle of South Africa's foreign policy. However, three considerations are important to South Africa in engaging with human rights issues (Nganje & Ayodele, 2021, pp. 5–6).

Firstly, although South Africa is committed to a core set of values and principles in engaging with the rest of the world, it resists the tendency of Western

powers to politicise the global human rights agenda; secondly, human rights are not considered as the overriding consideration – they would be promoted as one of many equally foreign policy objectives; and, lastly, South Africa is not inclined to champion a narrow liberal human rights agenda. Rather, its commitment is to be linked to broader questions of global socioeconomic, political and racial justice. The ANC government frames its human rights campaign role as a part of the Global South's struggle for socioeconomic justice.

The above interpretation means that South Africa is not always a willing ally of the West, as clearly reflected in its stance on the Russia-Ukraine war.

South Africa's Abstentions in the UN General Assembly and its Reactions to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

A dominant theme in the media since 24 February has been, on the one hand, the government's decision to abstain from three UN General Assembly resolutions in the first six weeks of the war and, on the other, the explanations of members of the government (including President Ramaphosa) for taking the neutrality stance.

The first reaction by the South African government on Russia's invasion was by Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Co-operation, who called on Russia to "immediately withdraw its forces from Ukraine". She argued that this call was in line with the UN Charter, which emphasises "respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states" (*Sowetan Live*, 2022). However, President Ramaphosa contradicted her the next day by stating that it was not the party's position to call on Russia to withdraw, but rather to push for mediation and negotiation. She later backtracked on her statement in a speech in the UN (*Business Day*, 2022; Gerber, 1 March 2022).

The first UN resolution on 2 March demanded that Russia immediately stop its aggression and withdraw its troops from Ukraine. The non-binding resolution was adopted by 141 of the 193 member states, five voted against the resolution and South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mali, Namibia and Mozambique were among the 35 states that abstained from the vote. Particularly significant is the fact (as reflected in the media) that prominent African countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana and Zambia supported the resolution.

The second resolution on 24 March demanded full humanitarian access and protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel in Ukraine and accused Russia of creating a "dire human rights situation", while the third on 7 April called for Russia to be suspended from the UN Human Rights Council. The three resolutions on Russia's invasion of Ukraine were reported in the media in South Africa as being based on a fundamental principle of the UN Charter, namely "recognising the full sovereignty of all countries and requiring all members to respect this principle" (Jurgens, 2022).

Government explanations on South Africa's abstention from voting on the three resolutions that were widely reported in the media are the following:

- On the first resolution the Department of International Relations and Cooperation issued a statement justifying the government's decision. The media highlighted the following reasons: that the text of the resolution was not welcoming the commencement of negotiations between the two parties and that "the text in its current form could drive a deeper wedge between the parties rather than contributing to a resolution of the conflict" (Stolz, 2022).
- President Cyril Ramaphosa's defence was that the Russia-Ukraine conflict should be resolved through mediation (Nonyukela, 2022). According to Ramaphosa, the resolution did not "foreground the call for meaningful engagement". According to him "the call for peaceful resolution through political dialogue is relegated to a single sentence close to the conclusion of the final text". For him, achieving world peace should be through negotiation and not force of arms, which is a principle on which South Africa has been consistent since the advent of its democracy, and which remains part of the government's foreign policy orientation (Njilo, 2022).

On the second resolution demanding humanitarian access and support to Ukrainians South Africa sponsored an alternative resolution calling for the provision of humanitarian aid to Ukraine but avoided mentioning Russia's role in the conflict. The resolution was rejected (*The Citizen*, 2022, p. 6). This rejection led to newspaper headings such as: "SA on thin ice in diplomatic arena" (*The Witness*, 23 March 2022, p. 2) and "Ukraine shames South Africa on global stage over proposed UN resolution backed by Russia" (Gerber, 26 March 2022).

Regarding the suspension of Russia from the Human Rights Council, South Africa's ambassador to the UN, Xolisa Mabhongo, told the assembly that the vote was premature as an investigation into allegations of war crimes had yet to be completed (Thaw, 2022). The defence of the Foreign Minister was that South Africa is not indifferent to the suffering of Ukraine citizens: "An unaligned position doesn't mean that we condone the military action of Russia in Ukraine"; however, the government did not believe the current approach by the UN General Assembly would help end the conflict. Pandor also said that here needed to be consistency in the approach of the international community to all countries violating international law, citing Israel, which has launched sustained offensive military operations against the Gaza, killing hundreds of civilians: "We don't see Palestinians as different from Ukrainians. But the way that the world community is reacting, suggests that Palestinian lives matter less than the lives of Ukrainians. And this is something that concerns us" (Gumede, 2022) This type of reasoning was reiterated by several politicians.

It was also argued that the ousting of Russia from the UN human rights council would make matters worse. In Pandor's words: "Constantly poking a bear that is injured merely serves to make the bear more angry and more reckless" (Subramoney, 2022; *Weekend Post*, 2022.).

During the first six months of the war, government officials made various statements about the war that received wide media attention. These statements,

which also indirectly provide justification for the South African government's stance, are the following:

- The UN Security Council has failed the world in the war between Russia and Ukraine and “cannot be relied upon to preserve peace and security”. South Africa will give greater attention to member states of the non-aligned movement and work with them to actively shaping the reform deliberations within the UN system (Minister of International Relations and Co-operation in her budget speech (Deklerk, 2022).
- Deliberations and negotiations are still the way to go – President Ramaphosa regularly maintains that negotiations are what assisted South Africa near the end of apartheid-era and the country's decision to democracy (Mokati, 2022; *The Witness*, 28 April 2022).
- Ramaphosa consistently refers to the ‘conflict’ in Ukraine, never using the words ‘war’ and ‘invasion’ in relation to what Russia terms as a “special military operation” (*The Witness*, 23 March 2022).
- Russia is not the only country to blame for the war in Ukraine – the conflict involves two members of the UN. It is the responsibility of the UN to take decisions that will lead to a ‘constructive outcome’ conducive to the creation of sustainable peace between the parties (Mapisa-Nqokula, Speaker of the National Assembly) (Patel, 2022).
- The war could have been avoided if NATO had heeded the warnings from among its own leaders over the years that its eastward expansion would lead to greater, not less instability in the region (Ramaphosa in Parliament) (Patel, 2022).

In a telephonic conversation with Ramaphosa on 10 March the Russian president explained his reasons and goals of the special military operation in Ukraine. The two leaders also reaffirmed their commitment “to further develop the bilateral strategic partnership, noting in particular, their readiness to expand trade, economic and humanitarian cooperation”. Both also underscored the importance of continuing interaction within the BRICS framework and other international venues (Nemakonde, 2022).

Critiques and Support (Direct or Indirect) of the Government's Stance

The first set of criticisms raised against the government that received wide media attention was the initial contradictory statements (or mixed messages) by the president and the foreign minister on the Russian invasion, which were described as confusing and embarrassing. These statements, it was argued, painted a picture of a cabinet that does not communicate among itself, with the one hand not seeming to know what the other is doing (*Sowetan*, 2022, p. 10). In an editorial in the *Cape Times* (2022, p. 6), on the other hand, the government's ‘flip-flopping’ on the Ukraine-Russia crisis and the contradictory statements were described as having “exposed the folly of South Africa's incoherent and vague foreign policy”

(*Cape Times*, editorial, 2022, p. 6), while it was also questioned whether the president and the minister understood SA's foreign policy differently (Mngomezulu, 2022).

The divisions among South Africans over the government's stance towards Russia's invasion of Ukraine were also reflected in editorial and commentaries by, inter alia, opposition political parties, religious groups and academics that received wide media attention.

Critiques of the government's stance as published in the media revolved around two issues and were sometimes conflated – on the one hand, criticism of its neutral stance, and, on the other, accusations that it was not neutral but sided with Russia. The media also focused on those who openly sided with Russia without acknowledging the government's stance.

The South African government has been roundly criticised for its decision to abstain from voting on the three UN General Assembly resolutions condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine. For many it was not a question of taking sides, but the fact that South Africa is not consistent in its application of its principles of human rights and sanctity of borders. In this regard, the head of politics and international relations at Rhodes University, Dr Siphokazi Magadla, for example, was quoted in the *Sowetan* (Nonyukela, 2022) as saying that it's not a matter of supporting one country over the other, but about supporting South Africa's principles. For her, South Africa's neutral position reflected an absence of values and a governing party that is really in crisis. All nations should condemn invasion of a sovereign country as South Africa condemns the invasion and occupation of Palestine by Israel. In a similar argument, the South African government is accused of hypocrisy and double standards – again, comparing South Africa's stance on Israel's occupation of Palestine and the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Sonno, 2022).

Newspapers also carried the statements made by the opposition parties such as the Democratic Alliance, which also slammed the ANC's stance on the war, arguing that the ANC “has tarnished SA's international image by failing to condemn Russian invasion of Ukraine, choosing to remain ‘neutral’ in the face of gross human rights violations and loss of lives”; the world should know that it's not SA that is supporting the war in Ukraine but the ANC; “the ANC is standing by and watching as the war threatens to send Africa to the brink of a food crisis. – Putin should be pressurised to allow the opening up of Ukraine ports to allow the exports of grain and wheat that is trapped there” (Deklerk, 2022).

Several foreign diplomats to South Africa (Germany, Denmark, the USA, Finland and the EU) also expressed their dismay over South Africa's decision to abstain and they questioned the reluctance of the country to take a firm stand, which, as some argued, is not doing South Africa any favours (Khoza, 6 March 2022, p. 8; Boonzaaier, 2022). Religious leaders such as the Archbishop of Cape Town, Thabo Makgoba, also called on the government to “condemn unequivocally” the Russian invasion, which he said is a flagrant violation of a central tenet of the UN Charter, namely the use of force against any state (Mlamla, 2022).

The second theme receiving attention in the media around the government's stance are the accusations that the South African government had chosen to take

the side of the “oppressor”. Several incidents sparked such viewpoints, which were carried in news reports. The first was the attendance of the defence minister of a cocktail function at the home of the Russian ambassador to South Africa (Ilya Rogachev) on the day Russia invaded Ukraine (Shange, 2022, p. 2). Other members of the ANC also attended an event held by the Russian consulate in Cape Town on 28 February when the invasion was in full swing. Also, in a tweet on 5 March the Russian embassy thanked South Africa for its “solidarity” with Russia’s fight against Nazism in Ukraine (Boonzaaier, 2022, p. 4). The third is Ramaphosa’s phone call to Putin within days of the war, while he called Ukrainian president Zelensky only seven weeks later (*The Citizen*, editorial, 2022, p. 12; *The Citizen*, 2022; Naki, 2022). After the phone call between Ramaphosa and Putin it was widely reported that Ramaphosa in a tweet said that “President Putin appreciated our balanced approach”, which was also interpreted as support for Russia in the war (Khoza, 10 March 2022). Further ‘evidence’ reflecting government bias towards Russia (described as such in the media), is the visit of the Minister of Defence, Thandi Modise, to Moscow on 14 August to attend a conference on security in Moscow and the existing perception that the ANC government is not siding with the citizens of Ukraine but rather with the “invaders” the Russians (see for example, Stolz, 2022; Hartley and Mills, 15 August 2022). This was barely a week after hosting the US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, in Pretoria, where amidst discussions of shared values the foreign Minister Naledi Pandor included the platitude “We are appalled by war”. She also said that “on the matter of Russia and Ukraine, there is no one who supports war. We’ve made that very clear” (Mills & Hartley, 15 August 2022). However, she also made it clear to Blinken that SA “would not be bullied” to choose sides in the war (Zeeman, 2022).

The above incidents contributed to editorial and other comments in newspapers on South Africa’s bias towards Moscow, which, as argued, has also severely damaged South Africa’s reputation as a truly non-aligned country and “probably ruined any chance we may have had of taking the ‘honest broker’ position as a peace negotiator” (*The Citizen*, editorial, 2022, p. 12; *Citizen Saturday*, editorial, 2022, p. 12).

A last theme receiving wide coverage in the media is the unequivocal support expressed for either Russia or Ukraine, which reflect the divisions among South Africans and among political parties. Opposition parties such as the Democratic Alliance (DA) and ActionSA have openly come out in support of Ukraine (see for example, Zulu, 2022 and O’Regan, 2022). This support is not limited to political parties but also includes ordinary South Africans who joined several protest marches across the country in solidarity with Ukraine.

On the other hand, former president Jacob Zuma has come out in support of Russia, projecting Putin as “a victim of western countries bullying tactics” and that Putin is “a man of peace” (Ndou, 2022). The opposition Economic Freedom Front also support Russia’s invasion, with its deputy leader Floyd Shivambu arguing that there is “nothing wrong” with Russia preventing the spread of NATO and that they will “never forgive NATO for the killing of Brother Leader Muammar Gaddafi”. He added that the USSR and particularly Russia helped South Africa in

the struggle against apartheid – Russia was “a true friend” of South Africa. Like Putin, Shivambo also referred to the war as “military operations” (Gerber, 15 March 2022).

Some commentators quoted in newspaper articles also supported Ramaphosa’s stance in blaming NATO for what is happening in Ukraine (*The Citizen*, 2022; Zinets, 2022). Specific reference was made to the fact that NATO had 12 members when it was established, while it has since recruited 14 countries that were former members of the Soviet Union. It was also contemplating inviting Ukraine to join it. Russia thus started to try to push NATO back into Europe and away from Russia (Sokutu, 2022, p. 3).

Reasons for the Government’s Apparent Support of Russia

The government’s stance on the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the divisions among South Africans, as reflected above, have inevitably also resulted in a wide range of commentaries explaining the reasoning behind its stance. The most common explanation is the ANC’s strong ties with the former Soviet Union, which trained and supported anti-apartheid activists during the Cold War (Ferreira & Tandwa, 2022). From the early 1960s to the late 1980s the anti-apartheid struggle was assisted by arms, military training, education, weapons, diplomatic support and medical care, among other things. Russia’s past generosity, it is argued, explains the government’s reluctance to name or condemn Russia’s invasion of Ukraine (Lynd, 2022, p. 5). South Africa therefore owes Russia for its historical support. For the *Sunday Times* editor, Msomi (2022), the gratitude many older South Africans feel for the historical assistance should not be underestimated. Although Ramaphosa has made no reference to Moscow, other government leaders such as the Minister of Social Development, Lindiwe Zulu, have made it clear that “Russia is a good friend” (Davies, 2022).

However, as also highlighted in several reports, the historical support argument has some flaws, in particular the fact that at that stage the Soviet Union also included Ukraine, which also played an important part in the apartheid struggle, and that the Cold War loyalties between the ANC and Moscow “are increasingly irrelevant in the 21st century” (*The Citizen*, editorial, 2022, p. 12). Ukraine’s role in the apartheid struggle includes its mission to the UN, which in 1985 endorsed comprehensive sanctions against South Africa; many members of the exiled ANC studied in Ukraine and Umkhonto we Sizwe soldiers who went to the Soviet Union mostly went to Ukraine (Lynd, 2022, p. 5). However, Ukraine’s role has been played down in the media (by some), with arguments referring to the racist treatment of African nationals who were left stranded in Ukraine while their white counterparts were allowed to exit the country (see for example, *Daily News*, 2022, p. 10; *Cape Argus*, 2022, p. 13; *Sunday Times*, 2022, p. 14).

A further explanation for South Africa and Russia’s friendship is their stance on anti-imperialism (*Daily News*, 2022, p. 18). Besides the support from the USSR to the ANC during the apartheid struggle, for many the struggle against apartheid was part of a larger struggle against colonialism and imperialism associated with

the West. Should it stand against Russian aggression South Africa would be seen as a Western lackey (Mills & Hartley, 17 March 2022). The fact that Russia challenges the West, makes Russia a representative of what the West is not – anti-colonialist, and anti-imperialist. As argued, Russia never had colonies in Africa, was never part of the slave trade in Africa and never took part in the Berlin conference in 1815 where the colonisation of Africa took off in earnest. Russia is popular in Africa because it is regarded as an advocate of decolonisation (Van der Westhuizen, 2022, p. 2). Yet, as has been argued, the Soviet Union was itself an imperialist power which colonised Ukraine and killed four million Ukrainians in a campaign of mass starvation (Jurgens, 2022).

Much attention has also been paid in the media to economic reasons in explaining South Africa's affinity to Russia, particularly the fact that the two countries are economic partners in the BRICS bloc (together with Brazil, China and India) (Lynd, 2022, p. 5). South Africa's ambivalence on the Ukraine issue may be motivated by concerns about offending China and Russia. However, in 2021 South Africa's trade with its political allies totalled R15.7 billion, while trade with NATO countries came to R1.131 trillion (de Wet, 2022). Nonetheless, it is argued that for political reasons it is important for South Africa to "maintain very direct, resolute, and absolute relations with the BRICS members, specifically Russia and China because of their permanent membership of the Security Council, which makes it important to be on the side of the BRICS countries" (Makwakwa, 2022, p. 1).

Media reports have also showed that is not possible to make a rational case for South Africa's support for Russia on economic grounds when it comes to trade between Russia and South Africa. For example, in 2021 Russia imported R1,3 billion worth of products from South Africa and exported products to South Africa to the value of approximately R458 million. Russia is not even in the top 14 trading partners with South Africa. The relationship between Russia and South Africa is unbalanced, with South Africa having R77 billion worth of investments in Russia while Russian investments in South Africa amount to about R23 billion – less than one third of South Africa's investments in Russia (Davis, 2022; *Daily News*, 2022; *Cape Argus*, 2022).

Effects of the Russia-Ukraine War on South Africa

Media reports on the effects of the war on South Africa roughly followed a sequence. The first set of reports, which appeared a day after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, assessed the risks and likely effects of the war on Africa and on South Africa in particular. South Africans were warned that they would have to brace themselves for the higher cost of fuel due to the sudden rise of the oil price on 24 February to more than \$100 a barrel (the highest in more than seven years) and the South African Rand losing ground against major currencies; that Russia and Ukraine are among the world's 10 top exporters of wheat and that South Africa imports wheat, buck wheat and dried legumes among other food products from Ukraine and is dependent on Russia for, among other things, nitrogenous fertiliser,

chemical fertiliser and coal briquettes. Over the past five years, South Africa sourced around 30% on average of its wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine (Van der Walt et al., 2022, p. 1; Dlodla, 2022, p. 9). Reports also highlighted the likelihood of a rise in food prices because of the disruption of trade in the significant producing region of the Black Sea (Mabuza, 2022; Sihlobo, 2022). Headlines in South African newspapers include “What Putin’s war will cost you” (Kaiser & Opperman, 2022, p. 3) and “War ‘Dire’ for SA Economy” (*Saturday Independent*, 2022, p. 1).

The effects of the war on Africa’s food supplies were widely carried. Various reports (for example, Kholonyane and Nkala, 2022) highlighted the major role that both Russia and Ukraine (particularly the latter) play in the global agricultural market and specifically in Africa. As one columnist put it, “Wheat and grains are back at the heart of geopolitics following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine” (Sihlobo, 2022).

Most reports highlighted the importance of Ukraine and Russia in terms of wheat and oil exports – for example, that Ukraine is “the breadbasket of the world” since it supplies a tenth of global wheat exports and was projected to produce at least 80 million tonnes of grain in 2022. About 95% of these exports leave the country through the Black Sea ports, which were blocked by Russia. Ukraine is also a leading producer and exporter of sunflower oil. Ukraine’s sunflower oil exports accounted for 40% of global exports in 2020. Several newspapers highlighted the fact that failure to open these ports could result in famine in Africa. Before the war more than 20 sub-Saharan African countries imported most of their wheat and oil from Russia and Ukraine. Major importing countries were Egypt, which accounted for nearly half of imports, followed by Sudan, Nigeria, Tanzania, Algeria, Kenya, South Africa and Ethiopia. Ukraine supplied more than a third of Ethiopia’s grain before the war (Sihlobo, 2022; Mills, 2022; Pechonchuk, 2022).

Towards the middle of the year the emphasis in reports was placed on the fact that Russia refused to accept the threat of famine and its responsibility in creating the risk (Mills, 2022). Furthermore, that Russia was trying to convince African nations that global food shortages caused by its invasion of Ukraine are not its fault and that this was merely Western propaganda. Russia therefore refuses to take blame for the food crisis. Nevertheless, Russia and Ukraine reached a deal on 22 July to allow grain exports to resume by sea (Baker, 2022; Zinets, 2022).

The third theme covered in the media is the actual rise in food prices in South Africa because of the war. Since the invasion of Ukraine, the price of maize, for example, was up by over 40% in April and vegetable oil prices by 75% (Mills, 2022). Besides the rise in food prices, South Africa’s fruit exports to Russia and Ukraine have also been compromised and South African farmers had to find new markets. Reports indicated that the country annually exports 11 million cartons of citrus fruit to Russia and Ukraine and 5 million cartons of pears and prunes to Russia (Mochiko, 2022, p. 4).

Conclusion

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has been receiving ongoing coverage in the South African media. Although accounts of the progression of the war, the reaction by European and other Western countries and by Putin, among other things, received wide coverage in the country's media, these were not analysed since they were mainly drawn from international media companies such as Reuters and had little direct bearing on the country. These reports merely provided factual detail on the war. Instead, the focus of this chapter was on media reports that pertained to South Africa. In this regard over 500 reports were analysed.

Several themes were identified in the media reports. Firstly, the government's abstention from three UN resolutions and the reasoning behind its decision. This so-called 'neutrality' position taken by the government resulted in strong support as well as strong condemnation by South Africans – both were carried in media reports. A second theme revolved around the government's apparent pro-Russian support and possible explanations for its Russian bias, while a third theme highlighted the effect of the war on South Africa.

The South African government's stance on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, particularly its abstention from voting on the UN resolutions and its pro-Russian bias, can be traced back to four important principles of its foreign policy. The first of these is its independence or non-aligned stance, and the second its stress on the peaceful mediation of conflicts, which it has been emphasising throughout the war. Thirdly, there is its solidarity with parties and countries which supported the governing party in its national liberation struggle against apartheid (which explains its pro-Russian bias) and lastly, there is its anti-imperialist drive, which sometimes takes precedence over its commitment to human rights and democracy. In the Russia-Ukraine war it became obvious that the government was, for example, not a willing ally of the West. It was also quick to blame NATO for the war in Ukraine.

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How Indian Media Looks Russia and Ukraine War? An Analysis on News Reports of Indian Newspapers

*By S. Arulchelvan**

The recent Russian-Ukrainian dispute attracted wide international attention. On Feb 24, 2022, Russia launched a full-fledged invasion of Ukraine. USA and NATO are striding up support for Ukraine, fearing Russia's probable incursion. World media is running continuous news about the Russia-Ukraine war. Each Country, Each Media is giving different kinds of news on this war. It is very important to study the news coverage of this war to know why and how the media is presenting this news. This paper is a detailed study of how Indian newspapers have covered conflict and war. The objectives of this study: To identify the presence of facts during the conflict; to study the content package, style, etc.; to understand the Indian media angle with that of the western media house. These objectives are studied by focusing on various variables like how much news space was given to the conflict, the gatekeeper angle, visuals, style of reporting, and major topics of discussion in the news. These variables are studied through a well-structured content analysis of the Russia and Ukraine war coverage, thus becoming an occasion for discussions about ethical journalism. One of the most prestigious assignments for journalists is conflict reporting. Rarely do we witness international events get continuous coverage in Indian media. Nevertheless, the current conflict has occupied news space in Indian media for almost more than three months. The study has some interesting findings: Russia-Ukraine conflict reportage mainly concentrated on the military power of Russia, and local reports concentrated on Indian students' evacuation. The editorial position is one of the most interesting aspects of Indian media's coverage of the conflict. Indian government's stand for neutrality is also highlighted. The fact that wiring stories were more than nationally produced stories, thus shows the western influence on Indian media.

Keywords: Ukraine, Russia, war, journalism, news media

Introduction

A perceived contradiction in goals or interests which are acted upon by the parties involved leads to a conflict situation (Bar-Tal, 2011). As for society's development, managing media conflict is very important (Salah & Ariemu, 2017). During conflict reporting the duty of the media is to provide independent and trustworthy information that can contribute to the reconstruction and reconciliation process (Bamidele, 2012). Conflict and violence make news but peace doesn't (Diamond & McDonald, 1996). Gilboa argued that what is exciting makes news. In simple words, people living happily together are of no public interest. As violence is reportable; nonviolence is boring (Gilboa, 2006). However, Lynch put

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forth that modern newsgathering is a “Feedback loop”, as what is reported is created to be reported (Lynch, 2001).

The framing and the way the war is reported in Indian media are significantly keeping India’s international relations in mind. The coverage of conflict reporting depends on the news value given to the conflict (Maslog et al., 2006). Therefore, the media must provide a platform for peace and conflict management, in conflict-ravaged communities, without which development is a hallucination to the community (Salah et al., 2017).

Background of the Study

To understand media/news reporting during conflicts, it is important to understand war and peace journalism. Several studies have been undertaken to understand media reporting in times of conflict. A common theme of results can be found in all the studies.

Previous studies done on conflict reporting have emphasized the perspectives involved in news output. In an analysis of the coverage of the Kashmir conflict in Indian and Pakistani newspapers. A vital point about the number and nature of perspectives was also discussed. To elaborate, the coverage was mostly done in a singular perspective and not in a multi-perspective manner thus leading to a lack of coverage of the other parties involved in the conflict (Rawan & Rahman, 2022). A similar theme can be found in the media reporting on Russia and Ukraine wars. The study concludes that there is a need for debates that comes from a place of learning about different perspectives. For example, Russia’s reporting on the war should involve scholars and activists from the Ukraine region. It is imperative to mention that not being engaged with the people who are informed about it, would essentially be reproducing exclusionary practices and generalist knowledge rather than context-sensitive knowledge (Vorbrugg & Bluwstein, 2022). The media coverage of the London bombings of 2005 was studied across British, American, and Russian newspapers. It focused on the need and role of experts in journalistic reports. There was a significant variation among different newspapers in the usage of government officials, non-government experts, and journalistic sources (Venger, 2019).

Influence of Media on Public Opinion

One of the concerns of media reporting during conflict is that it has the power to influence public opinion. One conflict reporting study on the coverage of fatalities during the Russia-Ukraine war found that there was two times more emphasis on civilian deaths by the Russian and US media than the Ukrainian media. Although the risk of manipulating public opinion remains high in media reporting, it is also necessary to consider that conflicts may sometimes “disappear” from public attention without media coverage. A newspaper coverage study done on the conflict reporting about the herdsmen-farmers in Nigeria showed that 71.3% of conflict stories were on the inside pages of the newspapers. The study

explored ideas on agenda setting role of newspapers by emphasizing that if an issue is not covered by a newspaper consistently, the issue might be abandoned from the public's purview. It was found that the conflict was covered only when it was ongoing hence there were no follow-ups done after the conflict. It was concluded that there was inadequate importance placed on the conflict by the newspapers under study (Gever & Essien, 2017). Another study explored critical events from their inception to after effects and the public reaction to them. It further explored how media representation can both inform and fabricate emotions. It was concluded that media coverage directly influenced the emotions of the people who consumed it (Thakur & Malhotra, 2020).

Influencing public opinion also takes the form of endorsing stereotypes and creates a biased representation of certain groups of people. This study compared the representation of ideological violence of Muslim and Non-Muslim perpetrators by the Canadian National News media. The study found that there was a significant presence of labeling as terrorists and the religious identity being revealed along with association with other violent acts. An interesting part of the study explored the idea of frames of reference manufactured by the media.

This research focussed on the media coverage of war crimes and war crime judiciary during Serbia's post-war period. The attention was solely on the media output about the conflict to understand the influence of media reporting throughout the life of a conflict. However, it is important to understand how media reporting shapes public opinion, ideas of representation, identities of the journalists, and media authority can play an impactful role in post-conflict media reporting (Golčevski et al., 2013).

News Reporting Influenced by Government / Political Parties

Media reporting bias can be fuelled by shifting public opinions, at the same time they can also be influenced or represented by the leaders, government, or the political affiliations of the dominant parties. In a critical discourse analysis report of the Gaza war of 2008-2009, it was found that reporting was influenced by political orientations and political stances of liberal and conservative stances. In a study conducted on Greek media coverage of the Ukrainian war, the general standpoint of the Greeks was that the war was unacceptable despite the multi-pronged attachment with Russia. Regarding media coverage, it was noted that all newspapers considered the Russian invasion of Ukraine unacceptable. From the results of the study, it can be concluded that the media coverage was heavily influenced by the leadership parties hence the language used in the media coverage was appealing to the political parties of the current leadership who unhonored state strong ties that they had with Russia. Hence, it was also concluded that the stance of the media was not exactly pro or anti-Russia but a matter of principle of the nation. A similar result was found in a comparative analysis of the media coverage of the Taliban conflict in Pakistan and Afghanistan from a war and peace journalism point of view. It was found that the news reporting relied heavily on the perspective of governmental agendas. It was also noted that when there is a

dominant public opinion about the conflict, other perspectives will not be covered or engaged in the conversation (Hussain & Siraj, 2018).

Peace Journalism

The Russia-Ukraine war had shaken the foundations of a lot of people as they were on the first steps of recovery from a global pandemic. With the major news source coming from media coverage, it is important that the world not become susceptible to more uncertainty and fear but rather be faced with the truth and not be blemished by biases and political agendas. This brings the need for peace journalism to the forefront of this.

There are two types of journalism when it comes to reporting situations of war namely, war journalism and peace journalism. Whilst war journalism reports negatively about the conflict that cultivates violence and selective victory, peace journalism reports on the root causes of the problem and solutions. Peace journalism also prioritizes bringing all the parties' perspectives to the table earning the alias empathetic journalism (Gouse et al., 2018).

The role of mainstream international mass media in contemporary conflict was studied. Stressing the importance of peace journalism as an alternative to the current media coverage. By honing into this fact, it explains the importance of the news system in shifting the perspective about conflict and security. There is a clear need for more peace journalism which can pave the way toward change even if it cannot bring out peace by itself.

Implications of the Previous Studies

The review of the literature regarding journalism during conflict has opened several similar doors to the path of peace. It can be inferred from the existing literature that war journalism feeds fear in the minds of people while propagating and representing the ideas of government-related institutions. On the other hand, peace journalism brings in different perspectives of the parties involved in the conflict. It is imperative to note the substance of having appropriate press media coverage during conflict times. A study (Thakur & Malhotra, 2020) explored how media reporting can inform and fabricate information. When media representation acts as a powerful tool, it also can skew the perceptions of certain religious and ethnic minorities (Kanji, 2018). This becomes disadvantageous and even fatal to certain groups of people. If a certain coverage has only one perspective or is the dominant view, it does not do justice to reporting the conflict. One solution to tackle such a system would be to address the structural limitations of media/news production (Joseph, 2014). Another solution would be to gradually shift toward peaceful journalistic reporting. Peace journalism ensures multiple perspectives in reporting involving affected parties, experts, and public opinion. Journalism during conflict times has been studied widely among diverse populations, but despite the need for peace journalism, evidence of the practice is not found.

Peace and Media

Although journalists through peace journalism try to ensure balance and a comprehensive portrayal of conflict, peace journalism may seem to be a kind of politicking (Joseph, 2014). In the process of news selection research demonstrates that only the stories that tend to fill newsworthy are worthy by the journalists, these problems arise from the fact that media are profit-oriented and peace stories do not bring profit to media houses (Youngblood, 2017).

The broad idea for which peace journalism stands cannot be ignored despite the criticism and obstacles faced because according to (Wolfsfled, 2001) the media can play a prominent role in the promotion of peace by highlighting the benefits peace can bring. According to Galtung and Lynch peace journalism covers all the stages of conflict - ranging from actual incidents to the cultural and structural aspects of the conflict. The media may not be able to make peace by themselves, but they can certainly pave the way toward it (Vladimir Bratic, 2008).

Peace Journalism and its Importance

In the year 1970's Johan Galtung first proposed peace journalism (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000). According to Galtung, peace, journalism is advocacy, an interpretative approach that signifies peace initiatives, tones down ethnic and religious differences, prevents further conflict, focuses on the structure of society, and promotes conflict resolution, reconstruction, and reconciliation (Galtung, 1986). McGoldrick and Lynch described peace journalism as the broader, fairer, and more accurate way of framing a situation as it helps give in-depth conflict analyses and transformation. Peace journalism opposes conventional journalism as it avoids the context of conflict being reported. Peace journalism looks into the causes and development of the conflict, alternatives to war, and solutions to end the war (Joseph, 2014). Therefore, peace journalism reports are efforts put in by the media to facilitate conflict resolution. As it examines the root cause of the conflict and places humanizing the situation higher than creating enemies (Joseph, 2014).

Conflict and News Reporting

Besides international organizations, national governments, or non-governmental organizations, mass media also plays an important role in reporting international conflict. How information is framed, shaping perception, and set agendas play a crucial role in molding public opinion (Joseph, 2014). In the case of an international crisis, the complete international structure is affected in terms of threat, most frequently intensity or change in the interactions between two or more states (Wilkenfled, 2003). In this respect, media plays a crucial role in forming the public's perception of events by providing storylines and frames (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987). For instance, the cold war between Russia and the west lasted for decades. As a result, they mediatize crises in such a way that their importance is the only source of information that strongly affects public opinions, which is

recognized even by politicians and other societal actors adapting media (Harvard, 2015). And media executive has admitted professional and ethical failures in covering conflict (Gilboa, 2006).

The Current Russia-Ukraine Conflict

On 24th February, Russia launched a full-scale land, sea, and air invasion of Ukraine, targeting Ukrainian military assets and cities across the country marking the start of the biggest war in Europe since the Second World War. U.S. President Joe Biden stated that the attack was “unjustified” and issued severe sanctions against top Kremlin officials, including President Putin. On 2nd March 2022, 141 of 193 UN members voted against Russia’s invasion in an emergency UN General Assembly session, demanding Russia immediately withdraw from Ukraine. What has been happening in Ukraine since Feb 24 has different light and is interpreted in different ways, using different terms depending on different regions. Ukraine and western media call the invasion a “war”, while the Russian media use the term “Special military operation”. To better understand and expose the truth about conflict major news organizations around the world have embedded journalists in Ukraine to cover bombing and violence in towns and cities that are hard-hit, across broadcast, print, and digital media. Journalists, politicians, civilians, and particularly Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky have also taken to various social networking sites to document the horrors of the war to a global audience.

Indian Media and Russia-Ukraine Conflict

Media plays a vital role in international relations as it has the power to decide what is right and what is wrong, and an aspect of how the world should view a story. The different portrayal of the same news makes the audience and state act in a certain way and take action accordingly, for example, the portrayal of the conflict presented by Russian media is opposite from the same news portrayed by Ukraine media or western media, the difference in perspective is also perceived in non-aligned nations like India.

This study aims at understanding Indian newspaper coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The study examined the framing of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict by newspapers for two months from 24 February 2022 to 30 April 2022. The media has become an authentic mediator in the process of knowledge, happenings around the world, and daily societal happenings. Hence there is a need to examine media presentation and representation of reality (Salah et al., 2017). After analyzing both newspapers the most important story covered locally in the Russia-Ukraine war is India’s repatriation of almost 18,000 stranded Indian students’ struggles and hardships they were facing during the conflict in Ukrainian regions. Wire services stories report on the life-threatening situation for millions of Ukrainian civilians, the killing of families trying to flee via humanitarian corridors, the anti-war protests in Russia, the bravery of the President of Ukraine Mr. Volodymyr Zelensky, and the brutality of the Russian president Volodymyr Putin.

Objectives of this Study

1. To identify the Salient indicators of war or peace journalism
2. Understand the difference between locally produced es and foreign wire stories in war.
3. To identify the discursive representation of social actors in the conflict by both the newspapers

Methodology

Since the research objective is aimed at assessing Newspaper Framing and Dominant Discourse of the Russia-Ukraine conflicts. Qualitative and Quantitative Content Analysis was employed in conducting the study. The quantitative and qualitative methods are complementary as they allow a wide-ranging analysis of newspaper stories. The study reveals that, despite differing in reporting based on their different editorial lines, the two newspapers have nonetheless projected dialogue as the most suitable pathway to resolve the conflict.

Research Question: The news from the Russia-Ukraine conflict is foreign and international for the selected newspapers as we have already seen in the previous section. In this regard, this study aims to answer the following broad question:

1. Salient indicators of war or peace journalism?
2. How does the newspaper discursively represent the social actors in the conflict?
3. Do the locally produced stories differ from the foreign wire stories in war

Data Collection and Sampling Technique

The paper chooses to examine two Indian newspapers (The Hindu and Times of India). The selection is based on the large circulation in their countries and their popularity around the world, and this makes them international. The Hindu is the second most circulated English newspaper in India. The Times of India is the third-largest newspaper by circulation in India and one of the oldest English-language newspapers in India. The selected newspapers are also chosen for their political orientation and ideological stances, i.e., liberal, and conservative. The two selected newspapers are considered elite and prominent publications on the international level.

The researcher extracted all the materials related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict from 24 February 2022 to 30th April 2022 that is from the day the war had begun from then for the next two months. The paper follows a purposive sample that reflects and supports the purpose of examining and analyzing the data. Seale (2012, p. 237) explains that when using purposive sampling, items are 'selected based on having a significant relation to the research topic'. A purposive sample seeks to be 'reflective (if not strictly representative) of the population. The sample

arguably represents the texts of the two selected newspapers from which it is chosen systematically. The sample consists of hard news presented in news stories. From different sections like the front page, national news, editorial, global, or world news, business, and so on. News stories cover the Russia-Ukraine conflict and exclude the news which just mentions war without focusing on it.

Theory of the Study

It is captivating that peace studies probe into some quintessential questions concerning human behaviors, cooperation, conflict, and relations. From this point of view, this study aims to examine two Indian dailies The Hindu and Times of India from the general perspective of the pioneer theorist Johan Galtung's Peace and War journalism. Galtung's theory is a combination of theory and practice (Burak Ercoşkun, December 2020). Galtung peace journalism suggests taking preventive advocacy such as writing editorials, focusing on common ground rather than revenge, differences, and retaliation, and focusing more on the invisible effect of violence.

The coding categories were adapted from Galtung (1986, 1998). The coder assessed each story based on 22 variables. These indicators, which comprised two major themes, approach and language were used to elicit from the body of the text of each story which frame, war journalism or peace journalism, and the depth of the narrative. The approach-based criteria included orientations such as partisan/nonpartisan, elite-oriented/ people-oriented, etc. The language-based criteria included the use of demonizing language, victimizing language, emotive words, etc. For example, a story is judged if it is war-oriented, whether it reports mainly on the visible effects of war. Does it focus on casualties, death toll, and property damage? Or if it is partisan-oriented. In this way, the approaches and language used in war journalism and peace journalism were measured.

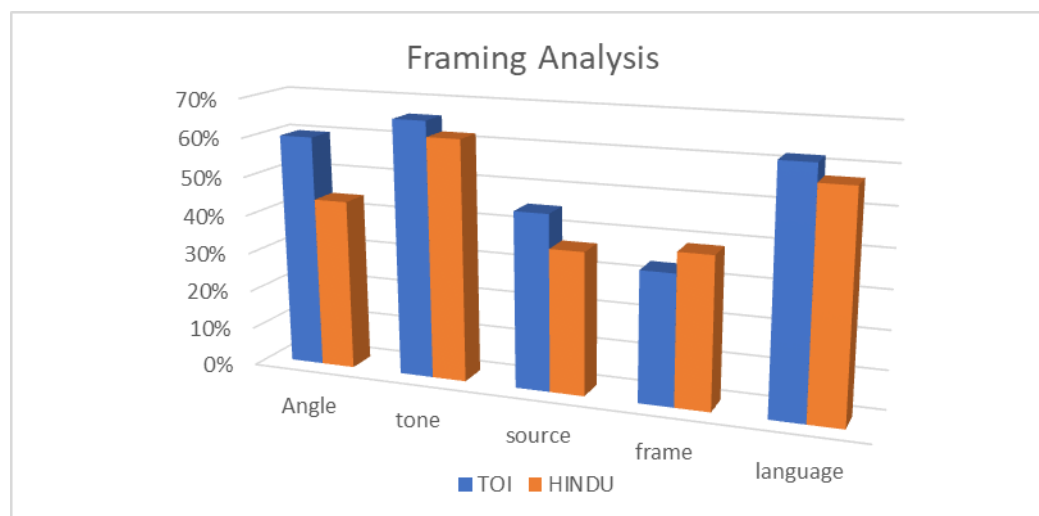
Content Analysis of Ukraine – Russia War News Stories

The unit of analysis was the individual story, which includes hard news, wire news, and editorials. A total of 589 stories about the Russia-Ukraine conflict were gathered from "The Hindu" and "Times of India (ToI)" over a period of two months – February 24-April 30, 2022.

This study aimed to understand the coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict done by two major newspapers by analyzing the framing and dominant discourse of individual stories published by them. The gathered data from about 284 and 305 news articles collected from The Hindu and TOI respectively shows that news on the Russia-Ukraine conflict was mostly reported in the international section of the newspapers (ToI-56% & H-40.14%). Both newspapers' content and newsmakers were more on Indian student evacuation (H-35% & ToI-30%). Newspapers have done well to reflect the condition of Indian students, stranded in Ukraine. News

stories have also reflected the students' ambivalence towards the Indian government's efforts to help them return home.

Framing Analysis



The commercial angle (ToI-60% and H-44.27%) was the dominant angle of the news stories. The tone of the news stories was critical of the war, (ToI-70% & H-62.32%). The majority of news stories from both papers were predominantly politically themed (H-38.73%; ToI-33.44%). Reports on glorifying the Indian government for the evacuation of students under operation “Ganga” was given peer importance. Wire service sources articles dominated the locally produced story (TOI-45.25% & H-36.62%). The language adopted avoided victimizing, emotive, or demonizing language and was more precise or neutral (ToI-62% & H-57.39%).

Themes Covered	TOI	HINDU
Economic	19.34%	23.54%
Political	33.41%	38.73%
Threat	16.07%	15.14%
Historical	1.31%	3.52%
People	21.31%	16.20%
Elite	3.28%	1.41%
Military	5.25%	1.41%

The themes selected for analysis include those subjects that can increase the intensity of the conflict. Political themes indicate dominance out of all the themes (TOI-33.41% & H-38.73%).

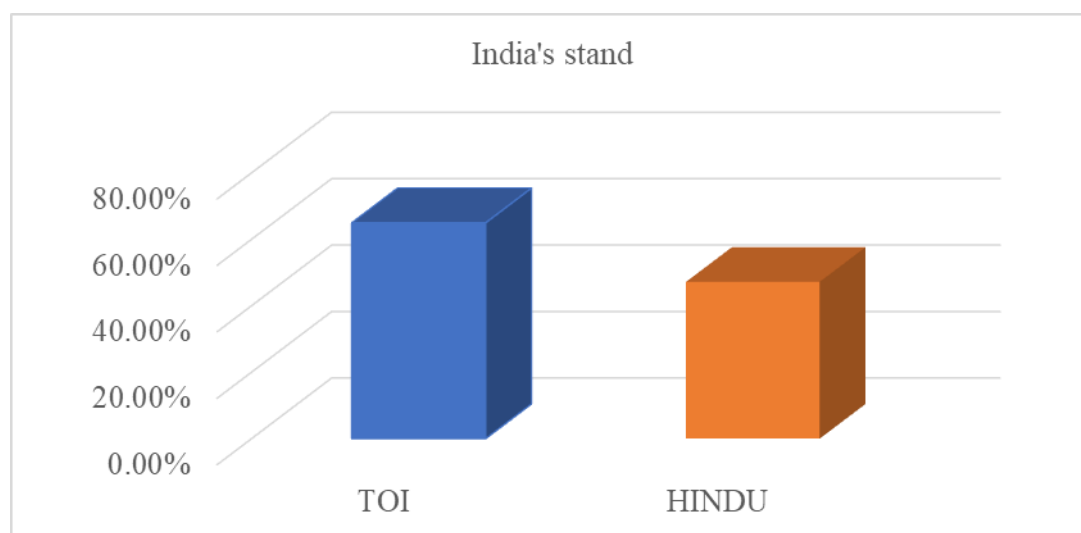
Journalists, civilians, and politicians. The humanitarian crisis unfolding in Ukraine and the scale of the Western response to Russia's invasion have far-reaching political and economic effects.

Discourse Analysis	TOI	HINDU
1. Ukraine region stories	46.56%	34.51%
2. Russian region stories	10%	10%
3. Favours Zelensky	33.44%	27.46%
4. Favours Putin	6%	8.10%
5. Neutral (No fav leaders)	10%	15%
6. International Relationship with Russia	6.23%	8.80%
7. International Relationship with Ukraine	49.24%	41.20%

Discourse analysis results state that Indian media extends support to President Zelensky over President Putin. It is a known fact that the west has extended support to Ukraine, Indian media's support towards president Zelensky is a result of more wiring stories from the west, as the locally produced stories concentrated on students' evacuation.

Effect of the Conflict in India

War effect in India	TOI	HINDU
Economy	12.79%	19.01%
Geo-Political Affair	15.34%	15.49%
Abstain	64.92%	60.28%



India's response to the conflict has been typical among major democracies. Despite India not being contented with the Russian invasion, It has abstained from votes in the UN Assembly India ultimately signifies "A subtle pro-Russia position". Due to the sanctions generated on Russia by America, India faced an economic fallout for its exports with Russia (ToI-12.79% and Hindu-19.01%).

Section * Source Crosstabulation

Count		Source of the news							Total
TOI	Section	Journalist	Editor	News agency	Combination	Outside author	wiring	other sources	
	Frontpage	30	0	18	3	1	8	1	61
	National	19	0	9	0	0	2	0	30
	World	15	1	14	0	1	127	13	171
	Business	5	0	9	1	0	1	1	17
	Editorial	1	14	0	0	7	0	1	23
	Other	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3
	Total	71	15	50	5	10	138	16	305

TOI	Value	DF	Asymp. sig. (2sided)
Chi-square	423.037	30	0.000
N of Valid Cases	305		

The chi-square test between the section and source demonstrates that the majority of the news reported was on the international or world section in TOI newspapers from 305 stories 171 stories were in the international section, hence resulting in the majority of wire service stories 138 stories out of 305 stories are from wiring sources like Reuters, AP, PA, AFP, etc.

Count		Source of the news							Total
Hindu	Section	Journalist	Editor	News agency	Combination	Outside author	wiring	other sources	
	Frontpage	23	0	4	3	3	16	5	54
	National	5	0	1	0	0	0	2	8
	World	23	0	6	2	1	80	2	114
	Business	2	0	6	0	0	8	18	34
	Editorial	0	10	0	1	19	0	0	30
	Other	29	0	3	7	4	0	1	44
	Total	82	10	20	13	27	104	28	284

Hindu	Value	DF	Asymp. sig. (2sided)
Chi-square	406.611	30	0.000
N of Valid Cases	284		

Out of 284 stories analyzed in Hindu 114 stories were in the international section. Resulting in 104 wiring stories. The cold war between the west and Russia exists for centuries, therefore the west extends support to Ukraine. The effect of it has also been reflected in the coverage of news by both newspapers. As both, the newspapers gave more news space to wiring stories

Source * International Relationship Crosstabulation

TOI Source	International Relationship					Total
	Russia	Ukraine	Neutral	Against both	Others	
Journalist	5	20	42	0	4	71
Editor	1	5	8	0	1	15
News agency	3	17	25	0	5	50
Combination	0	0	3	1	1	5
Outside author	0	4	6	0	0	10
Wiring	10	95	30	0	3	138
Other sources	0	11	4	0	1	16
Total	19	152	118	1	15	305

TOI	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square	116.827 ^a	24	0.000
N of Valid Cases	305		

Source and International Relationships in TOI newspaper shows that since there is a majority of wiring stories out of the other sources covering the Russia-Ukraine war in the newspapers, certainly the support for Ukraine is also predominant 152 stories portray support for Ukraine, even though the locally produced were either neutral or on the stranded students of India in Ukraine region.

Hindu Source	International Relationship					Total
	Russia	Ukraine	Neutral	Against both	Others	
Journalist	8	31	40	1	2	82
Editor	0	2	8	0	0	10
News agency	3	3	10	3	1	20
Combination	0	3	9	1	0	13
Outside author	3	12	11	0	1	27
Wiring	9	65	23	2	5	104
Other sources	2	4	16	0	6	28
Total	25	120	117	7	15	284

Hindu	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square	70.910 ^a	24	0.000
N of Valid Cases	284		

Similarly, The Hindu has also articulated support for Ukraine by producing 120 stories indicating support for Ukraine, as the west is against Russia. The above chi-square test results state that Indian media's support for Ukraine is due to the majority of stories in the international section being sourced from western media

Theme*Dominant Discourse

TOI Theme	Dominant Discourse					Total
	Russia	Ukraine	Neutral	Against	Others	
Economic	2	13	38	0	6	59
Political	16	48	36	0	2	102
Threat	2	37	8	1	1	49
Historical	0	4	0	0	0	4
People	1	27	32	1	4	65
Elite	1	9	0	0	0	10
Military	0	6	10	0	0	16
Total	22	144	124	2	13	305

TOI	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square	76.436 ^a	24	0.000
N of Valid Cases	305		

Russian President Putin may seem powerful and dominant in the conflict. But the above test between theme and dominant discourse states that Ukraine's President was the most favorable one internationally. This could be proved by a chain reaction that as a greater number of stories about conflict are published in the international section, hence there is a majority in wiring and west being an ally of Ukraine the support for President Zelensky is also obvious. The economic theme was also highlighted to communicate the economic crisis due to the war.

Hindu Theme	Dominant Discourse					Total
	Russia	Ukraine	Neutral	Against	Others	
Economic	2	12	40	3	10	67
Political	17	54	48	1	0	120
Threat	3	29	0	1	2	35
Historical	0	4	05	1	0	10
People	3	18	22	2	1	46
Elite	1	3	0	0	0	4
Military	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total	26	122	115	8	13	284

TOI	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square	67.098 ^a	24	0.000
N of Valid Cases	284		

The Hindu also portrays a majority of politically themed stories, 120 articles out of 284 articles were of a political theme. The result of the content analysis of the frames indicates a constant dominance of strong support towards Ukraine's president Zelensky. Reconciliation and a diplomatic approach prove to be positive for conflict coverage whereas hegemony fans flame in dispute. There are some other themes also that newspapers have given importance like economic and people themes, which indicates the consequences faced due to the conflict and the

efforts put in by the newspapers to end the war. The pattern of coverage is no longer different in both papers.

Discussion

Conflict Reporting is considered one of the most traditional and prestigious assignments for journalists; and journalists covering war zones are also awarded rightfully and estimably to honor the work of these professionals (Mochish, 2022). Having said that Indian media's international news coverage or media engagement with conflict has become a matter of question and criticism. The coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict became the center point to discuss how Indian media has covered the conflict and the role of independent media in conflict reporting.

Rarely is it seen that an international event gets continuous coverage in Indian Media? However, the Russia-Ukraine conflict managed to occupy maximum attention and good space in newspapers for over a month. An average of 10 stories under different sections like the front page, national news, world, economy, etc. were published for a month and it eventually got down to an average of 5 stories in the second month from when the war had begun. This study of newspapers on how Indian leading newspapers viewed and framed the Russia-Ukraine conflict according to their perspective is done by operationalizing Galtung's classification. It was inferred that the newspapers show uniformity in their coverage of the conflict and more stories were framed as peace journalism or neutral. Mentions of support for the war were low because the majority of the stories were neutral.

One of the eye-catching aspects of Indian media's coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict is the editorial position of the leading newspapers. In an uncommon departure from history, the newspapers took an anti-Russia position, which is the exact opposite of that of the ruling government of the nation. President Putin was criticized for his desire and greed to control the world. Nevertheless, India's stand highlighted its long-standing position of neutrality in international affairs even though Russia has been an Indian ally for decades. One of the main reasons for the shift in attitude by the Indian media could be its connection with popular western media. Most of the leading media houses in India buy news from western news agencies such as AP, AFP, Reuters, etc. And these agencies are quite popular for their western bias, especially during international conflict

We could identify differences between the foreign wire stories and locally produced stories. Foreign wire stories showed a stronger war journalism framing while locally produced stories were focused on students' evacuation from the conflict zone in Ukraine and, the remaining stories were neutral. Foreign wire stories also used emotive words to show their support towards Ukraine while locally produced stories did not use emotive words even though they had a concern for the people of Ukraine.

In-house journalists provided extensive coverage of India's evacuation of students from conflict areas in Ukraine. Nevertheless, media houses applauded the measures that were taken by the government to evacuate the students. A lot of personal stories also appeared, and the diligent steps taken by the Indian

government were also given significance. These reports appeared when the government was under severe criticism from parents, opposition, and social media for the delayed evacuation process. Times of India on February 28 carried a front-page story that spoke about the government's timely intervention. The piece was headlined 'Most Active Evacuation Program'. As the war goes on, we can see massive propaganda by western media have put out stories targeting Russia and victimizing Ukraine. The western media has been successful in influencing Indian media to support Ukraine and anti-Russia opinion which will influence the people of India and pressurise the government to support Ukraine. However, the western media failed to influence the Indian government despite that, we can see a sharp division of opinion in Indian public discourse when it comes to the Russia-Ukraine war. Sood aptly sums it up (*The Ultimate Goal*, p. 280), "The Indian narrative has been run far too long from elsewhere. It needs to change and cannot be determined in Europe, America, or elsewhere. India and Indians must tell their own story. We need to manage our narrative to control our destiny." This study also has its limitations. One of the prominent ones is the impact of the conflict framed by the newspapers on its readers. This study is also limited by its sample to only 2 newspapers. In this booming social and tech-savvy world future studies can examine the role played by social media and TV news agencies in reporting international conflict. Many other significant frames could not be determined as the coding category used for assessing the narrative content was conceived by Galtung's theory.

Conclusion

According to Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFlur, "Media Dependency Theory" states that the "More dependent an individual is on the media for having his or her needs fulfilled, the more important the media will be to that person (Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). This theory predicts a relationship between dependence and the influence of the media on individuals' usage. As people are more dependent on the media for day-to-day activities happening around them or at a distance, likewise they are dependent on media frames and interpretations too. This study interprets the framing and dominant discourse analysis of international conflict by two leading newspapers in India. Within the prism of this study, the Russia-Ukraine conflict is reported largely in a peaceful frame rather than a conflict-insensitive frame by selected newspapers. The fact that the newspapers favored Ukraine over Russia was that the majority of stories produced were by wire service sources, and it is widely known that western media is critical of the war and indicated ending the war, whereas the locally produced stories were neutral and prioritized the stranded Indian students in Ukraine and the government operation "Ganga" was given more news space. History proves that the media has always been criticized for its coverage given to international conflict, the current Russia-Ukraine conflict was an opportunity for the media to change history, and the majority of coverage was given to the conflict until the peak period of the war. It was noticed that the newspapers had covered the conflict in detail unlike the

recent US-led conflicts in Asia that never attracted comprehensive coverage or empathy from media houses. Discussions on the suffering of people, issues related to refugees, human rights violations, etc. hardly found this distinct and enormous coverage by newspapers. However, the media has faced lashes and dilemmas, especially due to the nature of the Russia-Ukraine war. This can sabotage independent journalism and lead to fake.

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American News Coverage of the War in Ukraine: The Attack on the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theatre in Mariupol

*By Margaret Cassidy**

This paper provides a western viewpoint on how the American news media have covered the War in Ukraine. In particular, it considers the assault on the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theatre in Mariupol. Through an exploratory content analysis, it found patterns in the diverse sources used in covering of the incident, word choice, photos and video.

Keywords: Mariupol Theatre, American news media, Ukraine, war

Introduction

Long before historians dig into the archives and construct well-researched narratives about past events, journalists are in the thick of those events as they unfold, trying to figure out what is happening, what is worth knowing, and how to report what they have learned to their readers or viewers. This is always difficult work to do well, but reporters in conflict zones have the vastly more challenging task of working in chaotic and dangerous settings, trying to determine what is accurate and what is misinformation and how best to construct a coherent, truthful, thorough narrative for their audiences. News coverage is often the primary way that people outside a conflict zone know what is going on, so it can shape public perception of the conflict and influence the type of support the people affected by the conflict receive. With so much at stake, it is essential that journalists take great care in the way they gather information and in the choices they make about what to report, and how.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022 is a crisis that has global significance and that is extremely challenging for journalists to cover. Reporting in regions that are under siege in Ukraine is obviously extremely dangerous. At times, communication with people inside conflict zones has been limited or entirely cut off, so access to any information, much less verifiable information, has been limited. New media platforms have provided valuable access to important information, but misinformation and disinformation on those platforms threaten to obscure or suppress the truth. And then, once journalists have gathered whatever information they have been able to obtain, they have faced all the critical decisions they always face about which events to cover, and how. Every element of a story—for example, word choice, the type of images or video footage to include or exclude, the use of sources—shapes how readers and viewers will perceive the events being reported.

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This project examined mainstream American news coverage of the war in Ukraine. In particular, it focuses on two of the organizations with the largest audiences and how they covered one specific event in March, 2022—namely, the bombing of the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theatre in Mariupol. Hopefully this small-scale project will serve as an introductory case study to help direct more expansive research moving forward.

Method

This project was a small exploratory project to get a sense of how mainstream American cable news organizations have been covering the war in Ukraine. The first step was to look at the Facebook posts of CNN, FOX News, and the Associated Press (a kind of “left, right, and center” approach) from February to July, 2022 to see what they chose to post; out of all of the possible stories to tell, which events or moments were chosen for coverage?

Although there was some variation across news organizations, there was a great deal of similarity in the topics they chose to cover. Some examples of the stories they all reported are:

- The initial invasion in February, 2022.
- Ukrainian President Zelensky’s virtual addresses to the European Parliament and the U.S. Congress in March, 2022.
- The Russian attack on a maternity hospital in Mariupol on March 9, 2022.
- The Russian attack on the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theatre in Mariupol on March 16, 2022.
- The war crimes trial and conviction of Russian soldier Vadim Shishimarin in Ukraine in May, 2022.
- The crises at the Zaporizhzhia power plant—first in the early stages of the invasion and again in September, 2022.

All of these events (and more) deserve attention, and hopefully future research will look carefully at the news coverage of each of them. This project focused on one of these events, namely, the bombing of the Mariupol theater on March 16, 2022, looking at the coverage the bombing received on the CNN and FOX News websites, two of the most-visited news websites by American news consumers (Watson, 2022).

A search of the CNN and FOX News websites produced multiple stories on the bombing of the Mariupol theater, beginning on the day of the bombing and continuing for several weeks. Each of these stories was analyzed for key elements of the coverage, such as the use of sources, word choice, and the content of photos/video.

Findings

Both CNN and FOX News posted stories on March 16, 2022, the day of the bombing, and then followed up with additional coverage over the days that followed. It was clearly difficult for reporters to know exactly what had happened or how many people had been harmed. As FOX News reporter Bryan Llenas reported on March 17 (from New York), “we’re having a hard time assessing the casualties” (in O’Neil, 2022). His report includes a brief amateur video of the smoldering theater from a distance, and he was able to declare, “it’s pretty clear that something has been destroyed there of some magnitude,” but that was as much information as he was able to verify. A full nine days later, on March 25, CNN reported that “information about the full extent of the attack has been slow to emerge due to the almost complete breakdown of essential services in the city, including communication networks” (Carey et al., 2022). The situation in Mariupol was chaotic; Russian forces continued to shell the city and people in Mariupol struggled to access the theater, rescue the wounded, and identify the dead. Communication with people in Mariupol was limited and difficult or impossible to verify. Under the circumstances, journalists did what they could. They talked to Mariupol and other Ukrainian officials when possible, they interviewed civilians in Mariupol if they could, and they relied heavily on social media posts—in particular, Telegram, Facebook, and Twitter—for information and updates.

Sources

Although there was very little overlap in the specific individuals used as sources by CNN and FOX News, there was some similarity in the *type* of sources they used. In particular, both CNN and FOX News used statements by local and national government officials and spokespeople. For example, FOX News quoted Mariupol Deputy Mayor Sergei Orlov, Ukrainian Parliament member Serhiy Taruta, the Ukraine Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (O’Neil, 2022; Pagonis, 2022). CNN quoted Mariupol government official Maxim Kach, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Irina Vereshchuk, “local authorities” in Lviv, and Mariupol “officials” (Lister et al., 2022).

Some of these sources appear to have been interviewed by CNN or FOX News reporters, while some information was obtained less directly. For example, CNN used the term “told CNN” in reference to Peter Andruishchenko (advisor to the Mariupol mayor) and the Mariupol Deputy Mayor (Lister et al., 2022) Kateryna Erskaya, a journalist who was at the Mariupol theater, “talked to CNN” about what she witnessed (Macintosh & Ochman, 2022). This language suggests that these sources were in direct contact with CNN reporters. However, reporters also relied heavily on social media posts for information. CNN used the Telegram channel of the Mariupol City Council (Lister et al., 2022), and FOX News cited Telegram information from Ukraine’s ombudsman Ludmyla Denisova (Pagonis,

2022) and “officials representing Mariupol” (Conklin, 2022). CNN used the Facebook posts of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky (Carey et al., 2022) and head of the Donetsk region administration Pavlo Kyrylenko (Lister et al., 2022), and FOX News cited a Facebook post by Ukrainian Parliament member Sergiy Taruta (Pagones, 2022). FOX News shared the Twitter post of UK Foreign Affairs Minister Dmytro Kuleba (O’Neil, 2022) and a statement by the Mariupol Deputy Mayor to the BBC (Conklin, 2022), and CNN used the televised message of Irina Vereshchuk (Lister et al., 2022).

CNN sometimes used civilian sources in their reporting. One CNN story describes the experience of several civilians. One is “Serhii,” a Mariupol man whose wife and two daughters were in the theater (Mackintosh & Ochman, 2022). A second civilian source in this story is Anna Kotelnikova, an anesthesiologist who escaped Mariupol just before the theater bombing; CNN used several of her photos in this story. Another CNN report features CNN reporter Ivan Watson talking with Maria Kutnyakova, a civilian who had survived the theater attack (CNN, 3/30/22). Overall, however, civilian sources were relatively rare in CNN’s and FOX News’ reporting.

Word Choice

A reporter’s choice of words can shape a reader’s perception or interpretation, direct their sympathies, and invite them to identify with one or another person or group in the story. Word choice can portray someone as a hero or a villain; it can obscure events in euphemistic phrases or lay them bare in graphic terms. In the case of the Mariupol theater attack, both CNN and FOX News were unambiguous in their presentation of Russia as the villain. Both organizations acknowledged the Russian claim that it was Ukrainian soldiers, not civilians in the theater, as well as the claim that Ukrainian forces bombed the theater. However, both organizations gave no credence to these claims, and proceeded to report this story as an act of depraved and unjustified Russian aggression. CNN referred to the attack as a “brazen” act by Russian forces (Macintosh & Ochman, 2022), quoted President Zelensky calling it a “war crime” (Carey et al., 2022). Similarly, FOX News called the attack a “horrendous war crime” (Conklin, 2022) and quotes the Mariupol City Council describing Russian forces as “fascists of the 21st century” (Conklin, 2022). FOX News described how civilians had “sought refuge” in the theater (O’Neil, 2022), one of the last intact large structures in Mariupol, and while acknowledging the Russian explanation for the bombing, commented that “somebody’s not telling the truth here” in the context of speaking of the “horrific atrocities” committed by Russian troops (O’Neil, 2022). CNN reported the hope that “evacuation corridors” could be established for civilians to escape Mariupol (Carey & Alkhaldi, 2022), and FOX News reported that some civilians had managed to escape through a “humanitarian corridor” (O’Neil, 2022). FOX News anchor Bill Hemmer likened the situation in Mariupol to the “humanitarian disaster” in Rwanda in the 1990s (FOX News Network, 2022). CNN also suggested a parallel to historical events by quoting Serhii, a Ukrainian civilian, who described the situation in Mariupol as a

“holodomor;” coming from the Ukrainian words for “hunger” and “extermination,” “holodomor” refers to a 1930s famine, allegedly engineered by Joseph Stalin, that killed millions of Ukrainians (Mackintosh & Ochman, 2022). CNN also quotes Serhii’s comparison of the destruction caused by Russian forces in Mariupol to the destruction caused by the Nazis in World War II; Serhii says, “the destruction now is greater than the Nazis did during World War II. This is a historical remake, this is another war crime (in Mackintosh & Ochman, 2022). Whether Americans followed the CNN or the FOX News coverage of this attack, they were encountering language that encouraged them to perceive the event as an appalling, merciless act by Russian forces against Ukrainian civilians.

Photos and Video

Just as word choice can be powerful, the subject matter of photos and video footage can be very compelling. Decisions about what images or footage to use can be extremely difficult, particularly when these decisions involve how much carnage or death to reveal. In the first days of reporting the bombing of the Mariupol theater, it appears the challenge for news organizations was not which images to use, but whether they had any images at all. Much as reporters had very little access to sources in the conflict zone, they also appear not to have had photos or video. Neither CNN nor FOX News had footage from their own reporters in Mariupol. On the day of the bombing, CNN used two photos of the damaged theater that they had obtained from Telegram (Lister et al., 2022). The next day, FOX News had a very short amateur video of the smoldering theater from a distance that they had obtained from the Telegram channel of the Mariupol City Council (O’Neil, 2022). FOX News used a number of photos in their reporting the day after the bombing, but they were from other parts of Ukraine and they were presented in a broader context than just the attack on the theater (O’Neil, 2022). Some of these photos were very graphic, showing civilian corpses in the streets and people grieving or tending to the dead.

Nearly two weeks later, on March 29, CNN posted a video story by anchor Jonathan Berman from Lviv in which CNN shared newly-obtained video footage posted on the Telegram channel of the Mariupol City Council showing people leaving the bombed theater in March 16 (CNN, 3/29/22). FOX News included “photos released by the city council” of Mariupol (Pagonis, 2022). As mentioned earlier, CNN’s March 21 report includes photos taken by Mariupol resident Anna Kotelnikova before the bombing. These photos show people outside the theater, as well as destruction throughout the city.

One photo stands out as particularly powerful, in spite of the fact that at first glance, it might not strike a viewer as all that interesting or informative. A Maxar satellite image (used by CNN and FOX News) shows a grainy aerial view of the theater before the bombing with the word “дЕТИ” (Russian for “children”) painted in white on the ground on opposite sides of the theater. Later reporting by the Associated Press would confirm that a set designer for the theater painted this word outside the theater to signal to Russian forces flying overhead that there were

children sheltering inside, as a plea for them to spare the children's lives (Lori Hinnant, 2022). Although typically one might think of close-up images of wounded or grieving civilians as the most heart-wrenching subject matter, this image was horrifying and heartbreaking in its capacity to evoke a sense of horror in those who see it. Perhaps more than any other reporting, this one image served as proof that there was no possibility that this attack was a mistake; instead, Russian forces were clearly capable of knowingly and deliberately slaughtering Ukrainian children. This image may very well endure as one of the most memorable, iconic images of the conflict.

Discussion

One aspect of the coverage of the Mariupol theater bombing that stands out is the challenge of obtaining any information at all. As CNN reported on March 21, "Mariupol has become a black box, with information only beginning to trickle out as residents escape" (Mackintosh & Ochman, 2022). CNN captured civilians' anguish over not knowing what was happening:

For days, family and friends of those inside [the theater] have waited on tenterhooks for news of their fate, posting in local Telegram channels and Facebook groups asking if anyone has seen their loved ones. Posts from some of those who have managed to escape the city haven't instilled much hope, describing basements turned into tombs, and streets littered with dead bodies (Mackintosh & Ochman, 2022).

This quote reveals one of the key features of information gathering during this crisis: the use of social media to obtain information when it was nearly impossible to access sources directly. In particular, the messaging app Telegram has been used extensively in this conflict and has become "the go-to place for unfiltered live war updates for both Ukrainian refugees and increasingly isolated Russians alike" (Allyn, 2022). Although there are legitimate concerns that Telegram can also be a source of propaganda and disinformation (Bergengruen, 2022), it has provided many individuals and groups, from civilians to local officials to President Zelensky, with the means of reaching a wide audience.

The "black box" of Mariupol was illuminated two months after the theater attack when the Associated Press released the results of a careful investigation they conducted that constructed a more detailed and accurate account of the bombing and its aftermath than CNN, FOX News, or other news organizations had been able to provide (Lori Hinnant, 2022). The AP reporters drew from a wide range of information sources for this investigation, including detailed eyewitness accounts of Ukrainians who sheltered in the theater, cell phone videos, photos, satellite images, drone footage, theater floor plans and a 3-D model of the theater that they constructed for the investigation. This investigation enabled AP reporters to revise earlier estimates of the death toll, which tragically doubled from 300 to 600. The report includes the AP's methodology to estimate casualties; for example, they compiled and compared eyewitness accounts of how many people were sheltered in different areas of the theater, which exits were blocked by

rubble, and what they saw as they escaped (Ritzel, 2022). The AP report highlights the value of investigative journalism and the way this type of reporting takes the time to explore issues very deeply and comprehensively, thus providing insights that are unavailable when events are first unfolding.

Another interesting feature of the CNN and FOX News reporting of the Mariupol theater attack is the similarity in the tone of reporting of the two organizations. At a time when American society is so severely polarized, and when American news media are among the institutions that exhibit (and perhaps contribute to) that polarization, it is very interesting to see a case where there is such alignment in the approach to a news story. If presented with an “anonymized” report on the Mariupol theater bombing, one would be hard-pressed to identify whether it came from CNN or FOX News. This is rather extraordinary, considering the way these organizations have taken opposite sides from each other in so much of their reporting in recent years.

This alignment of U.S. news media mirrors Gregory T. Papanikos’ study of Greek news coverage of the initial Russian invasion of Ukraine (Papanikos, 2023). Although the three Greek newspapers included in his study spanned a variety of political perspectives, and “Greek public opinion is highly divided on any issue” (Papanikos, 2022, p. 12), all three newspapers were “unequivocally against the Russian-Belarus invasion. Papanikos notes that coverage of the war in Ukraine “was more neutral and less controversial than other areas of political conflict in Greece”. These findings in Greece are very similar to those of this study of American news.

Conclusion

Clearly, there is much more work to do to more fully examine the American news coverage of the war in Ukraine. It would be interesting to see if similar patterns of reporting hold for other events in the war, and if news organizations that tend to skew in different directions on political issues continue to align so closely in their approach to stories about Ukraine. The AP report also reminds us of the extremely important work of careful, detailed investigative work over time and the value of the reporting that comes out of that work. As this conflict enters its second year, one can hope that more of this type of investigative reporting will emerge to help people around the world make sense of this crisis.

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The Russian War in Ukraine and the Implications for the News Media

*By John V. Pavlik**

Since the Russian invasion on the 24th of February 2022 the war in Ukraine has been horrific and tragically impactful. The consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine are far reaching, ranging from at least 3,496 civilian deaths, including at least 69 children, to the displacement of at least 14 million of persons (confirmed by the United Nations, Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 10 April 2022, Sugden et al., 2022), and to the massive destruction of Ukraine's infrastructure. Similarly profound are the implications of the war in Ukraine for the journalistic media of mass communication. In this paper I examine ten sets of major implications of the Ukraine war for the news media.

Keywords: Ukraine, Russia, war, journalism, news media

The Pursuit of Truth

Reporting in pursuit of the truth is the first of these implications. Journalists it is often said write the first draft of history. As such, they play a key role in establishing what society knows or at least believes to be the truth about the war in Ukraine. Yet, truth itself is elusive and hard to define. Philosophers since at least the time of the ancient Greeks have debated the nature of what is truth and how or even if we can ever know it. Journalist often accept the contested nature of truth and instead set their sights on the pursuit of truth, knowing that like the horizon, they may never reach it but they can be confident the facts and stories they are reporting are accurate and truthful. Philosopher of science Karl Raimund Popper (1963) has argued that rather seek to prove truth, but science should instead seek to disprove through systematic inquiry falsehood. And in many ways this is an approach journalists reporting in Ukraine may need to accommodate.

Before reporting any information about the war, it is essential that journalists verify the accuracy of that information. This is often called fact-checking. Among the most important tools journalists have in this regard is direct observation, including the events that occur during the war, the people and places impacted, and the circumstances that unfold. Direct observation inside the conflict zone is a vital mechanism for journalists and the news media to establish what may be true and what can be demonstrated to be false. Supplementing direct observation with interviews, including with combatants as well as civilians can add further detail and nuance to what is being reported. The combination of direct observation and interviews inside Ukraine or at refugee sites in neighboring countries such as Poland can increase the accuracy of what is being reported and add more facts to news reports. Relying on open-source intelligence (OCIT), or information about the

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conflict available via the Internet, has also proven valuable. Investigative journalism site Bellingcat, for instance, has used OCIT in its reporting on the war (Bellingcat, 2022). CCTV camera footage has also proven important. In May 2022 the BBC acquired such video that showed Russian soldiers shooting dead unarmed civilians (Rainsford, 2022).

To report on the war, reporters have relied on a spectrum of primary sources to get reliable and timely information. Mykhailo Shtekel, a Radio Free Europe (RFE/RL) Ukrainian Service Correspondent (Alazab and Macfarlane, 2022), has reported that in Ukraine reporters have utilized the mobile messaging platforms *Telegram* and *Viber* to obtain not only reliable information but also analytics about those being reached.

Unfortunately, as British journalist Phillip Knightley wrote in 1975, truth is often the first casualty of war. Knightley's words resonate loudly during the Ukraine war. Knightley was a special correspondent for *The Sunday Times* for 20 years (1965-85) and was twice named Journalist of the Year (1980 and 1988) in the British Press Awards. He wrote of his own experience as a war correspondent and in his book analyzed journalism in wars from Crimea to Iraq.

Lu Yuguang of Chinese news outlet Phoenix TV appears to have unique access to Moscow's view of the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Davidson, 2022). Yuguang has been reporting as a correspondent embedded with Russian troops inside Ukraine. It's not clear to what extent his reporting is independent, truthful or censored, though journalists traditionally embedded with the military must submit their reports for approval to military authorities before they may be transmitted. Moreover, an embedded reporter must have approval from military authorities as to where they may do their news gathering. It's likely that the stories emerging from this embedded reporting are highly sanitized and controlled by government censors, and they are presented to the public as independent journalism though far from it, and more akin to simply propaganda.

Freedom of Speech and Press

The reasons truth is the first casualty of war are many. Perhaps the most important reason is the restrictions government and military place on freedom of speech and press during war dramatically distort what is reported and lead to many inaccuracies, falsehoods, and even outright lies. The importance of freedom of speech and press to establishing the truth is the second set of implications of the Ukraine war for news media.

Soon after the invasion of Ukraine, Russian President Putin instituted a new law restricting freedom of speech and press regarding the war. In particular, the law prohibits any reporting that does not conform to the official governmental position on what is the truth. This means use of the word "war" or "invasion" are prohibited in Russia, whether in print, on air, or online, on news sites or social media platforms (Tebor, 2022). Only descriptions of the conflict as a special military operation are permitted. For any one inside Russia, whether a journalist or a private citizen, violating this law, or failing to conform to the government's

draconian censorship, comes with a severe penalty. Violating the law comes with prison sentence of up to 15 years or worse. Enactment of the law dramatically impacted all news media in Russia and points to the third set of implications of the Ukraine war for news media. Associated Press reporter David Bauder says the law is more an impediment than a muzzle for journalists operating inside Russia. Observes Bauder (2022a), "In a recent dispatch from Moscow, BBC correspondent Steve Rosenberg noted that a new Russian law required him to refer to the invasion of Ukraine as a "special military operation." Then he quoted a Russian human rights lawyer who liberally used what is now a forbidden word: "war."

Independent Journalism

This conflict in Ukraine highlights the importance of independent news media. The last few remaining independent Russian news media inside Russia chose to close rather than report the falsehoods required by the country's new law (Kirby, 2022). Meduza, a Russian news site based in Latvia, is struggling for support to continue to deliver independent news to Russia (Baer, 2022). Western media also had to adapt to the new law, avoiding the terms "war" or "invasion" and many including the BBC closed their operations in Russia. And those few Western journalists that remained inside Russia were forced to adapt or face arrest.

Only independent news media can hope to cut through the fog of war and possibly report the truth. State media are incapable of reporting the truth about the war. State media are instruments of government propaganda. In fact, Russia has criminalized critical reporting about the war (Thompson, 2022c). Russian propaganda is apparently designed to achieve multiple goals, including to influence public opinion to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine and to deflect blame for the atrocities from the Russian military and onto the Ukrainians themselves. The last independent TV news operation in Russia closed immediately following the passage of the Russian law requiring conformity to the official government position on the Ukraine war. In a final act of ironic truth telling, the TV station staff closed their final independent broadcast by airing video of a performance of Swan Lake which had famously aired thirty years earlier to signal the demise of the Soviet Union. The Committee to Protect Journalists (2022) reports that at least 150 Russian journalists have fled in the aftermath of Putin's war on information. Nobel Peace Prize winner Dmitry Muratov, the editor of Russian independent newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, has been called "all but the last man standing between Putin and an independent media in Russia" (Sonne and Ilyushina, 2022). Unfortunately, in late March *Novaya Gazeta* ceased operations after an official warning (Saric, 2022). However, in April he led his staff to launch *Novaya Gazars*, a new Russian-language news outlet based in Europe to provide uncensored reporting (Reuters, 2022).

The U.S. government also has used leaks to the press in an effort to shape the direction of the war. Allsop (2022a) points to a pair of leaks to the press. In one, Barnes et al. (2022) reported Ukrainian officials with locational details of Russian movements that they have subsequently combined with their own information and

used to target and kill Russian generals—a flow of intelligence, the *Times* wrote, that “has few precedents.” In a second, Dilanian et al. (2022), cited “US officials” who claimed to have “helped Ukrainian officials to locate the Moskva, Russia’s flagship in the Black Sea, which they subsequently sank.”

Fighting Disinformation

The next set of implications for news media of the Ukraine war revolves around another war that is being waged inside Russia and even beyond. This is the disinformation war. It is a propaganda war. Journalists must fight this disinformation war, though only independent journalists and independent news media are capable of fighting this war effectively. It is essential that journalists question all “information” regardless of the source. The most blatant disinformation is being disseminated by Russian authorities, from Putin to his generals and other government officials.

There are many lies and falsehoods Russians are being told about the Ukraine War. In March 2022, *The New York Times* reported four of the most significant falsehoods (Thompson, 2022a). These are 1) After Russian shellings killed many Ukrainian civilians, Russia blamed “neo-Nazis” inside Ukraine. 2) After Russia shelled a residential neighborhood, Russians claimed Ukrainians did the shelling. 3) After Russian military lay siege to the Chernobyl nuclear facility causing it to catch fire, Russians claimed they were actually there to protect it. And 4) after attacks bloodied and killed civilians at a Children’s and Maternity hospital, Russian officials claimed the injured Ukrainians seen in photographs and video were actually “crisis actors.” In March, Russia’s defense and foreign ministries issued statements “falsely claiming that the Pentagon was financing biological weapons labs in Ukraine.” U.S. sources have countered that these Russian allegations are a “false flag” providing potential justification for Russia’s own possible future use of biological or chemical weapons. Chinese diplomats and state media have repeated this Russian conspiracy theory and posted it to official social media accounts. Russian state media have even repeated Fox News reports to advance its narrative (Thompson, 2022b).

At least anecdotally, many Russians believe lies such as these because the falsehoods are all they see or hear and nationalism is on the rise. The information silos people now can reside within further fuels the likelihood they will believe these lies; they are often not exposed to any information that contradicts the Putin disinformation campaign. To illustrate the power of disinformation about the war, Hewitt (2022) reported on one case in which “Sergei,” a Russian-American, told him he relied on YouTube and Russian TV, also online, to get his news. Sergei was alarmed by the “Azov Nazi” videos he saw online that depicted far right-wing militias in Ukraine.

Moreover, support for Putin has increased since the invasion (TheConversation, 2022). Russian polling agency the Levada Center (2022) shows that as of the end of March 2022, 83% of Russians approved of Putin, up from 69% in February, and up from 61% who approved of him in August 2021. It’s unclear whether support for Putin will wain as the Russian economy declines under the weight of

the world's economic sanctions, but as of this writing his support is soaring, and the Russian propaganda machine seems to be working, creating for the Russian people something of a Potemkin Village (Goldberg, 2000), although more research is needed to test this hypothesis. These lies echo the same types of lies told by former U.S. President Donald Trump and other Republican political extremists following the insurrection at the US Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Questioning all "information" whether from Russia, China, USA or even Ukraine is important. In other words, misinformation, whether intentional or not can come from both the main combatants as well as third parties. These include China, which has been ramping up its own disinformation campaign about the war in Ukraine (Mozur et al., 2022). Journalists should also not simply accept without question information provided by American officials. In early March 2022, U.S. Pres. Biden stated that rising gasoline prices were caused by Putin (Boyer and Mordock, 2022). Although it's certainly possible that Russian actions are influencing fuel prices, the rising price of gas had already been underway long before Russia invaded Ukraine, suggesting fuel prices were on the rise for other reasons, likely including the Pandemic and problems in the overall supply chain.

News Media Coverage

Patterns in how the news media have covered the war in Ukraine is a key issue. Research has shown (Dennis et al., 1991) that how news media cover military conflicts often evolves over time. Moreover, its character often depends on contextual factors such as whether a news organization is headquartered in the country of one of the combatants or within a country with a vested interest in the outcome. With regard to the current war in Ukraine, there is little research as of this date to draw upon to determine how these patterns may or may not hold. However, Papanikos (2022b) has published the results of an early qualitative analysis of coverage of the conflict in three Greek newspapers. His study reveals that these papers have unequivocally condemned the Russia-Belarus invasion. This is surprising, Papanikos observes, noting that Greece has had long "historical, economic, and cultural (religion included) ties with Russia", yet the invasion was considered unacceptable. It's also worth noting that news media have made covering the war a major priority, and in some cases, such as the *Wall Street Journal*, developed new sections devoted to the topic. Titled "Russia-Ukraine War," [WSJ.com](https://www.wsj.com/news/ukraine) provides full coverage of the conflict, including a regularly updated and interactive map of the conflict, text and multimedia reports. New news media have similarly introduced such sections, including the *Washington Post*, whose special section is titled War in Ukraine.

Another way truth has become a casualty in the Ukraine war is through patterns of bias in news media coverage, particularly racial and cultural. As noted by Rutgers journalism professor David Love, a broad cross-section of news media, including media from the U.S., Europe and the Middle East, have described the victims of Putin's Ukraine invasion in very different terms than the victims of conflicts in other parts of the world. "This isn't Iraq or Afghanistan," said CBS

News foreign correspondent Charlie D'Agata of Kyiv, speaking on the American television news network. "This is a relatively civilized, relatively European city." D'Agata soon apologized for his comments, but what he said may have been a truth of many news media observers of the war, whether spoken openly or not. A similar view was offered on air by Al-Jazeera anchor Peter Dobbie (Love, 2022). Speaking on the Qatari news network, Dobbie said, "What's compelling is looking at them, the way they are dressed. These are prosperous, middle-class people... These are not obviously refugees trying to get away from the Middle East...or North Africa. They look like any European family that you'd live next door to."

Reporting without bias, or being what journalists call objective, is central to providing news coverage of the war that is credible to the public. Research shows that perceived bias in the news is a primary factor in the erosion of public trust in journalism (Pew Research Center, 2022). Like truth, objectivity may be an unobtainable goal for any human journalist. But it is essential that journalists covering the war in Ukraine strive for being free of bias in their reporting or the public will lose confidence in the news and no longer believe the stories they see, hear or otherwise experience.

Journalists have faced other challenges in covering the war, such as a now-famous apparently off-the-cuff remark by U.S. Pres. Joe Biden in late March after a major speech on the war during a visit by the president to Poland. Known for his gaffes, Biden said of Putin, "For God's sake, this man cannot remain in power" (Allsop, 2022b). News media, political pundits and others immediately responded to the statement, with White House officials saying the President was not calling for regime change. Biden subsequently said he meant what he said, but he was expressing his "moral outrage" and not about policy (Shear, 2022). Yet, for journalists how to frame the comment was problematic. Should they dismiss it as possibly an emotional outburst? Or should they read deeper meaning into it, perhaps the truth, even if it might escalate the war? Similarly, whether journalists should use the term "genocide" to describe the Russian atrocities is another key issue. U.S. Pres. Biden and others have called the Russian invasion genocide, and journalists have used the term genocide via attribution to these sources (Pietsch et al., 2022). Choice of words is an essential dimension of covering the war, including in headline writing, sometimes considered more art than science. In an allusion to Paul Simon's classic song, *The Boxer*, the *Washington Post* published the following headline for a story about the mayor of the Ukrainian capital then under siege from Russian forces: "In Kyiv stands an ex-boxer, and a mayor by his trade." Simon's lyric: "In the clearing stands a boxer and a fighter by his trade." *Post* editors explained that the headline was meant to honor "the courage and leadership of Vitali Klitschko, mayor of Kyiv and an ex-world heavyweight boxing champion (Washington Post, 2022).

Public Engagement

Audience interest in news about the war in Ukraine and its consequences has surged. Kersley (2022) reports that during first few weeks of the war, many news outlets recorded record-breaking levels of audience engagement. *The Guardian*, for instance, said February 2022 was its fifth-largest month ever for page views. Likewise, *The Sun* reports it had 70 million page views on its websites for Ukraine-related stories in the month since the start of the invasion. The BBC News live page about Ukraine had 396 million page views between 24 February and 13 March. *Times* digital reports it gained 1,000 new subscribers a day during the first two weeks of the war (Kersley, 2022). Data show traffic to the top news sites has continued to surge through at least March of 2022 (Majid, 2022), although it's unclear how long this surge in audience demand will continue. Google Trends data show a decline in April in terms of how many are searching for Ukraine-related content. Friedman (2022) of *The New York Times* notes that "virtually everyone on the planet can either observe the fighting at a granular level, participate in some way or be affected economically." *The Washington Post* has lowered its paywall for those in Russia and Ukraine, potentially increasing audience engagement (Pietsch et al., 2022).

Another important development in the nature of public engagement with the news media and the Ukraine war is the rise of social media, which has played a key role in transforming how people know about the war. The social media audience is largely a global one, although Russia has blocked Twitter and a Russian court has outlawed Facebook and Instagram. Yet through social media, the public across almost most audience segments in most of the world is highly engaged in news and information, as well as mis and disinformation. However, in an effort to prevent Russian disinformation, YouTube and Facebook have blocked Russian-affiliated content on their platforms globally (Dwoskin et al., 2022).

Social media are a double edged sword. They can be used to engage the public in quality journalism. The mobile app *Telegram* has proven valuable in distributing news and messaging during the conflict, and as of this writing has been able to evade Russian censorship. Telegram is one of the most popular social apps in Ukraine and Russia, and has been since before the invasion began (Alazab and Macfarlane, 2022). Created in 2013 by Russian-born tech entrepreneur Pavel Durov, Telegram is a free cloud-based app that allows users to send and receive messages, calls, photos, videos, audio and other files. NPR says (Allyn, 2022) that Telegram "has emerged as the go-to place for unfiltered live war updates for both Ukrainian refugees and increasingly isolated Russians alike." Telegram operates out of Dubai.

The U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM, 2022) also has utilized virtual public networks (VPN) to provide secure and unrestricted Internet access in Russia, and has made VPNs available via its website to those inside Russia. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has devised another hack to evade Russian censors. RSF has set up a Twitter account linked to the week's winning lottery number, essentially using the number as a type of secret code to encrypt the information that would change each week and stay one step ahead of the censors (Peters, 2022). Peters

(2022) reports, “Anyone searching the daily lottery number on Twitter could find it. Journalists can also add the number to their bio so they show up in search results. The nonprofit is now launching an account on VK, the Russian equivalent of Facebook.” VK has not yet been banned.

Russian censors also have taken steps to limit access to Radio Free Europe (RFE) broadcasts (e.g., by blocking transmission frequencies). Based in Prague (Czech Republic), RFE/RadioLiberty operates in 27 languages in 23 countries, including Russia (Ruffini, 2022). Traffic to the RFE website has surged during the war. Sullivan (2022b) reports, “In the first three weeks after the invasion, page views from Russia to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty sites skyrocketed to 26 million, more than 50 percent more than an earlier corresponding period. Video views from Russia to their YouTube channels more than tripled to 237 million. And this was happening despite sites being blocked within Russia.”

However, social media platforms also can be used as an effective vehicle for propaganda. Russian state TV has turned to the video sharing social media platform *Rumble* to distribute its propaganda. *Rumble* is a platform favored generally by conservatives and the far right and has not been banned by Russia (Fuchs, 2022).

Lessons we can draw upon here echo back to Nazi Germany. A half century ago German political philosopher Hannah Arendt (2006) observed that authoritarian leaders often invoke a strategy in which they call the truth lies and thereby control their populace. A Holocaust survivor, Arendt explained, “If everybody always lies to you, the consequence is not that you believe the lies, but rather that nobody believes anything any longer.” In such a situation, Arendt added, the public becomes confused and uncertain. They lose the ability to act, to think, to judge. “And with such a people,” she concluded, “you can then do what you please.” This may well be Putin’s strategy.

Sullivan (2022a) has reported that Putin’s regime has produced a “raft of Russian-language videos that bill themselves as fact-checks of falsehoods by Ukrainian propagandists — but are actually fakes themselves.” In one such case, confirmed by an analysis by the investigative news outlet ProPublica, Pro-Russian sources used social media to claim that a video showing a recent missile strike in Kharkiv was actually an unrelated explosion from 2017.

Deciding what Images of War to Show

Since soon after the invention of the Daguerreotype in the 19th century, news media decision makers have had the option to not only describe war in words, but also to show it in photographs. With the invention of motion picture photography and videography, the tools for visual storytelling in war time have advanced even further. The rise of Internet-connected smartphones, images and video of war have become an even more ubiquitous. While professional photo and video journalists have the tools to report the war visually, citizens acting as civilian war correspondents throughout Ukraine also have the tools to capture photographs and video of the Russian invasion and have produced extensive user-generated content (UGC) documenting the war as eye-witness to events on the ground. Moreover,

citizen journalists across the globe have utilized a spectrum of digital tools to help verify reporting about the war. Social media users have used Google maps and other online resources to authenticate video content posted online. In one case, a Twitter user examined a video shared on Telegram. “He found a landmark — an Orthodox church with four golden domes. He located it in Irpin, using Google Maps and a file photograph from the Associated Press to generate its precise coordinates. A scan of Discord, Reddit, and Twitter revealed chatter from witnesses of the bombing. Twelve minutes after spotting the footage, he felt confident the video was real, and posted the work on his Twitter account” (Verma, 2022).

For news media, decisions about what images, photographic or videographic, have become an intense and urgent matter (Coleman, 2022). Advocates for Peace Journalism caution that journalists should show the dead only when thoughtfully justified (Youngblood, 2022). As Lithgow (2022) notes, photographs and video are not facts. These illustrations do not equal the truth. Photos and videos are always from an angle, and they may have an agenda, a political or military purpose. It is essential to interrogate the relationship between any image and truth, considering the context and what may lay outside the field of view or frame, even a 360-degree photo or video.

Still, photos and video provide an extraordinary and potentially authentic and trustworthy source of evidence of the war and can prove vital in truthful news reporting about the war in Ukraine. On March 6, *The New York Times* featured a photograph of a family killed in Russian shelling near Kyiv (Huggins 2022). Award-winning photojournalist Lynsey Addario took the photo. *Guardian* news editor Joanna Walters called the decision to publish the photo “brave.” Walters added that it is “always an agonised debate, how to depict war, how to get the balance right.” Publishing uncensored images of the dead is uncommon. *The Times* has done so on some occasions, including after a 2019 attack at a Nairobi hotel. In a statement to the *Poynter Institute*, *the Times* defended its decision as “balancing the need for sensitivity and respect with our mission of showing the reality of these events.” *The Times* added, “We want to be respectful to the victims and to others affected by the attack.” Concluding, “But we also believe it is important to give our readers a clear picture of the horror of an attack like this. This includes showing pictures that are not sensationalized but that give a real sense of the situation.” This same rationale applies to depicting photos or videos of the Ukraine war, including imagery of dead civilians or soldiers. Through publication or broadcasting, online or over the air, these images can help reveal the truth about the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its horrific consequences, including the apparent acts of genocide by Russian forces during their occupation of Bucha (AFP, 2022). But it is also possible that the substantial number of images of the dead may have unintended consequences, possibly desensitizing or even traumatizing those who see them. Alongside mainstream news sources are the steady stream of images also flooding social media news feeds, and these may be equally impactful, though potentially unverified in their truthfulness.

Some have questioned whether a photo or video journalist has an ethical duty to help the wounded rather than capture a grisly scene on their camera. But as *New*

York Times diplomatic correspondent Edward Wong said on Twitter, in the case of the Addario photo, *The Times*' security employees "raced out first to give aid."

Role of Media in Democratic Society

Reflecting on the war in Ukraine highlights the essential role that news media play in democratic society, particularly during times of war. Papanikos (2022a) has written about the evolution of democracy since the times of ancient Athens. Although much has changed over the millennia, one of the elements that has not changed is the need for truthful, accurate, quality information in a democracy. Without that, a democracy cannot function in an effective fashion. And this need is particularly acute during times of conflict, including the Ukraine war.

Yet the role of journalism in democratic versus authoritarian states is dramatically different. In a democracy, independent journalism acts as the Fourth Estate, essentially a check on government. This is a vital role during war when lives are at stake. But in an authoritarian or totalitarian state such as Russia, the role of the media is far from a Fourth Estate or government watch dog. During the war in Ukraine, the Russian media have been reduced to the role of government lapdog and act as a propaganda mechanism for the Putin regime. The result is increasingly a society living in an alternate, untruthful reality. Moreover, Russia has weaponized its state media propaganda. In April 2022 Russian television's Rossiya-1 news channel threatened Britain with nuclear annihilation by airing a simulation of nuclear strikes by air and by sea destroying Britain and Ireland (Ilyushina et al., 2022).

The Safety of Journalists

Journalists are among the most courageous and at-risk front-line workers in the Ukraine war. Despite being unarmed, wearing vests clearly labeled "press", and protected by the Geneva Convention 2013, doing their reporting puts war correspondents at significant risk of death or serious injury. Death or injury is a real threat to any journalist reporting on the Ukraine war. With the indiscriminate shelling of the Russian military, reporters throughout the country are in jeopardy. In March of 2022, Taisia Bekbulatova, chief editor of independent news site *Holod*, told CPJ that reporters face "shelling, shooting and detention by Russian forces" (CPJ, 2022). The Geneva Convention prohibits attacking journalists in a war zone, and Russia's actions in this regard may thus constitute a war crime. Chernov (2022) of the Associated Press reports that Russian forces even have actively hunted journalists on the ground in an effort to capture them or worse, to prevent them from reporting. Further, the Kyiv-based Institute of Mass Information, a non-governmental organization, reports that "eleven journalists have been threatened by the Russians, five have been shot at but not killed, and six have been kidnapped" (Sergatskova, 2022).

At least seven journalists have been killed in the Ukraine conflict, the first being acclaimed American filmmaker Brent Renaud, who was shot and killed by Russian forces in an attack on 13 March, according to the Sampson (13 March 2022). Also killed in the conflict are Fox reporter, Pierre Zakrzewski, 55, Ukrainian producer Oleksandra “Sasha” Kuvshynova, Evgeny Sakun, a cameraman with Kyiv Live TV, Russian journalist Oksana Baulina, Ukrainian photojournalist Make Levin and Radio Liberty Journalist Vera Girich (Dorman, 2022; Hall, 2022; Vivarelli, 2022). On March 15 2022, Reporters without Borders (RSF) opened a press freedom center in Lviv, and delivered the first bulletproof vests for journalists in the conflict.

Journalists have been increasingly at risk in recent years globally. The United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2022) reports that 55 journalists were killed worldwide in 2021 and largely with impunity.

Women reporters are among the front-line journalists covering the war and telling the truth (Ruiz, 2022). Among the most courageous of journalists in the conflict has been Marina Ovsyannikova, an editor who protested live on Russian TV news in March of 2022 (McGuinness, 2022). During a live broadcast, she bravely walked onto the set in front of the camera and next to the anchor, carrying a sign written in Russian calling for peace and protesting the Ukraine war ordered by Putin. CBS Weekend News (2022) reports that the show reaches an estimated 200 million Russians, and for many it may have been the first time they heard anything about the war, much less Putin’s responsibility for it. Immediately after her actions, Ovsyannikova was arrested and her fate is uncertain. Subsequently, Russian state TV has been hit by a series of resignations, including at four journalists (Troianovski, 2022).

Immersive, Interactive and Mobile Media

Research shows that immersive news narratives can help increase both understanding and empathy. As news media report on the Ukraine war, especially its aftermath, employing reporting tools that can support the production of immersive journalism about the conflict can have enormous value. Among these tools are cameras that can take high resolution photos and video, imagery and video that is 360 degree in format, and satellite imagery. Some of the reporting to date already reflects the use of some of these tools. Satellite imagery has been used by a variety of news media, from CBS News to *The New York Times* to document before and after views of Ukraine, documenting the destruction wrought by Russia’s shelling of the country’s infrastructure. *The Times*, for example, has produced interactive content that combines textual and visual reporting elements in its coverage of Russian attacks on civilian targets (Collins et al., 2022). Moreover, *The Times* made this reporting available for all persons regardless of whether they have a subscription (i.e., the paywall has been lowered).

But using other reporting tools can enable news media to create immersive stories as well. *The Times* and other news media have created immersive stories about other conflicts, including terrorist attacks in Paris, France. Research by

Sundar et al. (2017) and Archer and Finger (2018) at the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University has demonstrated that in contrast to traditional linear narrative techniques, immersive journalism can better engage the audience, increase understanding of the events depicted, and generate greater empathy for those whose stories are told. In the Ukraine war, immersive journalism can prove particularly important including for stories about the estimated 6 million refugees and many more Ukrainians who have been displaced from their homes (Sugden et al., 2022). High resolution digital photos that contain geolocation data can also be utilized effectively in reporting about the Ukraine war. These photos can be merged to create photogrammetry, or 3D mapping of Ukraine and the devastating consequences of the Russian invasion, such as the destruction of infrastructure. CBS News has aired video of three-dimensional models illustrating the destruction in Ukraine's cities (CBS Weekend News, 2022).

Concluding Reflections

The war in Ukraine brings profound implications for the media of mass communication, especially the news media. It is increasingly clear that only independent journalism can help provide an accurate understanding of the war and put us all on a journey in the pursuit of truth about the conflict. But it is also clear that journalists face enormous risks in doing their reporting and demonstrate courage to tell their stories honestly and without censorship. Yet disinformation campaigns are being actively waged, and through the use of social media, the public in Russia and many other parts of the world are seeing only a highly distorted picture of the reality of the war in Ukraine.

Moving forward, news media should utilize the full range of storytelling tools available in the digital age to create more immersive news narratives. These can help better engage the public, increase understanding and build empathy.

Media scholars play a vital role, as well (Dennis et al., 1991). By turning their research attention to the aftermath of the Russian invasion, scholars can provide vital insight about the war and its media implications. This scholarship can shape not only academic inquiry into media and the war, but it can also help improve public understanding, influence public policy, and even shape media activity and practice in Ukraine and beyond.

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The Russian – Ukrainian War: Persistence of Frames and the Media Issue-Cycles

*By Gennadiy Chernov**

The Russian invasion of Ukraine drew unprecedented media attention all over the world due to its dramatic character and significant consequences. Beside the heightened interest, the media coverage also reflects the nature of media systems in democratic and authoritarian societies. This paper aims at testing whether there are some common features between media systems such as issue-cycle regularities with the interest in the event waning over time. This study also explores how issue specific frames serve the goals of different media system. The American news outlet CNN and the Russian news source gazeta.ru were selected to account for media system differences. The time frame encompassed the first five days of the conflict, and the most recent five days for the study. The number of articles dedicated to the war significantly decreased over the half year period for both outlets. The number of key terms used for the war decreased over the same time at CNN, but not at gazeta.ru. Framing analysis demonstrated that the use of frames depended more on the goals of propaganda than on the actual events in the authoritarian media system. The use of frames at CNN was more consistent with the real situation on the ground underlying the fact that freedom of speech is more conducive to reporting the truth.

Keywords: Ukraine, Russia, war, framing

Introduction

The Russian invasion of Ukraine became a turning point in many spheres of public life: it jeopardized the European security, destroyed the balance in international relations, disrupted energy supplies in Europe, and led to the largest migration crisis since World War II. The invasion also had a great impact on the way social and mass media cover it, and the media itself became in part the propaganda element of the hybrid warfare. The word “aggression” is often used in the media accounts, and it was in line not only with the media reports’ language, but it was also based on the characterizations of the invasion by different international bodies. For example, the United Nations assembly adopted Resolution ES-11/1 on March 2, 2022 titled “Aggression against Ukraine”. The resolution passed with 141 countries voting in favour, 5 countries against it. However, the author chose the word ‘invasion’ as a more proper definition for academic writing.

Pavlik (2022) identified ten implications for the journalistic mass communication. Such cornerstone issues for journalism as pursuit of truth and freedom of speech and press, are among them. The general trend in the Western media was the condemnation of the invasion. For example, Papanikos (2022)

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established that the main newspapers in Greece expressing the whole political spectrum from the left to the right, all agreed in their denunciation of the Russian invasion.

The news media play a paramount role in informing the audience about the current events, and they shape to a large extent the opinions of the audience about these events. “The news media exert significant influence on our perceptions of what are the most salient issues of the day” (McCombs & Reynolds, 2009, p. 1). Considering the role of the news media in how the world is viewed, it is important to investigate the regularities that the media follows in their coverage. The problem addressed in this article is how framing and the media issue cycles serve as internal mechanisms of what and how they say it.

Freedom of speech in Russia became one of the first casualties of war. The use of the words “war” or “invasion” are prohibited in Russia, whether in print, on air, or online, on news sites or social media platforms (Tebor, 2022). Only descriptions of the conflict as a special military operation are permitted” (Pavlik, 2022, p. 2). Propaganda and disinformation also emerged as indispensable tools in this hybrid warfare. The victory in the war cannot be achieved solely on the battlefield, but it also requires media support to justify the war, persuade the population of the country which committed an invasion that it is justified. It also needs to influence the international community to accept the discourse of the events offered by the warring sides. McGuire (1986) states that this influence is sought by any society, but the nature of such influence differs. Democratic societies rely more on persuasion while authoritarian societies rely more on coercion. The USA is an example of the former. This is a democratic country whose government condemned the Russian invasion, and it expressed its support for Ukraine from the beginning. For the most part, American media enjoy freedom of expression. Russia is known for its suppression of the independent media outlets which were completely shut down in the first days of the war. Even mentioning the word ‘war’ could lead to long-term imprisonment (Pavlik, 2022). The Russian media became a channel of promoting the point of view of the Russian propaganda, but the course of events on the battlefield led to modifications of its coverage in line with the official interpretation of events. However, both coverages of the war in Russia and the USA might follow the regularities described in the media communication research. In this particular case, two approaches were selected: framing (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009) and the issue-attention cycle (Downs, 1972; Gupta and Jenkins-Smith, 2015). Framing is a broad and encompassing approach. “Nearly any explicitly expressed position on an issue, any argument or any rhetorical device used in a media message, can be called a frame” (Chernov & McCombs, 2019, p. 73). The most often cited definition by Entman (1993) underlines this property: “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). However, this breadth allows for grasping devices and undertones in language use promoting a position on the issue in the media reports. The devices may include catch-phrases, metaphors, and other linguistic means to make a frame memorable

and persuasive. There is an additional classification of frames distinguishing between issue-specific and generic frames (Brüggemann & D'Angelo, 2018). This distinction allows for an in-depth analysis of a single topic with issue-specific frames, and it gives an opportunity to generalize the findings on a broader set of topics with generic frames.

The issue-attention cycle deals with the rise and fall of a certain issue in the media coverage. "Each of these problems suddenly leaps into prominence, remains there for a short time, and then- though still largely unresolved—gradually fades from the center of public attention" (Downs, 1972, p. 27). Downs determines five stages of this cycle.

- 1) The pre-problem stage.
- 2) Alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm.
- 3) Realizing the cost of significant progress.
- 4) Gradual decline of intense public interest.
- 5) The post-problem stage.

We could state that the war in Ukraine witnessed the first four stages.

The pre-problem stage was expressed in covering a gradual build-up of the Russian armed forces on the Ukrainian border. The second stage manifested itself in the alarmed discovery on behalf of Ukraine, and euphoria in the Russian media which predicted that Russian forces will reach Kyiv in two days and Ukraine will fall in a week. The grinding progress of Russian advances with losses and occasional failures led to the media realization of the prospects of a prolonged war which constituted the third stage. And currently, we are witnessing a gradual decline in the public's interest in Russia as the war seems to be too far from the end. The Russian offensive grinding to a halt coupled with significant defeats and growing human and economic costs. The media in the world are paying attention to the war. This is a major event in Europe, after all, but anecdotal evidence suggests that the amount of coverage declined in comparison with the first months of this campaign. "The broadcasting frequency of the stories about the military conflict with Ukraine reported by the main TV channels has been gradually decreasing after their maximum broadcasting frequency in late February and in early March." (Alyukov et al., 2022, p. 3). This war is so prominent and dramatic that we cannot expect a complete decline of media interest in it before it ends. However, we may expect a relative decrease in the amount of coverage.

Based on the framing and issue-cycle of the news approaches, this paper aims at exploring whether the media coverage in Russia and the USA, the countries with different levels of freedom of speech, are similar in the fluctuations in levels of attention to the war. This study also tests whether the media in both countries have their coverage diminished over the course of half a year. Another questions explored in the paper is how the goals of the war were framed and to what extent they were modified with the changes on the battlefield.

Framing and Content Analysis as Methodological Tools

It was noticed at the early stages of the conflict that the Russian-Ukrainian war coverage could be explored by content analysis and framing (Vrba, 2022). Different typologies of frames were offered over the years. For example, De Vreese (2005) distinguished two types of frames. “Certain frames are pertinent only to specific topics or events. Such frames may be labelled issue-specific frames. Other frames transcend thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different topics, some even over time and in different cultural contexts. These frames can be labelled generic frames” (p. 54). For example, this war was routinely characterised as “special military operation” (SMO). However, although this frame will play an important role in this study for content analysis, a deeper understanding of the goals in this operation could be framed differently, and the study aims at identifying them. The issue-specific frames are chosen because “An issue-specific approach to the study of news frames allows for a profound level of specificity and details relevant to the event or issue under investigation” (De Vreese, 2005, p. 55).

Whether issue-specific frames related to how the war and its goals are used became the focus of this paper. The euphemism SMO was broadly used at the beginning of the war, but the Russian media was constantly trying to justify it with fluctuating goals, which represents a broad range of terms from “protecting Russia” to “liberating Ukraine” to “defending Donbass”.

Methods

Content Analysis

Categories and Units of Analysis

“Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 24). The following logic of applying content analysis for the study is based on the Krippendorff’s (2018) design. The media universe related to the news is huge. Sampling of the outlets could become a complicated task. That is why a criterion was set to select outlets both in Russia and in the West that have prominence and cover the news constantly. Two outlets, Russian gazeta.ru and cnn.com online versions were used. Gazeta.ru is a news online outlet established in 1999. It gets in the top-10 of news outlets in Russia. Started as an independent publication, gazeta.ru became totally dependent on the government. Their selection was based on the fact that both outlets cover events 24 hours a day, and they give sufficient numbers of reports to sample.

The first stage is to define relevant units. Initial coding categories were identified. Based on preliminary reading of a few articles about the subject in Russian and American selected media, the dominant terms describing the Russian-Ukrainian war were identified. Due to limits imposed by the Russian government

and the absence of the independent media, gazeta.ru stuck to the term ‘spetsial’naia voiennoia operatsia’ (special military operation or SMO), and cnn.com more often than not used the terms ‘war’ and ‘invasion’ based on its interpretation of the conflict.

Sampling and Coding

Sampling procedure is dictated by the need to have sufficient numbers of reports to analyze, and the number of short articles for any given day may not be less than one article per day, especially in gazeta.ru representing one of the warring sides. The time frame applied to the analysis is the first five days when the shocking developments drew the highest level of attention from the world media, including countries under study with Russia potentially exceeding American coverage as the initiator of the war. However, cnn.com had extensive coverage as well. Another set was selected from September 14 to September 18, approximately half a year after the start of the war. The rationale is that over half a year supposed trends will take place. Then the coded instances were counted over the above-mentioned period and calculated.

There are two types of units used for analysis: special terms coded as the SMO for gazeta.ru and ‘invasion’ for cnn.com, and articles mentioning these terms as separate units to reflect the potential waning interest in the conflict over time. The number of articles about the war was huge at the beginning of the conflict. To focus on the most relevant aspects for the article, the stories about refugees, sanctions, and economic impact of the war were not selected as such. These themes were selected only if they were related to the actual events in the battle field. Mostly, the reports focusing on the war were left for analysis.

Frame Analysis

Measuring frames appears to be more elusive, and it comes from its combination of form, conducive to capturing its structure and content, and open to multiple interpretations. Nisbet et al. (2006) clearly demonstrated it in the following words: “frames...should not be confused with specific policy positions. Individuals can disagree on an issue but share the same interpretative frame.” (p. 11). Framing is a diverse field with a number of methodological approaches (D’angelo, 2018, Walter & Ophir, 2019). Making best of Entman’s (1993) definition, Matthes and Kohring (2008) posited that a frame can be measured as a cluster of frame elements: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. These elements could help to understand and describe “...issue-specific frames that provide details about the issue at hand.” (Kozman, 2017, p. 779). Such clusters have clear properties: “every frame is characterized by a specific pattern of variables. Conceived this way, frames are neither identified beforehand nor directly coded with a single variable.” (Matthes & Kohring, 2008, p. 264). When we deal with issue-specific frames, we do not necessarily find all these elements, but this approach allows us to not miss substantive features of frames under study. The affective side also did not escape

the attention of scholars. Boydston et al. (2013) distinguished positive, negative and neutral tones. This distinction helps identify the position expressed in the text and makes interpretations of frames more meaningful. Framing analysis can assist in both substantive understanding and valence of the issue-specific media coverage.

Preliminary analysis revealed two frames used across most of the reports - “demilitarization” and “de-nazification” of Ukraine. They started to be used by the Russian media in the weeks preceding the invasion. They depicted Ukraine as the country quickly militarized with the help from the West. The second frame was explained as the process during which Ukraine embraced the Nazi ideology.

If framing analysis represents a qualitative aspect of this study, content analysis will employ descriptive statistics to quantitatively measure and compare the number of key terms and articles related to the conflict.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The Russian – Ukrainian war is a recent and ongoing development. The current analysis is a snapshot of unfolding and unpredictable events, and is exploratory by its nature. Its goal is to establish certain trends which justify the use of not only hypotheses, but research questions as well.

To test the issue-attention cycle theory, the comparison between initial and the most recent coverage of the conflict will be made.

Hypothesis 1: The number of articles related to the coverage of the Russian – Ukrainian war in two selected media outlets will be higher at the initial period of the conflict as compared with 2nd period in Russia media.

The key words describing the war and serving as the terms for content analysis express certain intensity of the conflict. If the overall coverage of the war reduces, could this decrease also affect the use of certain marker words like “invasion” or the SMO decrease as well? If the issue cycle means certain fatigue with the issue, won’t it also affect the intensity of the coverage?

Research question 1: Will the number of mentions of the terms “invasion” and the SMO per article at the most recent stage decrease compared with the initial stage?

Framing analysis is not a single structured unified approach. Its qualitative aspect may differ across studies, and a few identified frames in this study are considered through the lens of the goals’ interpretations related to them. The goals are about what Russia wanted to achieve both politically and militarily. From the very beginning, the Russian side used certain terms to describe its invasion that downplayed the full-blown character of the war and put forward false pretexts for the invasion. It led to changes in the war’s character and the descriptions of its goals. Changes in the battlefield led to changes in the goals and interpretations of the war on the Russian side. The USA’s side used its own frames about what was going on during the course of the war.

Research question 2: Will the frames of war on the Russian side fluctuate more in their interpretations than on the American side due to the falsity of the Russian claims?

Results

Content Analysis

410 articles dealing with the developments in the Russian – Ukrainian war and using the coded terms were identified. 265 articles belonged to *cnn.com*, and 145 articles belonged to *gazeta.ru*. Hypothesis one states that the number of relevant articles in the initial stage (February, 24-28, 2022) will exceed the number of articles in the most recent period (September, 14-18). There were 108 articles related to the war at the initial period in *gazeta.ru*. The most recent period counted 37 such instances. A paired t-test was conducted to evaluate whether the number of articles at *gazeta.ru* at the initial stage of war were higher than at the most recent period. The results indicated that the mean for the initial period ($M=21.60$, $SD=6.50$) was significantly greater than the mean for the most recent one ($M=7.40$, $SD=2.70$), $t(4)=5.39$, $p=0.006$.

There were 203 articles related to the war at the initial period in *cnn.com*. The number of instances for the most recent period included 62 articles. A paired t-test was conducted to evaluate whether the number of articles at *gazeta.ru* at the initial stage of war were higher than at the most recent period. The results indicated that the mean for the initial period ($M=40.60$, $SD=6.38$) was significantly greater than the mean for the most recent one ($M=12.40$, $SD=5.98$), $t(4)=8.48$, $p=0.001$.

These results demonstrate that hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

Another supplementary question explored in the study was whether the number of mentions of the terms “invasion” and the SMO per article at the most recent stage decreased compared with the initial stage. Every article on the war at *gazeta.ru* contained the reference to the SMO as the default. As a result, the term was used at least once in each article. The term was mentioned 237 times at the initial stage, and 77 times at the most recent stage. Altogether, the term was mentioned 314 times. At the initial period the SMO on average was mentioned 2.2 times per article, and 2.08 times during the most recent period. The average number of mentions per article was the result of dividing the number of all articles on the number of all mentions. The paired t test was conducted to evaluate whether the term SMO was mentioned more often at the initial stage than in the most recent stage. The results indicate that the mean for mentions for the initial period ($M=2.20$, $SD=1.59$) was not significantly greater than the mean for mentions at the most recent stage ($M=2.08$, $SD=.80$), $t(4)=1.75$, $p=0.154$.

Our research question sought to test whether there will be more mentions of the SMO at the initial period than in the most recent one, and it did not happen to be the case.

The key term “invasion” was used for content analysis of the war coverage at *cnn.com*. The term was mentioned 158 times at the initial stage, and 22 times at the most recent stage. Altogether, the term was mentioned 180 times. It looks like there was a significant difference even before testing. However, the number of articles also was smaller. At the initial period the “invasion” on average was mentioned 0.85 times per article, and 0.38 times per article during the most recent period. The paired t test was conducted to evaluate whether the term “invasion”

was mentioned more often at the initial stage than in the most recent stage. The results indicate that the mean for mentions for the initial period ($M=0.85$, $SD=0.33$) was significantly greater than the mean for mentions at the most recent stage ($M=0.38$, $SD=0.18$), $t(4)=3.16$, $p=0.034$.

Our research question sought to test whether there will be more mentions of the "invasion" term at the initial period than in the most recent one, and the test confirmed that this is the case.

Framing

There were two frames that dominated the Russian source - protecting Russian speakers in the Donbas region from genocide, and "demilitarization" and "denazification" of Ukraine. Although both were deceptive and were not supported by any evidence, these two issue-specific frames did not refer to how Russia is planning to do it, and what will follow after the hypothesized occupation of part or the whole of Ukraine. There should be certain goals that represent the stages of the unfolding of this war. Russian dictator, Putin, broadened the interpretation of the "self-defence" frame to protecting the whole country, not being specific about threats to Russia (gazeta.ru, Putin announced the special military operation to defend Donbass). President's Press Secretary, Peskov, reiterated "denazification and demilitarization" and "self-defence" frames, but he didn't define them. Moreover, he refused to set any time limits for the operation, and although he denied that Russia aims at the occupation of Ukraine, but he refused to explain at what point of territorial gains the aggressor was planning to stop. (gazeta.ru, "Free Ukraine, clean it from Nazi"). The Foreign Minister of Russia, Lavrov, described the SMO as an act of liberating Ukrainian from the "fascist" regime. Again, he didn't indicate whether Russia aimed to occupy the whole country, and whether the aggressors would install its puppet to rule Ukraine. (gazeta.ru, Lavrov announced nobody plans to occupy Ukraine).

Maria Zakharova, Spokeswoman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation claimed that Kyiv should be held accountable for the crimes against its population. The claim matched the "denazification" frame, but again was not supported by any evidence. (gazeta.ru, Zakharova named the goals of the special operation).

During the very first days of war, the leading Russian politicians and propagandists formulated the goals for the invasion and what may constitute the frames "denazification" and "demilitarization".

Special Russian representative, Chizhov, insisted that Russia would not stay in Ukraine after the end of the SMO which proved to be a lie later. (gazeta.ru, Russian representative at the EU declared that Russia is not planning to stay).

In another report, Chizhov was quoted as saying that creating the new government in Ukraine is probable, and that the government could establish peace with the Donbass region. This claim obviously indicated Russian plans for a regime change (gazeta.ru, Russian representative at the EU foresees the new government).

A Russian representative at the UN, Nebenzia, used the frames "denazification" and "demilitarization" not only for justification of the Russian invasion, but he

also asserted that the SMO will be quick as “denazification” relates to a limited number of mythical nationalists who are the only ones to resist (gazeta.ru. Nebenzia predicts a quick completion of the operation).

However, the September sample articles did not contain a single reference to the “denazification” and “demilitarization” frames. The only reference to goals that could relate to the frames was a statement by Putin that Russia started the SMO to prevent the creation of an Anti-Russian enclave in Ukraine. The absence of these frames indicates that these false and unclear terms did not find any positive response after 6 months of the SMO anymore.

CNN coverage rarely referred to the invasion as the SMO. It happened only as a reference or as quotes from Russian officials. Aside from “invasion”, Russian actions were also framed as “military aggression”. These frames allow for detecting the cluster of terms related to the goals of this aggression. The frame “aggression”’s meaning was defined early in the military assault as follows: “they have every intention of basically decapitating the government and installing their own method of governance, which would explain these early moves towards Kyiv” (CNN: Attacks on Ukraine part of “initial phase” of a “large-scale” Russian invasion). The Western leaders, such as the UK Defence Secretary Wallace, characterised the Russian actions through using the frame “invasion”, and he specified that Russia wanted to invade all of Ukraine. (CNN: UK Defense Secretary: “Our view is that Russia intends to invade the whole of Ukraine”) The Russian invasion could also encompass the occupation of the East and South of Ukraine; creating a puppet pro-Russian government in Central Ukraine; and leaving a real Ukraine within the Galician region with the capital Lviv. (CNN: Here are some possibilities Putin may be planning for Ukraine). Overall, the invasion was recognized as a war like it was in the Turkey announcement (CNN: Turkish foreign minister: Turkey recognizes the Russian invasion to Ukraine as “war”). These ten frames were the clearest manifestations of dominant interpretations of events on behalf of two media outlets. These interpretations are qualitative by their nature, as their specific linguistic form may change due to changes in the dominant discourse. “In current framing studies, the interpretation and presentation of news language...is in short supply” (Lule, 2019, p. 18).

The above-mentioned instances of describing the frames “invasion” and “aggression” through its goals dominated the discourse at the beginning of the war.

It is interesting that in the second September sample the coverage didn’t include any references to the SMO goals. It may mean that the frames interpretation has not changed over the course of the war.

Discussion

The Russian-Ukrainian war has become the most important and potentially dangerous for the world peace since the World War II both in its scope and implications. Unsurprisingly, this conflict drew an unprecedented attention on behalf of the international media. The media’s interest to the war is strong across

the board, but the media differ in how they cover it. Countries that stifled independent media and freedom of speech like Russia follow the government's interpretation of events no matter how far this interpretation is from reality. The media of democratic countries have sufficient independence to cover the events in accordance with how they unfold. Media in democratic countries offer their interpretations of events not always free from certain biases as well. However, the independent media are able to accept the changes and contradictions indispensable of such a complex phenomenon as a war.

There are also regularities in how the media handle the events of utmost importance. The issue cycle theory detected one such regularity- gradual decrease of attention to an issue irrespective of whether the issue is getting resolved or not.

This study addressed both what is common for the media with different levels of independence, and what distinguishes them. The issue-cycle theory was tested to see whether media coverage of an issue decreases regardless of how free the media of certain countries are. The hypothesis was supported. The number of articles in September dedicated to the war events compared with the number of articles at the beginning of war in February diminished significantly. It was true for *gazeta.ru*, the Russian government –controlled outlet, despite the fact that Russia is engaged in this war, and that fact could lead to keeping the same attention in the media. It worked for *cnn.com* as well, the company that continued to keep the constantly updated news flow about the conflict.

The issue-cycle theory found additional support in this study, and it may be another indication that there are regularities in the way the media operate having certain universal properties. This conclusion is important because the social world to which the media belong is known for its changeability and resistance to any rigid schemes and predictability.

This paper also explored a separate question about whether the key terms linked to the issue are also used less with the time passed. These terms are like key triggers, focal embodiments of an issue coverage, the articles about the issue. The idea behind this question is that it is not only number of reports on the issue which decrease over time – it is also the number of mentions of the key terms inside a smaller number of articles that diminishes as well. Content analysis revealed two such terms” the SMO for *gazeta.ru*, and “the invasion” for *cnn.com*. In the former case, there were no indications that the number of mentions of the key term “SMO” decreased over time. There may be a probable explanation which deals with the fact that *gazeta.ru* uses this word at least once per article as default reducing variability. However, in the case with *cnn.com* the use of the key term “invasion” did significantly decrease over time. This discrepancy may mean that the independent media follow in general the logic of the issue-cycle theory both for the number of the articles as well as for the number of the key term mentions. However, the number of mentions becomes an outcome of interplay of additional factors in the media of authoritarian states.

Media, in general, operate in such a way that their coverage follow certain patterns. They also use certain tools to present the facts and events in certain interpretative forms called frames. The issue-specific frames suggest certain meaning and solutions and the same events may be described in contradictory

frames. Frames such as “defence of Donbass people” and “demilitarization” and “denazification” of Ukraine. These frames aimed at shedding a favorable light on the war, and they were not chosen by the media themselves. They had to use the frames given to them by the government. These frames reflected a false reality and were rigid meaning that no matter whether the situation on the ground contradicts to them or not, the media had to stick to them. This led to both difficulty and variability in supporting these frames with evidence. The problems became transparent with the causes of the war that had to match these frames. The real cause- the effort to occupy Ukraine and install pro-Russian government there, did not surface directly. It comes through the causes ranging from protection of Russia from NATO to “liberation” of Ukrainian people. The Western media, in our example *cnn.com*, defined the war with the frames “aggression” and “invasion” and the evidence supported these frames through both sampled time periods. In a free society, the media have such a luxury, to reflect on the events as they are and stick with the interpretations that find support in the field.

Conclusion

The current study confirmed that the media coverage of even the most dramatic and consequential events as the Russian-Ukrainian war, follow a pattern of waning attention on behalf of the news outlets matter whether the media system relies on influence or coercion. It is less known whether the key terms associated with the issue description and the mentions of these terms fall as well. The evidence from the current study is mixed. Another intriguing process of media effects is issue-specific framing which gives the media an opportunity to suggest certain interpretations and causal attributions if placed in a proper context. However, some correspondence with the real-life indicators is needed, otherwise the rigid frames may become too variable and vague, potentially reducing its persuasiveness. It could be also interesting to explore whether the decrease of the specific terms are replaced with other similar terms which may mean not simply waning attention, but a change in defining an issue. The current study hints at such a development, but future studies could clarify this possibility further.

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A Typology for Sociopolitical Stance of International Brands in the Case of Ukraine War

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Politics can no longer be avoided by brands. In the dynamic world of today where controversial socio-political issues emerge on a daily basis, consumers' political stances on loaded issues of any particular period could determine consumer-brand relationships. A number of examples in this regard can be found in recent literature. In some instances brands justify their stances by using a "higher purpose" in an attempt to project an image consistent with lack of political involvement. This research aims to analyze strategies adopted by various international brands in regards to the war in Ukraine and attempts to categorize these strategies into various types based on their reflection in domestic and international electronic media. This paper explores why brands taking a sociopolitical stance and using different kinds of positioning strategy under-researched area as a source of leverage for brand attachment. We try to design a typology for brands sociopolitical stance in the case of Ukraine war whether they are long term strategies with higher costs or short time strategies with fewer costs. The main questions addressed in this research are: What do customers expect from brands to take a political stance? How can a brand image change as a result of political stance? What is the purpose of brands' political stance and how can it be interpreted? Brands seem to have reacted to the Ukraine war because of one or more of the followings: 1. The brand has taken a political stance under the influence of their stakeholder pressure. 2. To create a desired image for themselves. 3. The brand sees its political response to the Ukraine war as consistent with their higher purpose and social responsibility, even if it is financially detrimental. 4. To boost awareness and ultimately increase sales.

Keywords: brand political stance, higher purpose, brand image, Ukraine War

Introduction

Nowadays, consumers live in a world where re-acting to social causes is a lauded form of self-expression. This happens to coincide with ever increasing numbers of brands taking various stances (Schmidt et al., 2020) on a wider range of sociopolitical issues such as wars, immigration, animal rights, gun control and climate change (Butler-Madden, 2017). This has given rise to an unprecedented turn in brand-consumer relations.

Since the Ukraine war, lots of companies have changed their strategies and policies; as a result, Russian market faced wide reactions that made the situation unbalanced and had remarkable influence on the world economy. Consumers are

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nowadays surrounded by mass media. Considering the increasing importance of social media in people's lives, today customers engage a lot more with news and ideologies. Moreover, it seems that they do not keep this to themselves and tend to project such engagement onto the corporations the products and services of which they regularly purchase and expect such corporations to empathize and share their viewpoints. For instance, The Corporate Social Mind (2020) states that 60% of customers in the US wish for corporations to engage in advocacy marketing and Bhagwat et al. (2020) believe that they wish for their brands to show strong support of particular sides in sociopolitical issues. People seem to want to have a role in changing the world they live in into the shape they desire (Radnofsky, 2021).

Needless to say, this has resulted in a closer-than-ever engagement of politics and branding in a deep and mutually efficacious relation. This engagement, depending on the issue in question and consumers' ideas on such issues, such engagement can take various forms and lead to different kinds of attitudes by brands. The purpose of the current work is to better understand why brand owners take a particular sociopolitical stance, and subsequent to such an understanding, categorize actions of popular brands into different kinds of categories.

Literature Review

Political Stance and Brand Attachment

The relation between political stance of a brand and emotionally connected to that brand, a concept dubbed "brand attachment" - "the emotional connection between humans and brands"- has recently been getting more significance and contributes to formation of consumers' preferences (Flight and Coker, 2021). According to Cone Communications (2017) and Kim (2019), more than 60% of customers hope that companies will play an active role in sociopolitical change. The importance of taking stance in sociopolitical issues is undeniable (Jungblut & Johnen, 2021), so the number of brands that take stance on political issues are permanently growing (Jung and Mittal, 2020). Political reasons are becoming more important for consumers in their decision-making process, i.e., they increasingly choose to either support a brand by using their products ("promoting"), or turn away from a brand ("boycotting") based on the brand's strategy in regard to politically charged current affairs (Jungblut & Johnen, 2021). In an essay by Flight and Coker (2021) it is argued that customers choose brands that "fit into and support their worldview" and as such, political ideologies may affect the nature of consumer-brand relationships. This has led to a deeper and more intimate relation between branding and politics which subsequently influence the attitudes of marketers. As a result, the choice of one or the other brand and product strategy by marketers in light of particular social events has become more understandable (Katsanis, 1994).

Sociopolitical Activist Brands and Brand Activism

In this study, we have defined “sociopolitical activist brands” in line with Bhagwat et al. (2020, p. 1) as those that make a “public demonstration of pros and cons on sociopolitical issue”. But sometimes consumers have different kinds of opinions about the same events, and the resulting differential social narrative stories might lead to different understanding (Milfield & Flint, 2020), which might cause some problems for brand managers too. Golob et al. (2020) argues that brand managers should think beyond common solutions and suggestions by paying attention to their wider social influence, because, as Vredenburg et al. (2020) argue, when messages do not conform to customers beliefs, it has the potential to make brands unpopular.

Why Brands Engage with Sociopolitical Causes?

A brand is a collection of human and nonhuman actors (Price & Coulter, 2019), including the consumers, values of the brand and sociopolitical stances. Brands deliver value through social, self-expressive, emotional, and functional, benefits (Aaker, 2014) that extend further the features of the product or service into a wider context (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård, 2007; Holt, 2004) where culture and brand culture become indistinguishable (Banet-Weiser, 2012). After the Russian president, Vladimir V. Putin, ordered the invasion of Ukraine on February 24, multinational companies, whether forced by sanctions or simply a matter of choice under pressure from investors and consumers, have become involved with taking stance on different kind of strategies for their brand. Brands can contribute to making people’s identity (Schmidt et al., 2020). In such an environment, brands help consumers define themselves (Belk, 1988) by constructing their identities through consumption of products and services that embrace wider values (Guzman et al., 2017; Morhart et al., 2015; Swaminathan et al., 2020). As a result, it can be construed that sometimes consumption is, in and of itself, a sociopolitical act (Banet-Weiser, 2012). From consumers’ viewpoint, following a political brand with consideration of its reputation is a common move. According to self-identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), consumers can be motivated to show their sociopolitical orientation and belonging, through ethical behaviors, in two opposing actions that are known to us as *boycotting* and *promoting* products (Shaw & Shui, 2002; Stolle et al., 2005). Consumers use brands that relate to their identity by providing relevant cultural elements that reinforce their sense of self (Guzman & Paswan, 2009; Holt, 2002) and it helps them make their social personas (Baalbaki & Guzman, 2016) through symbolic consumption (Solomon, 1983). Recent surveys prove that 42% of consumers have changed their consumption patterns in response to brand social activities (Ives, 2021). Brands re-actions have direct effects on brand reputation and might cause increase or decrease the profitability of a brand (Urumutta Hewage et al., 2021). Deloitte (2018) implied that 21.4% of marketing managers in the US believe that their brands should engage with political issues, because, “it shows that their company cares about more than making profits”. Getting involved with political

issues through implementation of the correct positional strategy will have 4 distinct impacts on a brand (Table 1).

Table 1. *Why Brands Engage with Politics?*

1	<p style="text-align: center;">Political consumption</p> <p>Societies become more politically polarized (Tucker et al., 2018; Hetherington & Rudolph, 2015), and consumers become more aware of the political nature of consumption (Simon, 2011) so brands, by taking a sociopolitical stance, offer their consumers benefits (Aaker, 2014).</p>
2	<p style="text-align: center;">Leveraging competitive advantage</p> <p>A sociopolitical stance helps brands to leverage competitive advantage in the sight of customers (Keller, 2003).</p>
3	<p style="text-align: center;">Answering to expectation of consumers</p> <p>Consumers increasingly expect brands to engage socio-politically (Vredenburg et al., 2020; Bhagwat et al., 2020; Swaminathan et al., 2020; Moorman, 2020) and by filling the void left by others, solve social imbalances (Edelman, 2020).</p>
4	<p style="text-align: center;">Co-creating brand meaning</p> <p>By involving with sociopolitical issues that matter to customers, brands can become closer with them (Holt, 2004) and co-create brand meaning (Ind & Schmidt, 2019; Iglesias & Ind, 2020; Price & Coulter, 2019).</p>

Sometimes brand activism as a strategy goes beyond producing products (Mirzaei et al., 2021). Brand related actions in the context of abstract moral concerns related to rightness, goodness, or virtuousness, help brands to have deeper connection with the feeling of consumers (Caruana, 2007). Consumers would usually rather to choose brand through symbolic consumption (Solomon, 1983) that is related, or contributed directly, to their identities in order to help with creating their social personas (Baalbaki & Guzman, 2016). They try to construct their identities through consuming that embraces wider values, because this action helps them feel better about themselves (Guzman & Davis, 2017; Morhart et al., 2015; Swaminathan et al., 2020). So, when importance of social events is high and gets enough attractions, brands can take positions either beside or in front of that to connect deeper with consumers and get more loyalty (Needham, 2005). That's why brand managers as political activists are trying to develop brand social role to affect consumers and help them with their social change to get closer to ideal themselves (Swaminathan et al., 2020).

Can a Sociopolitical Position & Brand Activism be a Higher Purpose for Brand?

“Higher purpose” has been known as the key factor to consider if aiming for success in the twenty-first century by both Ignatius (2019) and Clendaniel (2013). In purposeful branding, central issues are beliefs about what the world should look like and how we can help it to happen faster (Quinn & Thakor, 2018). Definition of higher purpose highlights the positive impact on people's lives and the world in general. Purpose-driven branding refers to make the purpose a part of a brand's identity or even the whole business model (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010), which

is a longer-term and strategic decision. The way that a brand acts in the society helps its image to go beyond economic profit and organizational boundaries (Garbe & Stengel, 2013) and how it stands in inspirational reason helps the brand to take positions beyond making profit (Kramer, 2017). A valuable brand position, beyond social and political re-actions helps both sides - brands, and consumers - to get along and become compatible with each other (Flight & Coker, 2021). This joining of forces forms a synergy that helps the relationship and, as a result, makes the brand reputation grow (Mirzaei et al., 2021).

The Effect of Sociopolitical Stance & Activism on Brand Image

Brands can take a sociopolitical stance either because they find an opportunity to create a competitive advantage (Friedman, 1970) or because managers recognize when brands exist in a social context and it should deliver value to different stakeholders (Freeman et al., 2007; Svensson & Wood, 2008). Recent investigations on consumers demonstrate that connecting a brand with a cause can increase a company's sales and improve brand image position if the cause is comprehended explicitly and the company's motivation behind consumers is not perceived as exploitative (Andrews et al., 2014; Barone et al., 2000; Webb & Mohr, 1998). Schmidt et al. (2020) demonstrate that managers believe that an appropriate sociopolitical stance helps a brand to differentiate, attract new customers and build emotional relation with becoming part of consumers' lives that enhance brand reputation and increase customer's loyalty. Milfield & Flint (2020) tried to evaluate brands re-actions in response to George Floyd's death, or Moorman (2020) has tried to evaluate re-actions to Colin Kaepernick's racial protest at NFL games, when he would kneel, instead of stand, during the playing of the US national anthem. Considering dominance of Ukraine war in news headlines, companies are trying to have a role in keeping the economic pressure on president Vladimir Putin and Russia, but there is a significant lack of research, in the case of Ukraine war on how brands usually act and on whether the differentiation between industries can have sizable effects on strategies taken by brands, and on whether eventually there is any meaningful connection between brands' strategies and their countries of origin. In this article we try to address this gap and our main goal in this regard is to represent a typology of strategies that include all sociopolitical stances taken by brands in the matter of the war in Ukraine.

Methodology

While the actions of brands adopting a sociopolitical stance about Ukraine war have been the subject of heated, widely watched, and prolonged arguments in the media recently, there has been a lack of empirical evidence about categorizing international brands reactions (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Moorman, 2020). Therefore, we designed a process for concluding about different methods to gain insights into attitudes and motivations of managers for each brand in different categories. These categories have been defined in 4 types including leaving Russia, suspending

activities, scaling back activities and halting investment. Our definition for each one of these categories are mentioned below:

- **Leaving Russia:** companies who are making a clean break from Russia, leaving behind essentially no operational footprint.
- **Suspending activity:** companies who have suspended all or almost all their corporate operations in Russia without permanently exiting or divesting.
- **Scaling back activity:** companies who have suspended a significant portion of their business in Russia.
- **Halting investment:** companies who have publicly announced that they are pausing new investments in Russia but are largely continuing to operate in the country as they did before.

We designed a 4-step model to define brand strategies. Our first step was to recognize companies who take a sociopolitical stance in the matter of Ukraine war. This step included two levels: at the first level we check an Iranian domestic news channel about Ukraine war and then we cross check each news item with NY TIMES news outlet to ascertain correctness of reflection announced in the news.

The second step involved categorization of all of brands recognized into 9 industries including CPG/FMCG/retail/fashion, energy, banking and finance, food & beverage, media, professional services, high-tech, travel & logistics, and manufacturing.

In the third step we defined different kinds of strategies and, based on our definition, we categorized strategies for brand reactions into 4 types (presented in Table 2). As a result, in this step, we can identify whether there is any connection between type of industry and type of brands sociopolitical stance in regards to Ukraine war. And finally in the last step we set out to delineate whether there is any meaningful connection between brands countries of origin and types of their reactions.

Table 2. Brands and Their Re-Actions

Brand Name	Country of Origin	Category /Industry	News headline	Domestic news channel (check)	International news channel (Double Check)	Strategy
1	Adidas	Germany	Adidas stop cooperating with Russian football federation.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
2	Uniqlo	Japanese	the Japanese clothing company that operates Uniqlo, said it would suspend its operations in Russia	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
3	H&M	Sweden	H&H suspends sales in Russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
4	Danone	France	Danone Stops investing in russia	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Halting investment
5	Nestlé	Switzerland	Nestlé punishes Russia with chocolate boycott	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
6	Nike	United states	Nike Stop Selling products in Russia.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
7	Reebok	United Kingdom	Reebok is leaving Russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia

8	Chanel	France		Chanel Stop Selling products in Russia.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
9	Unilever	United Kingdom		Unilever has halted investment in Russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Halting investment
10	BP	United Kingdom	Energy .2	BP Oil and Gas .1 Company is leaving Russia	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia
11	Total Energies	France		French energy giant .3 Stop buying petroleum from Russia.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
12	Shell	United Kingdom		SHELL stop investing in Russia for future project	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Halting investment
13	American Express	United States		The United States is closing its skies to Russian aircraft .4	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia
14	Bank of America	United States	Banking and Finance .5	The New sanctions 7Group package of against Russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia
15	Deutsche Bank	Germany		The New sanctions 7Group package of against Russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia
16	Credit Suisse	Switzerland		Credit Suisse stop investing in Russia for future project	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Halting investment
17	Goldman Sachs	United States		Goldman Sachs is leaving Russia	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Scaling back activity
18	Mastercard	United States		Visa and MasterCard join Russia sanctions 1campaign	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
19	Visa	United States		Visa and MasterCard join Russia sanctions 1campaign	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
20	Mars	United States	Food & Beverages	Mars is scaling back in Russia.	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Scaling back activity
21	McDonald's	United States		Mc Donald's said: "In response to the invasion of Ukraine, 850 restaurants in Russia are temporarily closed"	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
22	PepsiCo	United States		McDonald, Coca-Cola, Pepsi and Starbucks have all ceased operations in Russia	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
23	Cola Coca	United States		Coca-Cola ceased operations in Russia.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
24	Restaurant Brands International	United States		Burger King ceased operations in Russia.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
25	Starbucks	United States		Starbucks ceased operations in Russia.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
26	Paramount	United States	Entertainment .7	Paramount .6 sanctioned Russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
27	Netflix	United States		Netflix service stopped in Russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
28	The Walt Disney Company	United States		Walt Disney sanctioned Russia	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
29	Warner Bros.	United States		sanctioned Warner Bros. Russia	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
30	& co.Bain	United States	Professional services .9	Big consultancies .8 move to cut ties with Russia after backlash	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia
31	KPMG	Netherlands		KPMG & PWC .10 are leaving russia	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia
32	PWC	United Kingdom		KPMG & PWC .11 are leaving russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia
33	Boston Consulting Group	United States		European companies are leaving Russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
34	Ernst & Young	United Kingdom		Ernst & Young is cutting tie with Russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia
35	Amazon Web Services	United States		High-tech .13	Sanctions on .12 Russia by the Amazon method	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES
36	Apple	United States	Apple, AMD & Cisco has announced that they will cease operations in		Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity

				Russia.			
37	Samsung	South Korea		Samsung and Cisco have imposed sanctions on Russia.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
38	AMD	United States		Apple, AMD & Cisco has announced that they will cease operations in Russia.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
39	Cisco	United States		Apple, AMD & Cisco has announced that they will cease operations in Russia.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
40	Google	United States		Google excludes Russian state media from search results.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
41	Twitter	United States		Twitter blocks account of Putin's supporters.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
42	IBM	United States		IBM ends operations in Russia.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
43	Intel	United States		Intel ceased operations in Russia.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
44	Microsoft	United States		We help Ukraine for defending against Russian cyber-attacks.	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
45	Ebay	United States		Ebay is leaving Russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia
46	Nokia	Finland		Nokia joins Russian sanctions list	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
47	Micron	United States		Micron Corporation, the largest manufacturer and exporter of electronic components, entered the international sanctions list.	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
48	Uber	United States		Uber Distances Itself from Yandex	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia
49	Airbus	France	Travel and logistics .15	Airbus and Boeing also imposed sanctions on Russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia
50	American Airlines	United States		The United States is closing its skies to Russian aircraft	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
51	Boeing	United States		Airbus and Boeing also imposed sanctions on Russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia
52	Caterpillar	United States	Manufacturing .17	Caterpillar is scaling back in Russia	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Scaling back activity
53	Siemens	Germany		Siemens cut some ties with Russia	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Scaling back activity
54	Hyundai Motor Company	South Korea		Hyundai joins Russian sanctions list	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
55	Stanley Black & Decker	United States		Stanley Black & Decker is leaving Russia	Khabar fori	NY TIMES	Leaving Russia
56	Volvo	Sweden		Volvo will leave the Russian car market in both the passenger and heavy sectors	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity
57	Renault	France		Renault stops production in Russia in compliance with international sanctions	Akharin khabar	NY TIMES	Suspending activity

In Table 3 two of widely referenced Iran's news channels and their number of subscribers are depicted. These channels are also the most popular news channel in the Telegram app, an extremely popular virtual social medium.

Table 3. Iran's Domestic News Channel

Name of news channel	Number of subscribers
Khabar fori	5,691,375
Akharin khabar	2,264,585

Table 4 demonstrates categorization of strategies with regard to Ukraine war along with respective frequencies. As can be seen, “Suspending Activity” is the most common strategy followed by “Leaving Russia”. The less frequent approaches are “Scaling Back Activities”, taken by 5 companies, and “Halting Investment” used by only 4 companies.

Table 4. *Brands’ Strategies*

Strategies	Frequency
Suspending Activities	34
Leaving Russia	14
Scaling Back Activities	5
Halting Investment	4

Table 5. *Frequency of Strategies Used in Various Industries*

Type of industries	Number of brands Observed	Strategies	Frequency of each strategy
CPG/ FMCG/ Retail/ Fashion	9	Suspending activity	6
		Leaving Russia	1
		Scaling back activity	0
		Halting investment	2
Energy	3	Suspending activity	1
		Leaving Russia	1
		Scaling back activity	0
		Halting investment	1
Banking and Finance	7	Suspending activity	2
		Leaving Russia	3
		Scaling back activity	1
		Halting investment	1
Food & Beverages	6	Suspending activity	5
		Leaving Russia	0
		Scaling back activity	1
		Halting investment	0
Entertainment .18	4	Suspending activity	4
		Leaving Russia	0
		Scaling back activity	0
		Halting investment	0
Professional services	5	Suspending activity	1
		Leaving Russia	4
		Scaling back activity	0
		Halting investment	0
High-Tech	14	Suspending activity	11
		Leaving Russia	2
		Scaling back activity	1
		Halting investment	0
Travel and logistics	3	Suspending activity	1
		Leaving Russia	2
		Scaling back activity	0
		Halting investment	0
Manufacturing	6	Suspending activity	3
		Leaving Russia	1
		Scaling back activity	2
		Halting investment	0

Table 5 demonstrates our suggested categorization that is based on various strategies taken by companies in different industries. This table aims to depict a comparison of the most common strategies, previously outlined in Table 4, in each sector. The most common strategy in consumer goods and retail, Food & Beverages, Media, tech and manufacturing industries is “suspending activities” whereas in banking and finance, travel and logistics and professional services industries the most frequently taken strategy is “leaving Russia”. “Scaling back activities” has been used more frequently in manufacturing industries. None of the studied companies in energy sector have taken the strategy of “scaling back activities” while the other three types of strategies have been equally frequent. Finally all four companies studied in entertainment sector have used “Suspending activity” strategy; this industry is the only industry in which only one type of strategy is employed by all brands.

In Table 6, frequency of various strategy types is depicted based on the brands’ countries of origin. It also shows which countries have the most socio-politically active brands in the case of Ukraine war. Our result demonstrate that we have identified 34 companies from United States, 6 brands from United Kingdom, 5 brands from France, 3 brands from Germany, 2 brands from Sweden, Switzerland and South Korea, 1 brand from Finland, Netherland and Japan that have shown some sort of re-action in relation to Ukraine war.

Table 6. *Frequency of Various Strategies Based on Countries of Origin*

Continent	Total	Country of origins	Total	Suspending activity	Leaving Russia	Scaling back activity	Halting investment
America	34	United States	34	23	7	4	-
Europe	20	United Kingdom	6	-	4	-	2
		France	5	3	1	-	1
		Germany	3	1	1	1	-
		Sweden	2	2	-	-	-
		Switzerland	2	1	-	-	1
		Finland	1	1	-	-	-
		Netherland	1	-	1	-	-
Asia	3	South Korea	2	2			
		Japan	1	1	-	-	-

It is also shown that in the companies entered our analyses; in all continents the most frequently used strategy is “Suspending Activities”. Interestingly, companies in the UK have not employed this strategy and have mostly taken the approaches of either “Leaving Russia” or “Halting Investment”. Companies that are originally from Germany have equal frequencies in the categories of “Suspending Activity”, “Leaving Russia” and “Scaling Back Activities”.

Conclusion

The purpose of our research was to develop a typology for brands' sociopolitical stances in the case of Ukraine war, whether they are long term strategies with higher costs or short time strategies with less cost. We set out to conclude with a typology that includes different kinds of strategies and enables us to make a quantitative assessment of the type of re-action in order to find out what the most commonly used strategies among different kinds of industries are. Building on these, we argue that brands are increasingly taking sociopolitical stances and using sociopolitical connotations in their communications. The suggested reasons behind these re-actions are: (1) political consumption (2) leveraging competitive advantage (3) answering to expectation of consumers and (4) co-creating brand meaning. Our research demonstrates that in this case, the most commonly employed strategy among brands to address a sociopolitical stance is suspending activities; i.e., international brands are suspending their activities in Russia in re-action to the issue of Ukraine war in most industries. But in banking and finance industries most companies are leaving Russia. It is worth emphasizing that despite our efforts to design a typology for brands strategy; our results are specific to the Ukraine war and cannot be applied to other socio-politically charged issues. Our research opens multiple avenues for future investigations in the field of brands' sociopolitical stances. Firstly, future studies should focus on assessing how brands act in other social events. Secondly, a deeper investigation of different industries to gather more data and analyzed them with this typology could lead to development of effective concepts. Thirdly, future research can attempt to find alternative and potentially deeper categorization for brands strategy. Last but not least, our findings sets the stage for studies that aim to delineate how environments can affect the way brands usually act in these kinds of social events and contribute to the expansion of knowledge in the field of brand culture.

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Montenegro and the War in Ukraine: A Divided Country

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It has been 100 days since the War in Ukraine began. On this occasion, the Embassy of Ukraine in Montenegro organized a support march in Cetinje. In contrast, this city has also been known for protests to support the Russian invasion. Similar contrasts are visible in the decision of Montenegro to join EU sanctions against Moscow in April, including a ban on Russian airlines in its airspace and Russian state media. Sanctions were adopted after three failed attempts due to differences in opinions within the Government of Zdravko Krivokapić. Despite this, the stand of Montenegrin citizens is straightforward: every invasion should be condemned. Montenegro's controversial and complicated relations with Russia also reflect political and media coverage of the War in Ukraine. This paper aims to show how the War in Ukraine has been presented in the Montenegrin media and what are the official views of the Montenegrin establishment. We will analyze in what way and how (un)biased the Montenegrin media presented the development of the situation from day today and how this reporting influenced the formation of public opinion.

Keywords: Montenegro, Ukraine, Russia, EU, invasion, sanctions, media

Introduction

The Russian invasion of Ukraine opened up numerous geopolitical issues, including the security of the Western Balkans. Russia has always been considered an essential ally in this region, where it had a significant political influence. Therefore, the Russian invasion of Ukraine affected all aspects of society and prompted different reactions from high Montenegrin officials.

On April 8, Montenegro joined the countries that formally imposed sanctions on Russia. The Montenegrin Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MVP) expelled four diplomats from the Russian Embassy in Montenegro just a day before. Recently, six more Russian diplomats were declared *persona-non-grata* by the MVP. With these decisions, Montenegro harmonized its foreign policy with the official positions of the European Union (EU) but also provoked the anger of the Russian side. Russia retaliated by closing the Consular Department of the Embassy in Montenegro, as a decision made “*in the face of the hostile attitude of the Montenegrin Government.*” (Anadolu Agency, 2022) The decision of the Montenegrin Government to support sanctions against Russia has put Montenegro on the list of enemy countries together with more than 50 states. With this proclamation, Montenegro and Russia found themselves on opposite sides for the first time in Montenegrin history.

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The overall historical experience of Montenegro as a country going through a democratic transition, together with the most recent political scandals that involved Russia and deeply rooted nationalistic division, caused different reactions to happenings in Ukraine. Not only did Montenegrin citizens have divided opinions on the War in Ukraine, but the politicians also had a hard time reaching a unanimous decision on further foreign policy actions. This kind of deep division within society and the political scene was also evident in the media reporting of the Russian invasion and how facts were presented.

Keeping in mind the complex dynamic of the relations between two countries, this article will present the deep division in media reporting in Montenegro regarding Russian actions and the invasion of Ukraine.

We aim to show how public opinion on the events was formed based on media coverage. We will analyze in what way and how (un)biased the Montenegrin media presented the development of the situation from day to day and how this reporting influenced the formation of public opinion. Therefore, we are going to tackle several important factors that had an impact on media reporting in Montenegro. Additionally, we will analyze representative media outlets from both sides of the political spectrum, including the most-read foreign media outlets. In the end, an overall conclusion will be given, accompanied by personal opinions on the roots and causes for this kind of media reporting.

Setting the Scenery

War in Ukraine and Russian aggression extensively shaped the media reporting in Montenegro. Notably, this process was impacted by several factors that will be elaborated on to understand better the media standpoint and public opinion of Montenegrin society towards this issue.

As already stated, several factors impacted the overall media reporting in Montenegro, among which the most important ones include: Montenegro's long historical ties with Russia, thus shared religion; the divided political scene in Montenegro; comparison between the situation in Ukraine and the NATO bombing of Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in 1999³.

The historical relations that will be elaborated on in a more detailed manner in the upcoming part were also impacted by the recognition of the Serbian Orthodox Church's supremacy in Montenegro. The religious issue, on top of national identity issues, led to the historic change of Government in the summer of 2020.⁴ More importantly, the religious issue was deeply connected to the overall perception

³NATO's bombing of FR Yugoslavia is one of the most controversial events in which the entire international community was involved. The decision to intervene by NATO didn't have the approval of the UN Security Council, and the bombing took place under the guise of humanitarian action. The legality and legitimacy of the use of force in order to implement humanitarian action is still a matter of many debates amongst researchers. Question that still occupies scientific pens today is the search for answers to the logically imposed topics of.

⁴In 2020, for the first time after the introduction of multi-party system in 1991, Montenegro got a government that did not consist of a majority from the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS).

of Russians and Montenegrins as orthodox brothers, creating an even stronger bond between the two nations.

Regarding the third factor, the analogy between NATO bombing and Russian aggression is somewhat unclear except for the violence it caused. At the protests organized in Nikšić, Montenegro, by a group of Serbian nationalists, exclamations that glorify Russian President Putin could be heard.

The gathered protesters supported Putin and Russia, as they expressed their beliefs that Russians are their brothers by religion and shared history. Additionally, during the protests, we could hear that the Serbs in Montenegro experienced the same history as Russians in Ukraine. Therefore Russian aggression towards Ukraine is justified, and in a way, it could be viewed as a rightful payback for the NATO intervention in FRY (Reuters, 2022). In their view, NATO has proven incapable of protecting their allies and friendly countries, which in a sense encourages the public perception that they were never the right cause for the intervention in Yugoslavia.

In the opinion of the authors of the articles, this analogy is not rightfully set, and the only resemblance is in the suffering from the terrors of war that both nations experienced.

Russia and Montenegro and Their Centuries-Long Alliance

None of the Balkan states can say it had a longer and more dynamic relationship with Russia than Montenegro. Montenegrin ties with Russia date back to the 18th century (1711) when Montenegrins, at the call of Russian Tsar Peter the Great, joined Russians in their fights against the Ottoman Empire.⁵ This was when Montenegro was perceived as the loyal ally of Russia in the Balkans. In the upcoming centuries, Russian-Montenegrin relation has been based on a dependent relationship where Russia provided financial support to Montenegrins as long as it coincided with Russian broader strategic and geopolitical political interests.

As the fights against the Ottomans did not abate, and at the same time, with the strategic interests of Russian foreign policy, the heads of Montenegrin state were often guests at the Russian court, where they asked for financial aid for the Montenegrin people who were exhausted by the constant battles against the Ottomans. However, Russia's help was not only based on financial aid but also secular, religious, and spiritual aid. As a "mother" and a protective brother state, a cult of Russia was created, which has continued to exist. Montenegro and Russia are furthermore connected by the same Orthodox Christian religion and cultural solid belonging to the Slavic peoples. After the recognition of the Montenegrin state at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Russia and Montenegro formally established their diplomatic relations, and in 1878 a Russian consulate was opened in Cetinje, Montenegro. On the occasion of the visit of Montenegrin Prince Nicholas

⁵The emissary of the Russian Emperor Peter the Great came to Montenegro in 1711 and brought a letter calling on Montenegrins and other Christian nations to stand up and fight against the Ottoman occupier. The year of 1711 was considered as the year of formal establishment of Montenegrin-Russian political relations, and on that occasion in 2011, 300 hundred years of political relations has been celebrated.

to Russia, Russian Emperor Alexander III said that “Montenegro is the only true friend Russia has” (Vukićević, 2017, p. 125).

Although the Montenegrin Government has been known as pro-Western and pro-American since 1997, when Milo Djukanović became the country’s President, Russia recognized the independence of Montenegro in 2006, before Washington and European countries, which speaks of good political and economic relations. The recognition of Montenegro on June 12th, the day before the national holiday Day of Russia, was considered symbolic due to the historical connections and cultural-religious heritage that connects these two nations. Two countries reciprocally opened embassies in the capitals, first Russia in 2007 and then Montenegro, confirming their desire and readiness to continue developing good friendly relations.

This was a time of significant Russian investments, especially on the Montenegrin coast, the largest of which was the privatization of the Aluminum Plant in Podgorica (KAP), owned in 2005 by Russian businessman Oleg Deripaska, close to Vladimir Putin.⁶ Right after the independence of Montenegro in 2007, around 30 thousand Russians had bought land and real property in Montenegro, while Russian FDI in Montenegro amounted to nearly 2 billion USD in the same year (Gardašević, 2018). Rationalized conditions for starting a business, taxation, and real estate investment have created a real tourism boom, as the relations between Russia and Montenegro were extensively based on tourism, property purchasing, and industry. The investment trend has continued, as evidenced by the fact that in 2016 FDI from Russia to Montenegro represented around 30% of Montenegro’s GDP, as Russia was the country’s single largest investor in that year. (Conley and Melino, 2019) Increased economic penetration was interpreted as a Russian way of creating a well-grounded basis for further political action in the Balkan region. Russian influence in Montenegro became so vast that Montenegro was commonly referred to as “Moscow-by-the-Sea” (Reguly, 2014).

Montenegro and Russia had good relations and mutual interest in the economic sphere until 2013/2014. In 2012, Montenegro opened the membership negotiation process with Brussels, and two years later, in 2014, it joined the sanctions imposed by the EU on Russia due to the annexation of Crimea. Additionally, as Montenegro clearly defined its Euro-Atlantic path, the relations between Russia and Montenegro have dramatically worsened. Russian diplomacy representatives were loudly against Montenegro’s entry into the NATO pact, hoping to prevent the last section of the Adriatic coast from coming under the NATO umbrella. When Montenegro became a member of NATO in 2017, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Sergey Lavrov, declared that Montenegro would sacrifice its economic relations with Russia to join NATO.⁷

⁶Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska, owner of “Rusal”, bought a 58.7% stake in Aluminium Plant Podgorica (KAP). At the time of sale KAP accounted for 51% of Montenegro’s exports and 15% of the GDP (Bechev, 2018).

⁷In 2016, a group of Serbian citizens supported by the Russian establishment was involved in the attempt of trying to topple Montenegrin President Djukanović on the day of parliamentary elections, with the goal of deterring Montenegrin entrance to NATO Alliance.

This short overview of the historical genesis of Russian-Montenegrin relations is significant for a better understanding of Montenegro's position towards the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, in the first place, Montenegrin stance towards Russia, its century-old ally.

The Political Scene in Montenegro

All previously mentioned factors are relevant for this analysis since the political scene in Montenegro in recent years has been very diverse and deeply divided regarding several issues closely connected to the previously discussed factors. One of the most present divides is based on the national identity and historical interpretation of facts, which strongly correlates to the feeling of national identity and proximity to the Serbian state.⁸

Even though Montenegro is a multiethnic state, Montenegrins (35%) and Serbs (30%) represent the two most prominent national groups. As previously mentioned, Serbs in Montenegro strongly rely upon the sentiment of Serbia as their mother country, Orthodox religion, relations with Russia, and the Russian Orthodox Church. Knowing this, certain political parties (Socialist People Party SNP, Democratic Front DF, True Montenegro) in Montenegro kept alive this form of tradition, strongly dividing society into those who consider themselves Serbs and those who think of themselves as Montenegrins.

At the beginning of the War in Ukraine in February, Montenegro was led by the newly elected Government and its Prime Minister Zdravko Krivokapić. He is a university professor with no prior political experience. Krivokapic was very vocal during the protests of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, which helped him gain popularity and eventually win the elections.⁹ After taking over his position as the country's Prime Minister, he was recognized as a pro-Russian-oriented leader with deep conservative tendencies and support for the Serbian Orthodox Church.

However, due to internal struggles and a deep divide in the coalition formed around Krivokapić, his Government lost the no-confidence motion in February 2022. This motion was led by the civic movement URA – former members of the Krivokapic's Government. The new ruling majority was a more pro-European and Western-oriented Government, with a coalition of minority parties. Consequentially, these changes impacted Government's public response towards steps in sanctions against Russia, which were more prompt.

⁸After Montenegro regained its independence at the 2006 referendum, around 45% of citizens who were in favour of staying in the State Union with Serbia were left infuriated, denying the existence of Montenegro as a state and Montenegrins as a nation.

⁹In 2019, the Law on Freedom of Religion was adopted, which stipulated that the state becomes the owner of all religious buildings that were built before December 1918 - unless religious communities prove ownership, which caused stormy reactions. Part of the opposition and representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church believed that this law was unconstitutional and demanded that it be withdrawn from the procedure. This led to mass protests throughout Montenegro, which resulted in early parliamentary elections and the fall of Djukanović's government.

Reaction to the Invasion by Political Elite

The historical background and nationalistic narratives as visible are very influential on Montenegrin society and the political environment. This further impacts media outlets due to their affiliation with political parties in the countries.

Therefore, the media presentation of the war in Ukraine is deeply impacted by the political situation in the country. In this way, we will discuss in this chapter the overall political scene in Montenegro and how prominent political figures reacted to the situation in Ukraine.

Many politicians have voiced their opinions regarding Russian aggression in Ukraine using Twitter accounts. What is worth mentioning is that the media reported on this matter solely by citing shared content from Twitter without any analysis.

President of the country, Milo Djukanović, was among the first to come forward and vehemently oppose Russian aggression. Soon afterward, a public announcement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro strongly condemns Russian decisions. It was stated that Russian actions violated Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Minsk Agreement, and international law. (Jovanović & DFC Team, 2022) The current minister of foreign affairs, Ranko Krivokapic, is in line with the MVP, who also condemned the Russian invasion.

Further on, the media reported on the Ministry of Defense of Montenegro and their decision to condemn the Russian violation, together with the statement of the current Minister of Defense, Raško Konjević (Twitter, 2022). Not long after, Aleksa Bečić (Twitter, 2022), former speaker of the Parliament and leader of Democratic Montenegro, Miodrag Lekić (Vijesti, 2022), leader of Demos and SNP (Vijesti, 2022) issued their official statements. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) proposed a resolution to condemn Russia's attack on Ukraine within the Parliament, eventually signed by 44 MPs (Gradska, 2022).

Support for Ukraine was also given by the incumbent Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister at the time Dritan Abazović. Abazović expressed regret that Russia chose war in the 21st century.

However, it should be noted that just one day later, Abazović attended a meeting attended by almost all the famous Russian exponents in Montenegro who strongly supported Russian aggression (Jovanović & DFC Team, 2022). Any mainstream media barely reported this happening.

Similar reactions were seen when Russia decided to recognize the independence of Ukrainian territories Lugansk and Donetsk. The cause for the concern was the lack of prompt response by the Democratic Front and Democrats, as well as the public announcements of their leaders. This was also severally reported in the media by the pro-DPS outlets.

(Non) Unified Response to the Russian Aggression

Since its independence, Montenegro strongly shifted towards Western values and aligned its foreign policy with the European Union. In this regard, the question was how prompt the new Government responded to sanctions against Russia.

Even though many officials from both ruling and opposing parties have come forward and shared their points of view regarding Russian aggression, a more unified response was absent. It took three government meetings and almost two months after the initial attack happened for the Government to vote on the sanctions on the Russian Federation. This is a result of the lack of support and acceptable solution for all members of the Government. All this also impacted how citizens have been reported regarding the vents in Ukraine and Russia's decisions in this regard.

The main issue leading to the divide and prolonged decision was the unconventional approach the Prime Minister wanted. The new approach relied on the premise that a new body within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be created to deal with this issue. Many government members and prominent lawyers deemed this move as unconstitutional and operationally challenging to perform.

The sanctions against Russia were adopted on the 8th of April, 2022. This comes after the Montenegrin Parliament voted non-confidence of the Government and the appointment of the new Prime Minister, Dritan Abazović (Vijesti, 2022). Sanctions against Russia at that point included freezing the assets and economic resources of Russian citizens and companies in Montenegro who were considered close to the Kremlin and banning the operation of Russian government media. The Democratic Front (DF), one of the leading opposition parties, announced that they are against the sanctions against Russia, which will negatively impact the tourist season.

“We respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine, we are against sanctions against Russia, and as a small country, we should stay away from geopolitical conflicts as much as possible,” said DF official Milan Knežević (Radio Slobodna Evropa, 2022).

The Democratic Front did not excessively comment on the Russian aggression in Ukraine. Their official statements mostly followed the narrative about the hypocrisy of Western countries and pro-Western parties in Montenegro for calling for respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine while the territorial integrity of Serbia is being threatened.¹⁰

One thing worth noting is that political turmoil, shift toward pro-Russian and Serbian values and the indecisive standpoint of the Government deeply impacted public opinion regarding the War in Ukraine.

Media Reporting in Montenegro

As mentioned in the introduction, this article aims to observe the comprehensive reporting about the war in Ukraine from a traditional and social media perspective. As a visible, highly polarized political statement, historical narratives, fake news, and open messages from the officials of the Montenegrin Government have indeed impacted how the narratives have been created and how media outlet reports on specific issues.

¹⁰Here, above all, we mean the recognition of Kosovo's independence.

It is important to note that many media outlets and political parties have used traditional discrepancies and political uncertainties to fuel a further divide. Even though, in the end, we have all leaders condemning the Russian attack on Ukrainian sovereignty, the overall media reporting has been subjective.

The first day of the War in Ukraine was widely covered by all Montenegrin newspapers, media outlets, and electronic websites. Hashtags *Ukraine* and *Ukrajina* were one of the main topics trending on Twitter. At the same time, the reactions of Government officials and politicians, some through media, some through social channels, were not absent. Naturally, it is expected to observe either pro-Russian or pro-Ukrainian media reporting.

Another premise is that the overall pro-European narrative every actor in Montenegro uses, the strong anti-Ukrainian narrative will not be seen, but more likely, it will be observed as a lack of information or preferential reporting of the Russian side. Therefore, the following chapter will observe the focal points of foreign media in Montenegro and domestic media reporting, separated by their political affiliation – opposition and pro-government media outlets.

Foreign Portals in Montenegro

Currently, on the media scene in Montenegro, there are no active newspaper outlets or websites in Russian media.¹¹ In April 2022, as a part of the package of sanctions against Russia suggested by the EU, the Council of the Electronic Media Agency of Montenegro (AEM) unanimously adopted a decision on restrictive measures against the Russian media “*Russia Today*” and “*Sputnik*,” and the exclusion of those programs and their contents (Kajosevic, 2022).

Besides the business of the local media scene, the influx of Serbian-based media visibly polarizes the media scene in Montenegro. The content is full of sensationalism, fake news, and misinformation, further deepening the divide. In this respect, the two most notable examples of this kind of reporting are “*IN4S*” and “*Borba*”, also present in Montenegro, which seems to have powerful reporting in line with the views of official Moscow. This comes as no surprise knowing the official standpoint of the Serbian Government and the strong historical ties these two nations share.¹²

The overwhelming majority of articles are used from other major media outlets such as “*Sputnik*” and further translated, which is often the case with many media companies in the Balkan region. Compared to Montenegrin domestic media, which we will discuss further, the “*IN4S*” has a much higher number of articles and opinion pieces signed by the authors. The most prominent examples are the

¹¹In 2017, it was reported that five new pro-Russian websites were registered in Montenegro. These websites were founded by local journalist who are pro-Russian oriented, and who support the opposition parties in Montenegro. These website outlets were established right after Montenegro joined NATO in June 2017 (Tomovic, 2022).

¹²For years, Serbia and Montenegro were considered the two main ally states of Russia in the region of Western Balkans. After Russia and Montenegro’s political courses went in different directions, Serbia stayed the only country that unconditionally supported the policy of Kremlin. Particularly after the Government in Serbia was formed by the majority of Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and Serbian Socialist Party (SPS), the nationalist course in the political life of Serbia re-appeared.

articles “*Fascism in Ukraine*” (IH4C, 2022), and “*Why Russia wins*” (Kreveld, 2022).

Another indicator that this reporting is subjective and Russian-oriented is the references to “special military operation” and crisis in Ukraine. Their immense impact is visible in that “*IN4S*” was the third most read portal in Montenegro (Jovanović & DFC Team, 2022). The increasing number of news published from the Russian perspective is visible in these two outlets, while the Ukrainian perspective does not get the same media space.

Fueling headlines also do not help impartial and genuine reporting. One of those articles, please, from the portal of “*Radio-free Europe*” titled “*War in Ukraine further divides gap in Montenegro*” (Durović, 2022). Similarly, we encounter articles such as “*The Serbian Church follows Vučić’s neutrality on the Russian invasion*” (Tomović, 2022), continuing the narrative of the divide among the population. Even though this news portal is considered very prominent and famous for its objective, the reporter’s subjectivity could be visible in many articles on this topic, impacting readers’ views.

Domestic Pro-Government and Pro-Opposition Media

In this section, the two most frequently represented pro-government and pro-opposition media that reported intensively on Ukraine’s events will be elaborated. Those are “*Vijesti*” and “*Portal Analitika*”.

Regarding domestic media outlets, one of the most prominent portals in the country that have been traditionally opposed to the DPS rule but firmly open to European influences is “*Vijesti*”. Their comprehensive reporting was thorough and since this media portal has a separate section dedicated to the war in Ukraine, with 116 pages containing at least 15 headlines per page.

The overall analysis of the type of news/blogs/articles posted majority is taken from social media as publishers are esteemed politicians, PR statements, or prominent analysts. Most news is a basic translation of the reports covered and published by massive media outlets such as “*BBC*” or “*CNN*”. Only several articles originate from the journalists from “*Vijesti*”, which is understandable due to limited funding. Yet a clear distinctive pattern can be visible even in this small sample.

At first glance, the number of reporting’s that point out the Russian side of the story is not comparable to the number of press conferences of Russian representatives, their elaborations on the UN assembly as well as their press releases regarding failed peace negotiations or non-compliance with obligations that they pledged to perform. Among the first 60 headlines in “*Vijesti*”, there is barely any news that reports on the official standpoint of Russia, as well as a personal statement from Vladimir Putin, Sergei Lavrov, or Natasha Zaharova.

The overwhelming majority of reports are in strong support of the Ukrainian side with biased headlines such as “*Russian army faced with determined resistance,*” “*He draws the nuclear sword to divide Europe*” (Bogetić, 2022), and “*Putin’s imperial delirium*” (Bilt, 2022).

The situation is somewhat better when reporting how Montenegrin officials and day-to-day politics reflect on the war in Ukraine. The reporting is in line with a formal and straightforward statement of facts as the official press releases/ Twitter posts/interviews of politicians.

“*Vijesti*” is also famous for its statement pieces, such as those written by Balsa Brkovic. Even though there are personal pieces from the author, it is still visible that narratives of comparison between Montenegro and Ukraine and tendencies of a more substantial Serbian presence are filling up media space. Examples are pieces “*Ukraine*” and “*Other Russia*.”

The breaking headlines of “*Analitika*” on the first day of the War, February 24, 2022, were “Ukraine is under fierce attack, from the east to Kyiv and Odesa” and “Zelenski declared martial law: We are ready for anything, we will win.” The newspaper digital platform published the first reactions of the EU officials and world leaders, condemning this act of Russia. “*Analitika*” also published the first official statement of the President of the country, Milo Đukanović, who condemned the attack and stated that “Russia violates all fundamental principles of international law, undermines European security and threatens its stability.” (Portal Analitika, 2022). In addition, the newspaper published comments of the members of the Montenegrin Parliament from both ruling parties and opposition parties.

On February 24, “*Portal Analitika*” published 50 titles on its digital platform regarding Russia’s aggression in Ukraine. Over the past six months, hundreds of articles and stories have been published in Ukraine. The newspaper continued regularly reporting on the development of the situation from day to day, transmitting reports from the world’s media and publishing interviews, photos, and videos from all over Ukraine. On the newspaper website, a subsection “From hour to hour” was available, where happenings in Ukraine were reported hourly. “*Analitika*”’s reporting was limited to the conveyance of already published news by foreign media, as well as news that consisted of translations of tweets by foreign world officials and statements by Montenegrin officials. Occasionally, the newspaper would publish personal opinions and comments of local political analysts.

The war in Ukraine was a hot topic in Montenegro during the first couple of weeks of the conflict. The eyes of the entire Montenegrin public were focused on Ukraine and the development of events. At the beginning of the war, the national public service “*RTCG*” devoted more than half of its evening news “*Dnevnik*” to the topic of the war in Ukraine. “*RTCG*” reporters and journalists reported live from the Polish-Ukrainian border for seven days. On the *RTCG* electronic portal, a special page was added exclusively dedicated to events in Ukraine. Also, as part of the foreign policy show “*Focus*” on Wednesdays at 8 p.m., mainly topics related to the war in Ukraine were dealt with.

Social Media

In recent times, Montenegrin media space has been extensively shaped by the social media accounts used for promotion, campaigns, and sharing the institutions’ personal statements and official attitudes. This expansion has been vastly visible

since the Government shift in Montenegro happened. Twitter has become, at some point, the main channel for politicians to address the public due to COVID-19 and the extensive presence of citizens on this social network. This is more than evident in the case of Ukraine.

According to the opinion of many analysts, the war in Ukraine is not the first war happening in the age of digital media, but it is the first war to go viral, thanks to social media. War propaganda, hate speech, fake news, viral posts, and censorship of expression are some of the phenomena that marked this war.

Almost all of the politicians in Montenegro declared their support for Ukraine and condemned Russian aggression. In this manner, we have a prompt and open response in real time, where citizens can view all of the positions clearly without media intervention. Some institutions, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense, also used Twitter to inform the public about the official standpoints and potential activities that should be performed.

This social network introduced in December 2020 a new feature called Space. It is live audio conversations on Twitter where people can meet and discuss different topics at any time. For the first days of the war, the so-called “space rooms” were organized by Montenegrin citizens, primarily students, and journalists, where people would join and discuss the most recent happenings in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Very often, political analysts and journalists from the region would join these spaces and embark on debates related to the accuracy of the obtained information and events from the war front.

This Twitter feature was frequently used by DPS, its party members, and other parties to discuss political topics, among which war in Ukraine. In this manner, an influx of fake news and information can be spread or prevented as it is a free platform accessible to anyone on Twitter. Some media outlets also used the information gathered in Space as material for their reporting or to announce that one politician would be a guest on a specific topic, which was very often the case.

Conclusion

Living in the 21st century, it is indeed very hard to find impartial and objective news reporting regarding any issue. We live in an era where questioning everything is the only way to catch a glimpse of objectivity and have the ability to analyze anything from this standpoint.

Media reporting also belongs to this category. Additionally, war reporting is never impartial, neither historically nor today, and we dare say it never will. Their impartiality is somewhat more complicated if the media lacks financing and journalists are often the targets of violence, such as in the case in Montenegro.

Therefore combining these obstacles is difficult or even impossible, which is why we are not surprised that Montenegrin media outlets and journalists are subject to influences, especially those of political elites or societal narratives.

With both authors living in Montenegro, we analyzed media with the hypothesis that the party affiliation might strongly influence the reporting on the

Ukrainian war. And our view was proven right! The overall downgrade of media culture and the somewhat chaotic political situation confirmed our presumptions.

Therefore, it is tough to expect a difference in objective journalism regarding the war in Ukraine. This is especially notable because this issue also includes extensive differentiation on the national identity, and political usage of this divide impacts how the media portray this war. Based on the visible material, if somewhat media outlet coincides with pro-DPS forces or a more pro-European perspective, the coverage of the conflict is extensively based on Ukraine's perspective. This means that we usually lack information about the official Russian standpoint.

The same scenario is very much visible among the pro-Serbian oriented news outlets where the official standpoint of Serbia profoundly impacts the subjective reporting in favor of Russia. The Ukrainian moves are often interpreted as weak or the last resource options to give an illusion of Russian victory.

From the analysis of 5 media outlets and over 15 social media accounts of public officials, the conclusion can be drawn that the public in Montenegro relies on highly subjective reporting or purely personal perspectives of a few publicly present individuals. Therefore, it is easy to conclude that this polarization further divides the people, and much essential information gets lost in interpreting the facts to suit the reporting side.

This analysis is limited to the first two months of the Ukrainian war due to the format in which it has been written. Our advice at the end is to extend our initial idea by combining more media outlets with further analysis of the discourse used, which can contribute to the understanding of the position of the political elites and public about the war.

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The Brazilian Media's Reaction and Coverage of the War in Ukraine from 25th February to 15th September 2022

*By Raquel de Caria Patrício**

The Brazilian media have reacted to the 2022 war in Ukraine with a deeply critical eye on Russia. Domestically, the Bolsonaro Administration's reaction has been also the target of fierce criticism, mainly because the war has provoked in Brazil strong negative economic effects, namely the increase of the inflation and the drop of the national GDP, as well as the protection President Bolsonaro has given to the agribusiness. This article aims to investigate how the Brazilian media has covered the war in Ukraine through the content analysis of three Brazilian daily newspapers during the period of 25th of February to 15th of September 2022, as well as the political implications this war has had on Brazil. Interestingly, two conclusions that arise are that all newspapers condemned the invasion of Ukraine and they have also been criticizing President Bolsonaro's political behaviour, especially towards the sector of the agribusiness. Two interesting conclusions since these three newspapers cover a wide range of the Brazilian political ideology.

Keywords: Brazilian media, Russia, Ukraine, war, invasion, newspapers, agribusiness

Introduction

Russia's invasion of Ukraine (24th of February 2022) caused a shockwave that left no region in the world untouched as international surprise led to various reactions by national governments of different political and ideological inclinations. As such, Latin America was no exception. The region has been fertile terrain for Russian diplomatic and military engagement over the past two decades, and several countries have found Russia a credible partner and supplier of a wide range of goods and services (Kramer et al., 2022).

In the case of Brazil, the reaction of the Bolsonaro Administration was very different from that of the mainstream media. Indeed, the former President showed mild support for Russia, while the traditional media violently condemned the invasion and has since followed the United States (US) stance on the Ukraine war.

Not only ideological reasons explained Bolsonaro's viewpoint, but fundamentally the fact that war had provided a new excuse for the previous President to protect the sector of the agribusiness, which has strong ties with Russia.

For this analysis, there have been chosen the three newspapers with the largest national circulation and that together cover the entire Brazilian national political and ideological spectrum: *Folha de São Paulo*, *O Estado de São Paulo* (or just *O*

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Estadão), and *O Globo*. The first two are from the state of São Paulo and the last one from Rio de Janeiro.

According to the Communication Verifier Institute (CVI, 2022), in 2020, these newspapers were the ones with the largest circulation in Brazil, that is, of printed and digital subscriptions, with *Folha* taking the lead with a total average of 343,522 copies, followed by *O Globo* with 341,738 and, at some distance, *O Estado* with 233,315. Far behind in fourth place came *Super Notícia*, from Minas Gerais, with an average of 138,796 copies, and in fifth place came *Zero Hora*, from Rio Grande do Sul, with 125,037.

Moreover, *Folha de São Paulo* has a non-partisan and pluralist political orientation, although its news coverage of the governments of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002), Lula (2003-2010), Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), and Michel Temer (2016-2018) has earned the newspaper several accusations of being oppositionist during each of these administrations. *O Globo* comes across as politically conservative, while *O Estado de São Paulo* is also politically conservative but economically liberal, representing, in Brazil, the neoliberal thought. Nevertheless, this newspaper has recently adopted more liberal positions in the social and political spheres, defending, for example, the legalization of abortion in the country and adopting a critical position towards former Presidents George W. Bush and Nicolas Sarkozy, besides having supported the candidacy of the centre-left former President of Chile Michelle Bachellet. These newspapers represent the mainstream Brazilian public opinion, excluding the extreme right and the extreme left, whose supporters read the mainstream newspapers. All of them have their own websites, which are very popular, and *O Globo* even has its own TV broadcasting station, which is widely viewed.

Therefore, the starting point of this investigation is the question of how have the three main Brazilian newspapers covered the war of Ukraine and what political implications have this war had between 25th of February and 15th of September 2022?

The deadline results from the first day after the invasion and its end is due to a methodological issue, the ending of the period for delivering this article.

In theoretical terms, this study is analysed within the framework of the social constructivism inside symbolic interactionism, as a comprehensive theory in the phenomenological strand of sociology (Schutz, 1972) integrated in postmodern thought (Berger & Luckmann, 2016; Moscovici, 2001), which demonstrates the lack of impartiality of the media within the outline of the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 2016). More particularly, the theoretical approach bases on media representations within the social symbols (Moscovici, 2001). This means that media operate within a social system in which the values of *Good* and *Evil* serve as limits in the construction of interpretation. That is why it is expected that the Brazilian newspapers under analysis offer the same perspective on the Ukrainian war – after all, they share the same Western values. Therefore, they do not mirror reality since journalistic objectivity is already seen as a myth. What the media do is representations of facts based on the socio-cultural, political-economic, and historical values of the societies in which they are embedded. The notion of objectivity has been replaced by that of honesty, in such a way that the

media cannot be objective, but must be honest, that is, report the facts as journalists understand them.

Accordingly, the methodological option followed in this research adopts a post-positivist character that seeks to merge discursive elements with political practices to discover the different faces of reality – understood as "*constructed rather than natural, because its material dimension is real only to the extent that it is associated with the meanings ascribed to it by ideas shared by social actors*" (Patrício, 2019, pp. 339-340).

Therefore, the method used is content analysis, which aims to produce new understandings about phenomena and discourses. Phenomenology considers that the presence of the individual is the fundamental experience, and that all knowledge comes from the reality experienced by the subject. It concludes that this reality is constructed from the different viewpoints and questionings of individuals, and highlights the importance of language, which besides being the form of expression of the different perceptions of phenomena and the revelation of constructed realities is at the centre of the subject's construction of reality, from which comes the importance of discourse (Hartley, 2013).

Considering this, the aim of this research is to analyse how the three main Brazilian newspapers have covered the war in Ukraine and simultaneously assess whether this war has served as an excuse for the Bolsonaro Administration to protect the agribusiness, a sector that has strong ties with Russia.

To do so, this article is divided into two great chapters. The first is dedicated to the approach of the questions of the constructions of reality within which the media representations gain relevance. The second perspectives the content analysis of the front-pages, editorials, and simple news of the three newspapers chosen to be the foundations of this article.

Sociology of Knowledge

Based on the theoretical framework stated in the introduction, it can be affirmed that news are social constructions of reality and *socialisation* only happens when the individual perceives the stimulus, that is, the stimulus only becomes real when it is interpreted by a symbolic system of meaning and, therefore, assimilated (Bergen & Luckmann, 2016).

Media Representations

In the media, the observation of ontological reality is unavailable to the professional – the journalist – because of his primary quality as a human being. It is impossible for him to transcribe faithfully the facts extracted from reality but rather to reconstruct them through perception – understood as a process of deconstruction –, cognitive organisation, and discursive expression. The media end up being subjective, because of the subjectivity that characterises the journalist-individual (Morin, 1984).

Hence, social representations and their importance in communication processes resurface and can be justified through the processes of "*objectification*" and "*anchoring*" (Hartley, 2013, p. 115).

"*Objectification*" refers to the way in which the constituent elements of representation are organised and the route through which these elements acquire materiality and become expressions of a reality assumed as natural. "*Anchoring*" leads back to the process of assimilation of new objects in function of items already integrated by the cognitive system of journalist-individuals. This means that the knowledge acquired by previous experiences are the networks of meanings – anchors – that enable meaning to be attributed to new knowledge, behaviours, people, groups, etc. They thus constitute a code of interpretation that gives shape to the unknown, to the unforeseen (Hartley, 2013, pp. 115-116).

Through objectification and anchoring, journalist-individuals make reality intelligible and for it to become comprehensible it must be contextualised and framed, which forces them into a subjective action of interpretation. However, journalistic news as a discourse of apprehension and expression of a real world are not a reflection of totally objective ontological reality but rather a social construction.

Media as Reality Makers

As an alternative to the objective approach, constructivist media theory emerges focusing on the processes of selection and interpretation that embody representation and for which news are constructions (Halloran et al., 1970; Cohen & Young, 1981; Molotch & Lester, 2017; Schlesinger, 1992; 1993; Hall et al., 2013).

Rather than reflecting society, the media construct and shape events by providing information that substitutes real referents for others. Thus, media affect the way individuals think, believe, and act by constructing the collective imaginary (Anderson, 2021), that is, which holds the community together and helps a people define themselves as a culture as opposed to *outsiders*, those who express indifference towards the media-constructed event. Simultaneously, media also transform events. The mere fact that someone has a camera directed at him/her changes his/her behaviour, therefore changing the event (O' Shaughnessy, 2016).

Indeed, the facts are shredded by the media and because of a work of decontextualization they are never the ones that emerged from reality. In tendency, and in a rigorous information such as the one the three Brazilian newspapers under analysis have provided about the war in Ukraine, the facts are only like those that occurred. The angle, the ordering, and the hierarchy of the facts always produce a distortion. Decontextualization is always followed by a re-contextualisation operated by someone who was at the scene of the event on behalf of someone else – either the public or the journalist himself who receives the agency's takes. That is why it is said that there is *first-hand news*, *second-hand news*, *third-hand news* and so on (Fontcuberta, 1999).

The important thing to remember is that the objective and impartial view of reality deserves a great deal of scepticism. All media representations come from individuals, who by their characteristic of being human present different ideologies,

beliefs, and the characteristic of the social group to which they belong. Therefore, the veracity represented is evaluated according to the proximity of the journalist-individual's vision to the belief system, that is, the frame of references in which he/she is enclosed and thus within which his/her community sees and understands the world. This is the reason why the journalist-individual represents constructs of the mediated reality. In this sense, the news cover, select, and divulge themes considered of interest or importance for the individuals of that community. They present themselves to that community as a reflection of the interests and values of the journalist-individual and not as a pure reflection of the events themselves (Tuchman, 1978).

This means that the *agenda-setting* of the media makes it explicit that the media, in disseminating symbolic content present individuals with a list of the issues on which they consider it important to have an opinion. This is the *news making*, that is, the conception of mediated reality (Wolf, 2001).

The hundreds of events from around the world that arrive daily in the newsrooms of newspapers do not all become public (Cruz, 2014), rather it is necessary to do informative selection work based on notability criteria built into media style books. To this work, Wolf (2001) presents the evaluative topics in the definition of the media agenda: the importance of the event, its interest, availability, product, criteria relative to the audience, criteria relative to the competition, and criteria relative to the media.

The war in Ukraine satisfies these criteria in *Folha de São Paulo*, *O Globo*, and *O Estado de São Paulo*. It was reported every day from February to September 2022, but at the beginning, the event made the headlines of the three newspapers and by the end of the period, it made up news of lesser relevance given the durability and lack of novelty of the event. Indeed, for the symbolic representation of the news object the journalist-individual condenses the event and focuses his attention only on the aspects he considers to be the most important of that event, that is, the salient aspects of the event in a process of *highlighting* so that everything that does not seem important, new, or dramatic is left out (Cruz, 2014).

For all the above, it can be stated that journalism is a hermeneutic activity (Cornu, 1999). Firstly, because current events are characterized by an opacity that gives them multiple meanings allowing various interpretations of reality, which leads agenda-setting to limit the work of journalists because it restricts their view. Secondly, because the technical differences used by journalists influence what they look for. Thirdly and finally, because any journalistic interpretation of reality requires a subject of interpretation on the object interpreted and this interpretation cannot overcome the cultural and ideological differences of the subject of interpretation.

This means that the value of objectivity itself can never be fully satisfied. Therefore, journalistic objectivity in the absolute sense is an illusion, which does not mean that information professionals do not have it as a reference. The desire for objectivity on the part of the journalist is essential.

Analysis of the Newspapers – Content Analysis

Front-Pages

The three Brazilian newspapers under analysis have not been favourable to the war in Ukraine despite Brazil being a member of BRICS. This informal group has not provided considerable historical, cultural, religious, nor economic ties between Brazil and Russia. Moreover, this war is not of great interest to the Brazilian public opinion since there are no strong ties between Brazil and Russia nor Ukraine. The Brazilian public opinion's interest in this war is extremely related to the economic effects the war has provoked worldwide and in Brazil, namely the inflation and the drop of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as well as the protection former President Bolsonaro gave to the agribusiness. Besides, Bolsonaro had gone to greet Putin a few days before the invasion in veiled support of the Russian position, which earned him criticism from the national media.

For all three newspapers, the beginning of Russia's military action in Ukraine was the cover story of February 24th 2022, highlighted by *Folha de São Paulo* (2022a) and *O Globo* (2022a), which announced that Putin had ordered the military action in the neighbouring country after the escalation of tension in Eastern Europe, and a small note by *O Estado de São Paulo*, which reported that Ukraine gathered troops and asked for weapons, while China criticized the US sanctions (*O Estado de São Paulo*, 2022a).

On the following day, 25th February, the war in Ukraine was the front-page of all three newspapers, which reported it with great prominence and impressive large images to draw readers' attention.

If in *Folha de São Paulo* the event was the front-page of the newspaper from February 25 to March 9, in *O Globo* the same happened from February 25 to March 12, being the one of the three newspapers that made the Ukrainian war its front-page for longer, since *O Estadão* only made the event its front-page from February 25 to March 6.

Indeed, on March 10, *Folha* was already sharing the front-page with another article (*Folha de São Paulo*, 2022c), which means that it was giving it less relevance due to its lack of novelty. In *O Globo*, the cover was divided with other articles from March 13, and on March 16 the event was no longer included on the cover at all. The war in Ukraine was moved to the so-called "world", a section in which Brazilian newspapers divide the news to cover international events. On the front-page of *O Globo* that day were several articles highlighting the defence of a tax on fuel by the Minister of Mines and Energy (*O Globo*, 2022b). Meanwhile, *Folha* of 11th March also featured another story on the front-page: the increase in the price of petrol, which threatened the economy while news about the war in Ukraine moved to the *world* section (*Folha de São Paulo*, 2022b). Nevertheless, a story that made the front page of that newspaper still on March was related to agribusiness and to former President Bolsonaro's initiatives with Putin (*Folha*, 2022d). In *O Estadão*, the front-page was divided between the war in Ukraine and other articles much earlier on 7th March (*O Estado de São Paulo*, 2022b), while the

following day the war in Ukraine was no longer on the front-page of this newspaper, rather in section *world* (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022c).

This means that in the period under study the war in Ukraine was covered by *Folha de São Paulo* daily, that is 203 times. From that total, 14 issues related to the war had been covered on the front-page which, in all cases included a picture or more attracting the interest of the readers. The rest of the times, the event has been covered as a simple news. *O Globo* has also dealt with the war in Ukraine daily, this is 203 times. From that total, 19 issues related to the war had been covered on the front-page also including a picture to attract the interest of the readers. Likewise, the rest of the times the event has been covered as a simple news integrated in the section *world*. *O Estadão* has also covered the war in Ukraine daily that is 203 times. Nevertheless, the frequency with which this event has appeared on the front-page has been significantly lower compared to the other newspapers only 11 times.

Editorials

It is also interesting to consider that the three newspapers taken for analysis have a broader global perspective in all their themes when compared to others. Hence, they provide their readers with editorials on the war in Ukraine, which give a more informative international assessment of the issue.

Indeed, *Folha de São Paulo* presents three editorials in the period pre-invasion all of which about the visit Bolsonaro did to Russia to greet Putin and his reasons (Folha de São Paulo, 2022h). The first of 15th January mentions that the Toronto Star's centre-left editorial questioned the reason for the former Brazilian government's *sudden* change of position attributing it to the recognition of its failure. The second editorial entitled "*Brazil goes to war*" is from 12th February (Folha de São Paulo, 2022h) and on 22nd February *Folha* launched the editorial "*Joe Biden's sanctions make Rubble and Moscow Stock Exchange rise*" (Folha de São Paulo, 2022g), while in the period under study only five editorials were launched, all of them in March (Folha de São Paulo, 2022f).

All the editorials that *O Globo* launched fell within the period under study. The first of them, from 22nd May and entitled "*War in Ukraine Brings Agricultural Opportunity to Brazil*" (O Globo, 2022h) is concerned with Brazilian interests. Exactly one month later in June *O Globo* published an editorial (O Globo, 2022g) clearly adopting a Western perspective on the approach to the war, "*The West Should Agree on Its Goals in Ukraine*". On the 25th of August, another editorial was launched, "*Effects of Ukraine's War Will Continue to Be Felt*" (O Globo, 2022f) in which it is mentioned that Russia discards the diplomatic solution to the conflict with high human, economic, and geopolitical costs. By the 1st and 15th of September, *O Globo* published two editorials (O Globo, 2022d, e) entitled "*Successful Ukrainian Counteroffensive Changes Putin's Perspective on the War*", and "*Expansion of the Ukrainian War is a Scenario that Doesn't Interest Anyone*" considering the retaking of territories by Ukraine. From the newspaper's point of view, this fact has redrawn the map of the conflict and imposed a political and diplomatic dilemma on Russia. This view was amply reinforced by the *Folha de*

São Paulo news item "*Current phase of Ukraine war should make Xi rethink alliance with Putin*" published in September, according to which the Chinese leader might have doubts about his relationship with Putin because of the Ukrainian advances in the war (Folha de São Paulo, 2002e). Already outside the period under study, but very close, on the 19th of September, *O Globo* published a very interesting editorial on the war in Ukraine. It was "*Liberalism is the main target of Russian aggression against Ukraine*" (O Globo, 2022c) and refers that the conflict had opposed liberal democracies to Putin's *illiberalism* dealing, therefore, with a war of antagonistic values, which will define the future of humankind.

Immediately after the invasion, *O Estadão* launched an editorial in its February 25th edition (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022f) related to Brazilian interests, which mentioned that Russian military action in Ukraine affected world markets and according to the newspaper the price of a barrel of oil had exceeded US\$ 100 and the Stock Exchanges had closed the 24th in low. The Brazilian B3 had fallen to 0.37% and the Dollar had rose 2.02% against the Real to R\$ 5.10. For the Brazilian economists, the conflict should increase inflation and slow down Brazil's GDP. Two other editorials published in the same edition of *O Estado de São Paulo* were "*Russia exhibits its new military power*" (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022d) and "*The West must show how much Putin has stumbled*" (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022e). In the February 26th edition, the newspaper published two interesting editorials, the first by Paul Krugman and the second by Fareed Zakaria (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022g, h).

In its February 28th edition, *O Estadão* once again defended Brazilian interests in the editorial "*Food prices should rise in Brazil as effect of the conflict*" (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022 i) mentioning that the higher cost of commodities such as wheat and corn produced in Russia and Ukraine was causing a negative impact on Brazilian inflation. This theme was returned to in the March 3rd edition, with another cover story (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022k) referring again that the conflict had caused the rise in oil, wheat, and corn prices just a week after it began. Still, in this issue there was space for an editorial by William Wack (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022l), although in the March 1st issue there was an editorial on "*Putin's three big mistakes so far*" (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022j).

In the March 4th issue, two very pertinent editorials took up once again national interests. The first by Fernando Gabeira (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022m) and the second by Eliane Cantanhede (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022n). Pedro Dória came with a third editorial: "*Zelenski is a social media Churchill*" (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022o).

Lastly, the March 6th issue similarly featured editorials on the war in Ukraine, all of which also related to the defence of Brazilian interests affected by this war. In this scope, it is worth considering Eliane Cantanhede's editorial (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022p) criticizing the former President's stance towards the conflict, J.B. Guzzo questioning whether "*Could Brazil have done something different in Ukraine?*" (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022q) and Celso Ning "*War increases uncertainty in the economy*" (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022r).

The proliferation of editorials in the three newspapers analysed shows that all of them have a broad global perspective in the entirety of their themes since editorials provide a more informative international approach of the war in Ukraine.

Simple News

Considering that the three newspapers published an average of four news items on the subject and covered the war in Ukraine between the 25th of February and the 15th of September, it is perceptible that they have editors who consider that the subject is relevant enough for the Brazilian public to have an opinion on that. Because of this event, somehow the three newspapers stopped publishing about other national and international information to be able to publish about the war in Ukraine.

Furthermore, the narrative that the three newspapers constructed is a representation of reality very close to each other since of the 203 times they covered the war in Ukraine in the period considered all news items followed the same narrative pattern through the processes of objectification and anchoring (Hartley, 2013, p. 115). This means that these news became intelligible and comprehensible reality because they were recontextualised and framed, which forced them into a subjective action of interpretation as a discourse of social construction.

Despite the similar content, each newspaper used titles, stories, and images that they probably believed would grab readers' attention more.

On the other hand, in all three newspapers expressions such as "*West*", "*military aid to Ukraine*", "*unity of the international community vis-à-vis Russia*", "*sanctions against Russia*", "*less dependence on Russian gas*", "*companies leaving Russia*", "*Russian crimes against humanity*" and most recently "*Ukrainian counter-offensive*" abound, which clearly demonstrates that the three newspapers under analysis adopt the Western point of view as they share Western values and are integrated into Western society.

More particularly the whole newspapers echo mostly the US stance, while expressing an anti-Russian attitude. Indeed, they totally and unequivocally criticized Russia for the invasion of Ukraine and continue to criticize Russia's and especially Putin's actions towards Ukraine. On the other hand, they praise Zelensky, even comparing him to Churchill in an editorial already mentioned (O Estado de São Paulo, 2022o). Notwithstanding, the Estado de São Paulo published a story on March 12 calling attention to the beginning of the post-American era, due to the growing challenge to the legitimacy of US leadership. According to the report, this contestation is occurring on the part of states such as Russia or China, or on the part of self-styled states or other powers, such as the Islamic State (O Estado de São Paulo, 2002s).

Likewise, *Folha*, *O Globo*, and *O Estadão* were prolix in the period under study in expressions such as "*increase in the price of oil*", "*increase in inflation in Brazil*", "*increase in the price of corn and wheat*", as well as in "*defence of the interests of agribusiness*" pointing to former President Bolsonaro's use of war as an excuse to defend this sector. This seems normal as the war in Ukraine is too

distant from Brazil, so it seems natural that the country should be concerned about the effects that such a distant event has on its citizens.

Also, for that reason, in the full coverage of the issue, the Russian-Ukraine conflict has been more neutral and less controversial than other areas of political conflict in Brazil. Undeniably, the three newspapers analysed draw their readership from a wide ideological spectrum with little ambiguous opinions about the war since all of them share Western values and with these values, they build their own narratives about the war in Ukraine.

Indeed, they all have shared a US stance about the war while have also demonstrated a national interest approach on the issue especially about the effects of the war on the country's inflation, the drop of its GDP, and the former President's stance on the defence of the agribusiness.

Final Remarks

Through what has been said above it is possible to state that journalist-individuals from *Folha*, *O Globo*, and *O Estadão* have not been able to transcribe faithfully the facts extracted from the war in Ukraine but rather to reconstruct them through their perceptions, cognitive organisations, and discursive expressions. This means that all three newspapers analyses are subjective, because their journalists are subjective as well (Morin, 1984).

Indeed, through the processes of objectification and anchoring the journalist-individuals from the three newspapers have perceptions that are based on a framework of values.

This set of values is present in all journalistic tasks about the war in Ukraine: selecting the event of the war in Ukraine and not another, understanding only some aspects of that event, conferring a certain ordering to the selected elements, giving them the form of news, choosing the words to give it public visibility. It becomes evident the constructivist media theory, which focus on the processes of selection and interpretation that embody representation and for which news are constructions, like what happens on the front-pages, editorials, and simple news of *Folha*, *O Globo*, and *O Estadão*.

Rather than reflecting the war in Ukraine the three newspapers construct and shape that event by providing information that substitutes real references for others. Thus, these newspapers affect the way individuals think, believe, and act by constructing the collective imaginary (Anderson, 2021), that is, which holds the community together and helps the Brazilian people define themselves as a culture as opposed to *outsiders*, those who express indifference towards the media-constructed event.

In this sense, this article has answered its starting question since the main Brazilian newspapers have covered the war in Ukraine through their front-pages, editorials, and simple news as constructions of reality according to the Western values. They share amongst them those Western values and they are integrated in the Western society. Therefore, besides being constructions of reality, they clearly adopt a US and Western stance, while criticizing the Russian point of view.

Furthermore, the three newspapers show undoubtedly an anti-Bolsonaro stand since the former President had shown a veiled support for Russia and the war had provoked in Brazil strong negative economic effects, namely the increase of the inflation and the drop of the national GDP, as well as the protection former President Bolsonaro paid to the sector of the agribusiness. Besides, it is interesting to note the three newspapers have strongly condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine, while criticizing Bolsonaro's political behaviour towards the agribusiness. Two interesting conclusions since the three newspapers analysed are the ones with the biggest Brazilian circulation and cover a wide range of the national political ideology.

Considering this, the aim of this research has also been reached now that it has been analysed how *Folha*, *O Globo*, and *O Estadão* have looked at the war in Ukraine and it has been concluded that this war has served as an excuse for Bolsonaro to protect the agribusiness, a sector that has strong traditional ties with Russia.

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The Greek Newspaper Coverage of the Ukrainian War: The Pre-Invasion Phase and the Day of the Invasion

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This paper is a first attempt to look at the Greek media coverage of the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine. Three daily newspapers are used during the period of December 2021-February 2022 to measure the frequency of coverage of the issue during the pre-invasion phase and the first day of the invasion. In addition, a qualitative content analysis is employed to account for the three newspapers' stance on the Russian-Belarus invasion. One conclusion that emerges, which to many would appear surprising, is that all newspapers unequivocally condemned the Russia-Belarus invasion without any strings attached to their position. Since these three newspapers cover a wide spectrum of the Greek political ideology, it appears that despite Greece's long historical, economic, and cultural (religion included) ties with Russia, this invasion was considered unacceptable.

Keywords: Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Greek Media, War, Public opinion, polls, newspapers

Introduction

In a commentary on 9 March 2022, Doug Bandow of the Cato Institute stated that, "... it is best not to attack people in Europe, which guarantees heavy media attention in Western capitals."¹ He is right. This paper looks at the media attention of the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine in just one such European capital, that of Athens, Greece. The media attention was not favorable to the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine in a country like Greece that has had long and friendly historical, cultural, religious, and economic ties with Russia.

This study is part of a larger project exploring the Greek media coverage of the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine. This paper only examines how three popular Greek newspapers covered the Russian-Ukraine conflict in the pre-invasion phase and the first few days of the war. Both quantitative and qualitative content analyses are used and is based on a similar study by Tumber & Palmer (2004, Ch. 6) of four British newspapers' coverage of the Iraq war during the pre-invasion phase.

The Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine is of great interest to the Greek public opinion because there are strong ties with both Russia and Ukraine. In addition, there is a keen Greek interest in Russia's justification of this particular invasion. I have identified a number of reasons as to why this invasion is of great interest to the Greek public opinion at large which are briefly discussed below.

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¹<https://www.cato.org/commentary/ukraine-crisis-could-spark-new-cold-war-or-nuclear-war>.

Some of these issues are discussed in my previous publications where the interested reader can find many more references.

Firstly, Russia, Ukraine and Greece share the same Greek Orthodox religion. In the last few years, these three churches (Russian, Ukrainian and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople) do not harmoniously co-exist. In many occasions their differences have been very acrimonious. This has many political connotations, but most importantly it reveals a general Russian hegemonic strategy in countries that consider themselves to be under their own sphere of influence. This important issue of a religion schism is not discussed here despite its importance for the future developments of the Greek-Russian relationships. However, it does affect favorably towards Russia a part of the Greek public who consider the Greek Orthodoxy an important determining factor.

Secondly, a large Greek community lives in both countries. These communities have a very long history going back at least to Greece's Ottoman past, if not in mythical period, as the remnants demonstrate on Snake Island. As a matter of fact, in the first days of the invasion, ten Greeks in Ukraine were killed by the Russian-Belarusian invaders which spearheaded a strong Greek governmental reaction against Russia. In the beginning, Russia, using its favored mean of disseminating fake news, tried to deny any responsibility, but quickly it was more than evident that it was Russia's fault, most probably by an accident, which always happens in wars. Instead of apologizing, they chose to deny it. This made the whole incident even worse. This was an additional factor which may explain the Greek government's strong stance against the Russian-Belarusian invasion.

Thirdly, many Greeks believe that Russia played an important and pivotal supportive role in Greece's War of Independence in the 1820s. On the other hand, Ukraine, especially the city of Odessa, carries an important sentimental value because it was the city where a secret Greek society, by the name of *Filiki Eteria* (Φιλική Εταιρεία), was established in 1814, aiming at liberating Greece from the Ottoman yoke. Of course, as I have explained in Papanikos (2022a), on the role of foreign powers in the Greek War of Independence, Great Britain played the most decisive role followed by France. The Tsarist Greek Christian Orthodox Russia wanted Greece to be an autonomous part of the Ottoman empire and not a fully-fledged independent state. It was the British who imposed an independent state and the French army that fought for this in the Peloponnese. It is irrelevant that the British were pursuing their own economic and political interest and the French were inspired by their romantic influence by the glorious past of classical Greece. The fact is that many English and French came and fought side by side with the Greeks against the Ottomans. Since the 1820s the misconception that runs across all Greek generations is that Russia liberated Greece which shows, if nothing else, that Thucydides was right when he warned us that we do not learn from history.

Fourthly, Russia in its Soviet Union version has played an important role in determining the political and military developments in Greece in the 1940s when the communist forces fought the first "hot war" instigating a civil war that lasted almost the entire decade of the 1940s. I have examined these political and military developments in Papanikos (2020a). For reasons which include their anti-US stance, some of these communists hold favorable views of Russia. Some Greeks

support whatever is anti-US and might view this invasion as an act against the US. There is another reason for this which is explained below.

Fifthly, the motives proclaimed by Russia to defend its invasion are similar, if not identical, to the defense provided by Turkey in 1974 when it invaded Cyprus. It has occupied 40% of the island's land ever since. The Russian foreign minister bluntly put it that the Russian-Belarus invasion is similar to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. He failed to acknowledge that Russia itself was against it and still is. Also, no state, apart from Turkey itself, recognizes the partition of the island by force. The same will most probably apply to the expected partition of Ukraine. Nobody would recognize it apart from Russia itself and a few countries that are under Russian occupation, e.g., Syria.

Sixthly, modern Greece is a member of the European Union (EU), of the eurozone and of NATO, which carries more responsibilities than any other country in the region. The majority of the Greek public opinion accepts that Greece's future is primarily within the EU and the Eurozone. This has an economic, political, and cultural dimension. After all, many Greeks think that the idea of Europe is a Greek idea starting with the name itself. Young Greeks learn in school that the Battle of Marathon was not a war between Greeks and Perses, but a war between Europeans and Asians, as Herodotus so eloquently told us so. It was a battle between two different civilizations, or of two political systems—that of tyranny and democracy—as so expressively was depicted in Aeschylus' tragedy, *The Persians*, written in 472 BCE. It was a war between autocracy and democracy.² Many Greeks think that they have property rights on the idea of Europe and nothing can be called European without the Greeks being included. What is of interest is that many Europeans think this as well³ and, in many cases, they used the same argument, i.e., a United Europe must have Greece as its member at any cost. The truth is that the other Europeans have paid dearly for Greece's membership to the EU and the eurozone. It is also true that the great majority of Greeks do recognize this even though the Greek mass media do not emphasize it as much as it should. Some Greeks, not as many as in the EU case, think that being a member of NATO is necessary for political and military reasons. They contemplate that NATO membership is necessary not so much to protect Greece from a non-aligned force, but to protect Greece from another NATO member, namely Turkey.⁴ This can explain some seemingly

²Exactly the same description is used today to describe the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine. Many commentators see this invasion as a struggle between democracy and tyranny.

³In Papanikos (2022b) I made a similar argument about the concept of "democracy" which in US public opinion is being recognized that its beginning can be found in Greece and particularly the city of Athens which is called the "cradle of democracy". In one way or another this shapes the US foreign policy towards Greece and something that Greece can build on it to develop even better relationships with the US public and not so much with the US government. This relates to one of the five criteria of democracy—that of isopoliteia—as I explained them in Papanikos (2022e).

⁴This by itself shows the uniqueness of Greece which brings headaches to the US foreign policy which is trying to balance its stance between two NATO members, Turkey and Greece. It is not easy at all. The ambiguous Greek foreign policy makes the role of the US even harder. There is a good and bad conspiracy theory. There are many in Greece who strongly believe that the US favors Turkey over Greece. Similar are the feelings in Turkey, i.e., US favors Greece over Turkey. This is a bad application of the conspiracy theory. A good application of the conspiracy theory is that all the US wants is to avoid a conflict between these two friendly nations. Any solution by both countries

contradictory attitudes of the Greek public opinion findings, as explained in the next section of this paper.

For all the above reasons, the Greek public and therefore the Greek press has a strong interest in the deleterious events in Ukraine. The main thesis of this project is that the Greek news coverage of the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine is influenced by (a) the ideological-political perspective of the medium (newspaper, radio, tv channel, social media etc.) and (b) the Greek interest in the conflict for the reasons presented above. Even though the two are interrelated, this paper examines only a small part of the second aspect by looking at how three popular Greek newspapers covered the Russian-Ukraine conflict at the pre-invasion phase and the first day of the invasion. Other aspects will be part of a future research. However, some comments are made on the ideological-political stance of the three newspapers.

I have expressed my views on the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine in three working papers (Papanikos, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d); the first is in Greek and the other two in English. The first was published before the invasion (20 February 2022) and the other two after the invasion of the 24 February 2022. I have received many comments from academics and researchers from many different countries. According to one database (ResearchGate), there were thousands of reads as the latter are measured by the hosting platform itself. I am not going to summarize their arguments here, but I plan to respond to all comments in a future study in which my arguments-interpretations-hypotheses-biases will be corroborated by the actual development of the events. So far, the events, as they develop, do not reject my main theses expressed in my early works, but this, by no means, implies that my analysis of the causes is validated. Some other analysis may explain better what really has been happening. After all, my theses depend on a conspiracy theory which too many scholars find it unacceptable as a scientific method of explaining events, and rightly so.

This paper is organized into five sections, including this introduction. The next section looks at the Greek public opinion using a pollster which measured public opinion beliefs about the Russian-Belarusian invasion of Ukraine. The third section presents the data of the front-page coverage of the three Greek newspapers in the pre-invasion phase and the early days of the invasion. The analysis is quantitative, i.e., how many times the issue appeared on the front page either as a simple reference and/or as a headline. Here, what is important is the coverage (mentioning) itself which constitutes hard evidence of Greek public interest. The fourth section analyzes the content of the front pages of the three newspapers, particularly during the first day of the invasion. This is important because it shows the newspapers' stance on the issue. The last section concludes.

will be accepted by the US. Thus, the solution is totally in the hands of the two countries. US is indifferent as long as there is a peaceful solution. Not because they are nice guys but because this serves better their interests.

The Greek Public Opinion

The Greek public opinion is highly divided on any issue. This is true in all democracies.⁵ The Russian-Belarusian-Ukrainian conflict could not be an exception. However, this division has its own unique characteristics, which are different from other thorny issues of the past. For example, during the economic crisis of 2008 and the referendum thereafter in 2015, the split of the Greek public opinion over the eurozone and the EU had strong ideological characteristics as I have explained in many papers, but most importantly in my analyses of the 2012 Greek elections (Papanikos, 2012a, 2012b); in my analysis of the January 2015 elections (Papanikos, 2015) where I risked a prediction that within the same year a new election will be called as it actually happened; and in my book (Papanikos, 2014). In the latter, not only had I predicted the referendum of 2015, but I explicitly stated that the question posed will be a confusing one and the result will be a strong “no”. What I could not predict is that, despite this, during the same night of the referendum, the Greek government at the time made its famous “kolotoumba”—literally meaning somersault. In the context of the referendum, the strong *NO* became a strong *YES* overnight. However, these analyses do not apply to the split of the Greek public opinion on the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine even though some similarities exist, especially the ideological affinity of those who stand along the Russian invasion who most probably are the same who wanted Greece out of the EU and the Eurozone. This comparison, which has great interest, is not examined here and is left to be analyzed in a future study.

As mentioned in the introduction, a large part (but not the majority) of the Greek public opinion is pro-Russian for a number of reasons including the common religion of Greek Orthodox, the alleged role of Russia as perceived by Greeks in their war of independence in the 1820s and the links of Greek communists with the Soviet Union. On the other hand, the same arguments apply to Ukraine. Actually, they are even stronger than the ties with Russia. Ukraine’s church is also Greek Orthodox and is in fact more loyal to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople than the Russian Church. On the other hand, in the Greek historical consciousness the city of Odessa stands very high as mentioned in the introduction. Thus, from all these points of view it is really very hard for Greeks to show support for one or the other side.

However, there is another split which relates to the anti-US sentiment of the Greek public for many reasons, but primarily because they think that the US did not do anything to prevent the establishment of a dictatorship in Greece in 1967. Some think that the whole coup d’ etat was organized by the CIA itself.⁶ President

⁵Actually, this is one of the five criteria of democracy, i.e., isegoria (part of which is the freedom of speech). I have examined the issue of democracy in Papanikos (2022e, 2022f). See also the comments by Meydani (2022) and Petratos (2022). Without isegoria you cannot have political parties and freedom of communication. In other words, without democracy there is no public opinion and therefore no division. It like a cemetery: nobody talks and nobody argues.

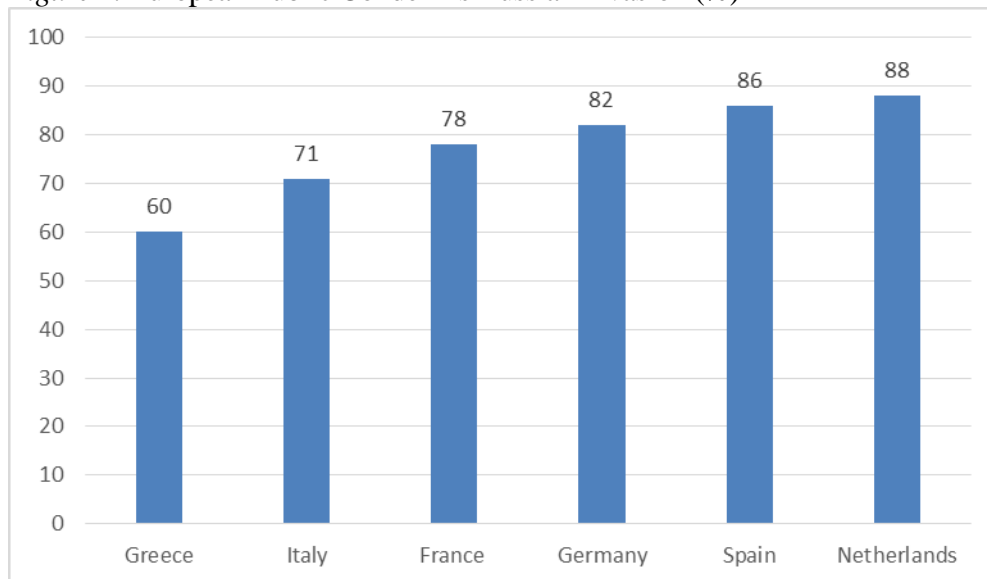
⁶In my book about Andreas Papandreu (Papanikos, 2019) –a US citizen and an active follower of the US democratic party—I explained, according to my judgement and interpretation of the available facts, what led to the dictatorship of 1967. Notwithstanding the US interest on the issue, the dictatorship was not a reaction against a potential communist threat and I do not think anyone in

Clinton officially visited Greece in 1999 and came close to apologizing for the US's role during the dictatorship. In any case, the suspicion runs very high in the Greek public opinion of the real intentions of the US in the ongoing skirmishes between Greece and Turkey. This distrust explains why a great portion of the Greek public opinion –not the majority, but a vocal minority-- is against whatever the US government is supporting in the international political arena.⁷ Thus, even though the current Ukrainian struggle and what it stands for is closer to the long-term national strategic interest of Greece, part of the Greek public opinion supports Russia because by doing so, they demonstrate their antithesis to the US irrespective of what their own national interests are.

The findings presented in Figure 1 can be explained by these arguments. According to a public opinion poll in six EU countries published in POLITICO, 40% of Greeks did not condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine. From all six countries polled, this is by far the highest percentage. This high percentage is not surprising given the historical, cultural and religious ties with Russia and the anti-US feeling of a portion of Greek public opinion. However, if Greeks were to be reminded that the invasion of Russia-Belarus for all practical purposes is similar to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus as the Foreign Minister of Russia reminded the whole world immediately after the invasion, then their opinion would have been different.

US administration at large had such an opinion. It was rather a conflict between George Papandreou and the Greek King. Those who like conspiracy theories (as I do if they are good) may believe it was a conflict between three US power establishments: the CIA, the Pentagon and the White House. In this “battle”, the CIA won. I think the US president was just watching, if he was watching (cared) at all. In any case, to say that the Papandreou's (father and son) were pro-Communist would have been a good joke if the victims were not so many when George Papandreou served as the Prime Minister of Greece during the events of December 1944 when he ordered to fire and kill many communist demonstrators. If the victims were not so many from both opposing sides in the aftermath which lasted up to 1949, one would only laugh hearing that in the US anyone would seriously consider the two Papandreou's as pro-Communist. Further testimony is the fact that when Andreas Papandreou came to power in 1981, he reinforced the Greek-US and the Greek-EU ties despite his pre-election rhetoric. However, all these had an influence in shaping the Greek public opinion against the US government which lasted for many decades and still can be found in a considerable section of the Greek public opinion even though it is declining. As I explained in my paper (Papanikos 2022b), many Greeks now recognize the obvious: the Greek interests are common to US interests. The US public includes a strong Greek-American community and most importantly a considerable number of US philhellenes, unparallel to any other ethnicity, which, unfortunately, has not been exploited by the official Greek foreign policy over the years as I explained in detail in my paper (Papanikos, 2022b).

⁷There are many academics and researchers whom confuse Greek stance with other anti-US attitudes around the world. In many other countries in the world, fanatics hate the people of the US and their way of life. In Greece they love the American way of life but they disagree with US policy if it is not to their liking. They are two completely different attitudes. This important difference in anti-US attitudes is not emphasized and many Greeks with such attitudes do not comprehend the difference.

Figure 1. European Public Condemns Russian Invasion (%)

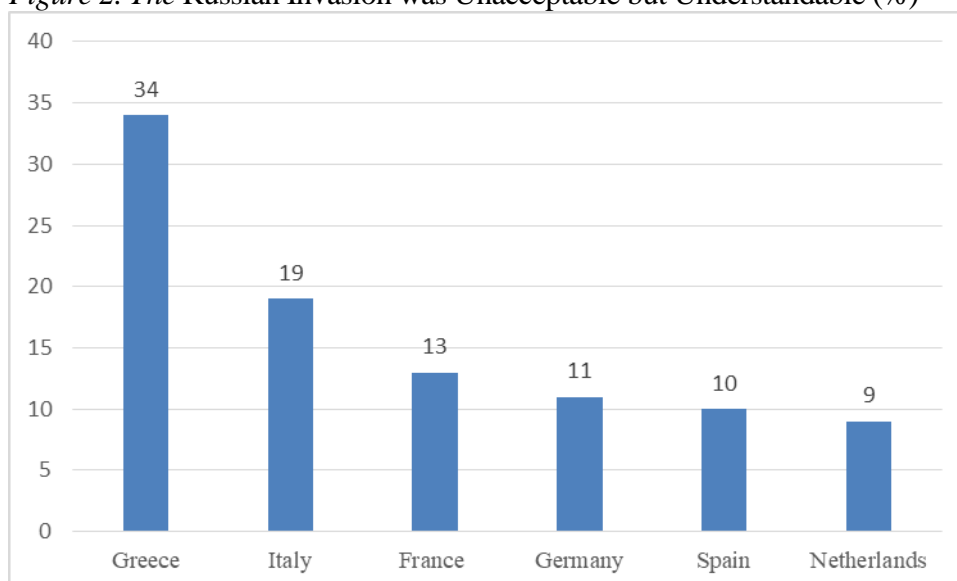
Source: Politico (<https://www.politico.eu/article/poll-show-european-back-ukraine-path-to-eu-membership/#>)

Figure 2 shows that 34% of Greeks justified the Russian invasion even though they consider it unacceptable. I guess the difference of the 6% from the finding reported in Figure 1 can be interpreted that this portion of the Greek public opinion not only considered the invasion understandable, but acceptable as well. The way that the question is posed makes it difficult to interpret the responses. What do the 66% of the Greek public opinion think? Do they think that it is not understandable or that it is acceptable?

Table 1 is of greater interest because it reveals what is really in the back of the minds of most Greeks. The great majority of Greeks (58% in February and 63% in March) support the creation of an EU army. This is much higher than the ones who condemned the Russian-Belarus invasion. It is much higher than any other EU country. Why is this the case and for what purpose? This seems to contradict the previous finding, but it does not.

Almost all of the Greeks who favor an EU army would respond that they want such an army to protect Greece from a potential invasion from Turkey. They do not have Russia in mind, but Turkey. Nobody in Greece fears a Russian invasion as they do in all other countries, which are close to Russia and were part of the Soviet Union's sphere of influence.

Figure 2. The Russian Invasion was Unacceptable but Understandable (%)



Source: Politico (<https://www.politico.eu/article/poll-show-european-back-ukraine-path-to-eu-membership/#>)

Table 1. Support for a European Union Army (%)

	February 2022	March 2022
Greece	58	63
Italy	27	35
France	38	51
Germany	27	36
Spain	32	51
Netherlands	26	27

Source: Politico (<https://www.politico.eu/article/poll-show-european-back-ukraine-path-to-eu-membership/#>)

Even though the subject of this paper is not the public opinion of the EU countries, the results of the pollster show an apparent contradiction between condemnation and action. Countries like the Netherlands, for example, whose public opinion measurements show a strong condemnation of the Russian-Belarus invasion of 88% and 91% in the two figures, only 26% in February and 27% in March supported the establishment of an EU army, which presumably will protect the EU countries on the occasion of a Russian invasion. Rich in words, poor in action. These public opinion results should be used to explain the meaning of the phrase, “put your money where your mouth is”. Many EU countries cannot find their mouth when it comes to money. They expect the US taxpayers to pay for the protection of their democracy and freedom.

If the media echoes people’s public opinion, as I think they do, then one should expect, on average, a pro-Ukrainian Greek stance on this war. Of course, given the divisiveness of the Greek public opinion, then many Greek newspapers and other media which are available in Greece today will represent all possible views on the issue. In this paper, I concentrate on the most important ones, which is determined

solely by their popularity as measured primarily by their circulation numbers. Some surprising findings emerge even from a newspaper that is traditionally against whatever the US supports and stands for in the international arena.

The Quantitative Content Analysis

Three daily journals (*Kathimerini*, *TA NEA/TO VIMA* and *EFSYN*) are used in this paper's quantitative and qualitative content analysis. These newspapers represent the mainstream Greek public opinion broadly defined to cover the entire political spectrum, excluding the extreme right and the extreme left, which, in Greece is a relatively small percentage of the popular vote of less than 10%. The political parties representing these two extremes publish their own newspapers, but their circulation is very small, even smaller than their votes in parliamentary elections, because many of their supporters read the mainstream newspapers. In any case, these newspapers are the most popular in Greece. All of them have websites which are very popular, and two of them even have their own TV broadcasting stations, which, again, are widely viewed.

The "mainstream" is broadly defined to include all three political ideologies that have dominated Greek politics since the fall of the dictatorship in 1974. *Kathimerini* is a very popular daily newspaper which circulates every day except Mondays. This newspaper can be considered as representative of the right and the center-right political ideology. It circulates as a broadsheet, permitting the coverage of many more issues on its front page. The other two are tabloids.⁸ The newspapers *TA NEA & TO VIMA* represent the center and a part of the center left. *TO VIMA* is included because it is the Sunday version of the newspaper *TA NEA*, which circulates every day except Sundays. These two newspapers have their own very popular TV stations that devote many hours to news. The third newspaper is *EFSYN*, which represents part of the center-left and the left political ideology. It circulates every day except Sundays.

Table 2 reports data on the front-page coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict of the three Greek newspapers from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022. Not shown in the table is the frequency, which was increasing as the day of the invasion was approaching. *Kathimerini* has continuously covered the issue on the front page from 5 February 2022 until the day of the invasion (24 February 2022). *TA NEA* uninterruptedly covered the Russian-Ukrainian issue on its front page from the 3 February 2022 with one exception of 11 February 2022. However, even on that day, the newspaper was advertising a book of the Russian president's autobiography. Similarly, *EFSYN* had the issue covered on its front page from 14 February 2022 with only one exception, that of 19 February 2022.

⁸This distinction of the distribution of the newspapers between tabloids and broadsheet determines different news agendas. As Tumber & Palmer (2004, p. 81) put it, "The tabloid agenda is driven by hard news values, dictating a focus on the major facts of any set of events, with a low degree of analysis of related material but with a relatively strong focus on the main principles that drive policy, whereas the broadsheet agenda is also driven by a desire to present maximum possible background and analytic material." The evidence of this study does not reject their statement.

These different approaches in prioritizing the Russia-Ukraine issue are also reflected on the total front-page coverage reported in Table 2. During the December 2021-February 2022 period, *Kathimerini* published 69 issues. In 55 of them, or 80% of the total, the Russia-Ukraine issue was covered on the front page. The simple mentioning of the subject appeared in 48% of the total issues circulated during this period and 32% appeared as a headline, which, in many cases included a picture, attracting the interest of its readers. The newspaper *TA NEA* and its sister Sunday newspaper *TO VIMA* was published 84 times during this period, of which 13 were issues of the newspaper *TO VIMA*. The Russian-Ukrainian theme covered 57% of the front page of the two newspapers, both as simple news (36% of the total issues published) and as a headline (21% of the total number of issues). The newspaper *EFSYN* was published 71 times during this period. In 65% of them, the Russian-Ukrainian issue was not mentioned at all on the front page. Ten times out of 71 issues, the Russian-Ukrainian theme appeared as a headline and all were after the 14 February 2022, which includes the four days of the invasion. All these days were covered by the newspaper as headlines. However, this was true for all newspapers.

Table 2. General Front Page Coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian Issue from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022

Front page Coverage	Kathimerini		TA NEA & TO VIMA		EFSYN	
	Number of issues	%	Number of issues	%	Number of issues	%
No Mention	14	20	36	43	46	65%
Simple Mention	33	48	30	36	15	21%
Headline	22	32	18	21	10	14%
Total	69	100	84	100	71	100

Source: Author's calculations.

Another important issue is whether the Russian-Ukrainian conflict was linked to direct Greek interests. In this case, what was investigated was not only that the issue was covered on the front page, but Greece was explicitly mentioned. It did not include the general mentioning of the EU and/or NATO of which Greece is a member as well. Table 3 reports the number of times and the percentage of the front-page coverage of the issue with a specific reference to the Greek interest.

Table 3. Front Page Coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian Issue Mentioning Greek Interests from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022

	Total Issues	Mentioning Greek Interests (total)	Mentioning Greek Interests (%)
Kathimerini	69	14	17
TA NEA & TO VIMA	84	11	16
EFSYN	71	6	8

Source: Author's calculations.

The two newspapers –*Kathimerini* and *TA NEA/TO VIMA*—covered the issue emphasizing Greek aspects in 17% and 16% of the total issues respectively. These

low numbers are not so surprising because a general analysis of the entire content of the two newspapers –not reported in this paper—will show that *Kathimerini* has a broader global perspective in all its themes relative to other newspapers. This is also true for the Sunday newspaper *TO VIMA* even though it is a tabloid; their readership is different. *Kathimerini's* form of circulation as a broadsheet relative to the other two newspapers which are published as tabloids, explains the global perspective of its coverage. Similar evidence was reported by Tumber & Palmer (2004) for four British newspapers covering the war in Iraq. Furthermore, a more thorough analysis will show that even on the front page, *Kathimerini* publishes a commentary—a sort of editorial—which provides a more informative international perspective of any issue covered. During this period, I have identified 11 such editorials (actually 9 plus two very important comments with pictures), or 16% of the total issues, which were published on the front page and relate to the Ukrainian-Russian topic, with or without a Greek interest. These are briefly discussed in the next section of this paper.

The quantitative content analysis of the front pages of the newspapers has a qualitative dimension as well. When a newspaper decides not to cover the issue at all, it may be interpreted that the editors have decided that this issue is not important for the Greek public. After all, without coverage (a quantitative aspect), nothing can be said about the newspapers' stance on the issue (a qualitative aspect) apart from the obvious fact that there is no interest and other news were considered more important. With this in mind, the following section provides preliminary, but, I think, irrefutable evidence as of the three newspapers' stance on the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine.

The Qualitative Content Analysis

This section is devoted to the stance of the three newspapers on the issue of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. As mentioned in the previous section, *Kathimerini*, because of its type of broadsheet, provided a few commentaries; some will be analyzed in this section. It seems that this newspaper had the most informative coverage of the conflict, which a good conspiracy theory alleges is primarily due to its inside information.

If the full coverage of the issue is taken into consideration, the Russia-Ukraine conflict was more neutral and less controversial than other areas of political conflict in Greece. One possible explanation is that these three newspapers draw its readership from a wide ideological spectrum with ambiguous opinions about the issue. Even though it is very difficult to contain these newspapers into specific areas of interest, I may risk to say that, even though it is not so obvious to the average reader, *Kathimerini* echoed mostly the US point of view, while *TA NEA* & *TO VIMA* mostly reverberated the EU positions/stance on the issue and *EFSYN* mostly chose to ignore the issue altogether, even though in general, in all its political themes, the newspaper expresses an anti-US stance rather than a pro-Russian one.

The above qualitative analysis applied to the pre-invasion phase. Once the invasion took place, then all three newspapers were unequivocally against the

Russian-Belarus invasion. I analyze in detail how the invasion was covered by the three newspapers on their front pages the day after the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine. For all three newspapers, their first issue after the war circulated on Friday, 25 February 2022.

I will start with the newspaper of the left, the *EFSYN*, because it is of great interest how they covered the invasion. During the pre-invasion phase, the newspaper had an indifferent, slightly anti-US stance on the issue. My interpretation is that the newspaper—which appeals to many strands of the Greek intellectual left—has a general anti-war stance. This part of the public opinion believes—for whatever reason—all wars are initiated by the US. Russia would never dare to invade a European country and start a war in Europe.⁹ Again, for unexplained reasons they considered Russia as a pro-peace country. The newspaper was taken by surprise which might explain its strong condemnation of the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine.

One would have expected that the newspaper would play a blame game. Surprisingly, its front page totally and unequivocally criticized Russia without any strings attached to its position. On the top of its front page (see the appendix for the front page of the newspaper), it had in large capital font: ‘NO TO THE INVASION OF UKRAINE’ and then with lower case letters that Russia opened Pandora’s Box. It was also mentioned that all political parties of Greece condemn the invasion. It cites on the front page what the president of the Hellenic Republic said, along with the prime minister and the leader of the official opposition. All of them condemned the Russian invasion beyond any doubt. At the right of the front page, the newspaper printed four photographs from demonstrators in Russia, Germany, Greece and Portugal all with banners against the war. Also, on the front page there was reference to the military advancement of the Russian army; the economic sanctions to be imposed by the EU, the USA and Britain; the economic impact on the financial markets; the markets of energy and goods; and the antiwar demonstrations all over the world including in Russia itself. At the bottom of the front page the newspaper with capital large font wrote: ‘NO TO WAR.’ Contrary to the other two newspapers’ front pages which are presented below, *EFSYN* on the front page had no other issue but the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine. My interpretation of this strong reaction, as mentioned above, is that the newspaper in general is pro-peace and never expected that Russia would invade Ukraine. Most probably, the editors of the newspapers thought that the whole story was a usual US propaganda. Quite possible they felt somehow betrayed by this Russian action of violence and they showed it with strong front-page coverage.

⁹As a matter of fact, this interpretation squares well with my own conspiracy theory approach to this invasion. According to it, it is the US which prompted Russia to invade Ukraine. Prompting has two interpretations: a strong and a weak one. The strong alleges that the US and Russia are in full agreement as to the extent of this invasion. The victims will be the rest of the world. The weak version is that the US acted alone and tricked Russia into invading Ukraine. In this case, all countries of the world, including Russia, are the victims. The only winner will be the US. This presupposes that there are no accidents like a full-fledged nuclear war. A conspiracy theory is like a myth or a story. The only thing which is required is to have a good narrative and some elements of truth. It must have good and bad guys.

The other two newspapers presented the invasion extensively, but not exclusively (see the appendix for their frontpages). It was in their headlines and provided many analyses. It is of interest that both newspapers devoted space to discuss the economic implications of the invasion, emphasizing the impact on Greece's economy. Contrary to *EFSYN*, this shows a self-centered approach, i.e., a Greek economic perspective. Both newspapers condemned the Russian invasion, but again, not as strongly as the *EFSYN* newspaper. *Kathimerini* had a more extensive and analytical approach. Its broadsheet print permitted the publication of two analyses: a short one called "main article" and a larger one called "commentary". The short one used very soft language which argued that borders do not change using violence and that Greece, once again, should be on the right side of history and choose not to be neutral and rather align itself with its allies without explicitly mentioning them. There was not a direct reference to Russia, but a general statement that Greece's stance should be in accordance with international law.

The longer article on the front page had a stronger title, "geopolitical earthquake". This article also used moderate language, but is critical of both Russia and the US because the latter gave a bad example by supporting non-democratic regimes using force and invasions in the past. It concludes that Russia will be alone in this war and its economy cannot support its aspirations. Again, for a newspaper which many think take a pro-US stance, such a position on the first day of the Russian invasion comes as a surprise. The anti-US newspaper, *EFSYN*, had no mention of the US and did not play the blame game. On the other hand, the alleged pro-US newspaper, *Kathimerini*, blamed the US for its past for leaving a bad example for Russia to follow. On the other hand, the newspaper *TA NEA* does not seem to take a very strong position against the Russian invasion either. Instead, it chose to analyze what the economic and the military impact of the invasion will be.

In concluding the above content analysis of the front pages of the three newspapers, all of them condemned the Russian invasion. However, what comes as a surprise is the language and the focus used by each newspaper. One would have expected stronger language by the pro-government, pro-US newspaper, but instead it was the left-oriented newspaper of *EFSYN* which used stronger language. One explanation might be that a part of the Greek public supports Russia because of its historical and cultural ties with Greece. Most probably this readership is more conservative and traditional than the average Greek public. Thus, *Kathimerini* and *TA NEA* echoed this part of the Greek public opinion by choosing to use softer language in condemning the invasion. Nevertheless, all three newspapers had a clear anti-Russian message for their readers.

As mentioned above, *Kathimerini* published a series of commentaries on the front page during the December 2021-February 2022 period. The commentary of the next day of the war was analyzed above. The rest of this section is devoted to the other commentaries. Some of them were prophetic.

The first commentary of the period was published on 2 December 2021. This was written on the occasion of the Greek Prime Minister's visit to Russia on 8 December 2021. The article is well written and emphasized the economic relationships between Greece and Russia which, however, are subject to the political

relations between the West and Russia. It is of interest to note that this article cites the general secretary of NATO as saying that if Russia invades Ukraine, NATO will not intervene. Even if you do not plan to do it, you should not state it because gives the wrong (?) signal to Russia. It tells them that they can invade and there will be no military reaction from NATO. What was the purpose of this statement? Is it deterrence or encouragement?

The next commentary appeared on 15 December 2021. Again, it is repeated that there will be no military support for Ukraine if Russia invades. What comes next as a real surprise is what the commentary suggests: Ukraine should yield to some of Russia's demands. The article is devoted to one particular economic sanction, that of SWIFT, which the newspaper, very prophetically, suggests will be very damaging for Russia, but for Europe as well and will reinforce the US dollar. Thus, a good conspiracy theory suggests that if the invasion is good for US and bad for Russia and Europe, then the US has no interest in discouraging it.¹⁰

On 11 January 2022, the newspaper covered the meeting of the Russian and US deputy Foreign Ministers in Geneva. The Russian minister said that Russia does not plan an invasion. The newspaper comments that this creates a small window to diplomacy.

The next commentary appeared on the 12 January 2022 and was devoted to the role of the EU which, from an international political point of view, is very weak. As a result, and despite its strong economy, Europe is not seated at the same table as Russia and the US in the discussions of the future political architecture of Europe. The article blames Europe for not having a common foreign policy and its own military force. It appears that the invasion solved both problems. The EU developed a strong common foreign policy and the discussion now is about creating an EU army.

The next commentary was published on 20 January 2022. It dealt with the issue of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and how Russia wants to use it to serve its own political ambitions in the area. This split extends to the Ukrainian church because the Ecumenical Patriarchate recognized it as an autocephaly (independent) church, and thus has created political skirmishes which added to the discontent that some Greeks felt about Russia.

The next piece is not commentary but front-page coverage of the meeting of the Russian and US foreign affairs ministers. It was published on the 21 January 2022. The newspaper chose to emphasize that the US president's alleged statements that there are small- and large-scale invasions was misinterpreted. Somehow, this confirms a conspiracy theory that the US would not object a Russian invasion because this serves its own strategic interests as I explained in Papanikos (2022d).

¹⁰To take my conspiracy further from what I said in Papanikos (2022d), the US did not expect such fierce resistance from the Ukrainian people. They thought that everything would be over in a few days. As I said in my paper, US fears its own domestic public opinion, which now strongly opposes the Russian-Belarus invasion and asks US to act. Similar are the effects in other capitals of the western democratic world. The US government as well as the German government are in a very difficult position. If the Ukrainians did not resist, everything would have been much easier. Compare this with the Afghanistan.

The commentary of the 27 January 2022 is more philosophical and echoed something that has appeared in many analyses elsewhere in the western world. The difference between Russia and the US is a conflict of two completely different political worlds. It is a struggle between a system of autocracy and collectivism against a system of democracy and individualism. And the commentary concludes that it is from this prism that the Ukrainian crisis should be analysed. A very good commentary, but it is far away from the interests of the average reader of the newspaper.

The next commentary of the 10 February 2022 is devoted to the French president's visit to Russia. However, what is of interest is the announcement by US officials that Russia will invade Ukraine within the next two weeks. The next commentary on 17 February 2022 discusses the US prediction that Russia will invade Ukraine on the 16 February 2022 and concludes that predictions are risky to make. Another conclusion of the article is that whatever happens in Ukraine, both Russia and the US will emerge as winners.

The next two commentaries appeared over the next two days of the invasion, the 25 and 26 February 2022. The first was analysed above and the second is devoted to the refugee crisis.

The analysis of these commentaries which appeared on the front-page show that the pre-invasion stance was more neutral by *Kathimerini* than one would have expected. This is also true for the other two tabloid newspapers. In many cases they chose to ignore the issue. The actual invasion changed everything and all three newspapers unconditionally condemned the Russian-Belarus invasion. The same stance continued in the post invasion phase, but this is still ongoing and an analysis should wait until the invasion is over.

Conclusions

The analysis of the three Greek newspapers' front-page coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in the pre-invasion phase and the first day of the invasion reveals some unexpected observations. Firstly, all newspapers unequivocally condemned the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine. Secondly, the newspaper which usually echoes the left ideas in Greece and anti-US feelings used the strongest language to condemn the invasion. The other two newspapers, especially the one which is allegedly pro-US, used softer language and a sort of blame game on the US's past behavior of invading countries thus setting a bad example and essentially a 'go-ahead' message to Russia. My interpretation is that this was done to appease a conservative right-wing readership who still strongly values the historical and cultural ties with Russia. In other words, we condemn Russia but we do the same thing for the US. Then, it becomes a matter of principle and not a pro-Russian (anti-US) anti-Russian (pro-US) stance.

As this paper is part of a larger project, future research should look at the other mass media in Greece, especially the TV channels and the newspapers which express more extreme positions in favor of Russia. It would be of interest in the latter case if the readership of these newspapers increased after the invasion.

In addition, the dynamics of the shaping of the Greek public opinion should be researched. The Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine may mark the beginning of a permanent shift of the Greek public away from favoring a pro-Russian Greek foreign policy resulting to fostering even further the ties with the EU and US. There are many voices for a common EU policy when it comes to foreign policy, to the dependency on energy sources and to defense.

In the very long term, this invasion might make Europe great again. A United Europe, as I mentioned in Papanikos (2022c), is much stronger than Russia and in some aspects stronger than the US. What it lacks though is a political unity and a committed leadership. Unfortunately, in the modern world, a few Athenians and Thespians cannot fight for Europe as they did in the Battle of Marathon. Even in that battle the two city-states were fighting alone for all Greeks and Europeans alike. Today this would have been equivalent if Germany—the strongest nation in EU—was fighting to defend European values along with a small country, e.g., Greece. I think the commitment of Germany to spend more on military—actually more than what Russia is spending—and, given the superior German technology and industrial advancement, makes it more than capable of defending Europe. It does not need even the small country of “Thespians”, but Greece must play this role. It owes it first to itself and its glorious past. Most importantly it can play a leading role and is legitimized as no other country in the world to act in the name of democracy and freedom. The public opinion of the free world will follow as it seems that it follows now the heroic resistance of Ukrainian people. Historical Greece can show to the world that this war is not against Russia at all and of course not against Russian people, but it is a battle against a bad tyranny, a bad autocracy and a bad oligarchy. There are good tyrants, good autocrats and good oligarchs but I leave to examine this issue in a future research.

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APPENDIX: Front Pages of Newspapers

Front Page of Kathimerini on 25 February 2022

EISPRAXIS ΗΛΕΚΤΡΟΝΙΚΟΣ ΦΑΚΕΛΟΣ ΟΦΕΙΛΕΤΩΝ ΣΕΛΙΔΑ 24

Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ ΚΑΘΕ ΠΕΜΠΤΗ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ ΜΕ ΤΗΝ ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ 199-192 ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΑ ΦΥΛΛΑ ΜΕ ΤΗΝ «Κ» ΣΕΛΙΔΑ 8

Ο ΠΡΟΕΔΡΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΙΣΡΑΗΛ ΧΕΡΤΣΟΓΚ: Η ΣΧΕΣΗ ΜΑΣ ΕΝΔΥΝΑΜΩΝΕΤΑΙ ΣΕΛΙΔΑ 9

Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ
 Ημερήσια Πολιτική και Οικονομική Εφημερίδα

Ετος 103 ■ Αρ. φύλλου 30.054 ■ Ημερησίως: Γ. Α. Παύλος ■ ΑΘΗΝΑ, ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ 25 ΦΕΒΡΟΥΑΡΙΟΥ 2022 ■ www.kathimerini.gr ■ €1,20

Η πιο σκοτεινή ώρα της Ευρώπης

Ρωσική επέλαση προς το Κίεβο – Κυρώσεις από ΗΠΑ, Ε.Ε.

Πογκόμοσ σοκ προκάλεσε η χθυσινή αόκρυπτη εισβολή των ρωσικών δυνάμεων στην Ουκρανία, ενώ όλη η υψηλός αναταραχθεί μεχρι ποδ το κλημάσεις τις επικεκερίσεις ο Ρωσική Πρωτεύουσα. Αργά χτες το βράδυ η επίθεση συνεχίζεται σφαιρώντας τον κόσμο γύρω από το Κίεβο. Η διεθνής κατακραυγή ήταν σχεδόν αμέσως, με τον Αμερικανό πρόεδρο Τζο Μπάιντεν αλλά και τους γάιγκες της Ε.Ε. να ανακοινώνουν νέες κυρώσεις κατά της Ρωσίας. Ο Γάλλος πρόεδρος Εμανουέλ Μακρόν επικυρώνισε χτες με τον πρόεδρο Πούτιν, από τον οποίο ζήτησε τον τερματισμό των επικεκερίσεων. Την ίδια στιγμή κορυφώνεται η διεθνής ανησυχία για τις μακροπρόθεσμα γεωπολιτικές και οικονομικές συνέπειες της κρίσης, ιδιαίτερα στην Ευρώπη. Όλα ξεκίνησαν όταν τα ρωσικά εδάφησαν 5.05 π.μ. στο Κίεβο (και στην Αόλινα) και 5.05 στις Μόσχα. Ρωσικοί πύραυλοι άρπασαν να πλάτουν σεριά ουκρανικών πόλεων, ενώ λίγα λεπτά νωρίτερα ο Πούτιν έλεε απευθείας έκτακτο διάγγελμα προς το ρωσικό έθνος. Σελ. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 και 8



Πολίτες βρίσκουν καταφύγιο σε σταθμό του μετρό στο Κίεβο μετά την εκβολή των ρωσικών δυνάμεων στην Ουκρανία.

Φόβος στην Ελλάδα για τσουνάμι ακρίβειας και επιπτώσεις στον τουρισμό
Σελ. 5, 22, 23, 27, 28

- ΑΡΘΡΟΤΗΝ «Κ»**
- Πόλεμος και οικονομία**
Του Νίκου Βέττα Σελ. 5
 - «Πώς έκασο το τσεκ πν.»
Του Γιάννη Γουλιανού, σελίδα 2
 - «Ο κόσμος τρέχει, κομείς βομβές»... ΕΛΛΗΝες της Ουκρανίας μιλούν στην «Κ» Σελ. 4
 - Μέτι κρησ στα κρηματιότρια Σελ. 29
- ΑΡΘΡΟΤΗΝ «Κ»**
- ΚΩΣ ΤΑΣ ΥΦΑΝΤΗΣ**
Η Ελλάδα στην πραγματικότητα Σελ. 6
 - ΤΙΜΟΘΙ ΚΑΡΤΟΝ ΣΕ**
Η Ευρώπη θα αλλάξει για πάντα Σελ. 7
 - ΓΙΑΣΑ ΜΟΥΝΚ**
Οι διακίτες έρπον τις μέρες και έμπνευγ να προσποιούνται Σελ. 8

ΣΗΜΕΡΑ

ΜΕ ΚΟΚΚΙΝΟ ΔΑΝΕΙΟ
Επιδότηση έως €210 για ευάλωτα νοικοκυριά
 επίπτωση από 70 έως 210 ευρώ τον μήνα, ανάλογα με την οικογενειακή τους κατάσταση, θα μπορούν να λάβουν το εύλογο νοικοκυριά με κλειστό δώμα και σκεπάζει την πρώτη κατοικία. Το πρόγραμμα θα έχει διάρκεια 15 μηνών μέχρι να λησουργήσει ο φερέος, στον οποίο θα μπορούν να εκχωρήσουν την κατοικία και να δομηθούν ως ενυπόθετες. Σελ. 25

Πανεπιστήμια: Διαμαρτυρίες και ανησυχίες από την πλευρά των ΑΕΙ που ανησυχώνουν κομηλέτημ βροβρολογία προκαλεί η ολολογοποίηση των διαδικασιών τους με βάση ποσοτικές δείξεις για τον καταπολεμ του 20% της τωκτικής χρηματοδότησης. Σελ. 9

ΘΕΩΡΕΙΟ

Νέο δόγμα στο ΝΑΤΟ
Σελ. 2

Ανάλυση: Έως τον Ιούλιο του 2022 θα έχει ολοκληρωθεί η κατασκευή των αόλιανών εγκαταστάσεων του Πανεπιστημίου στην Βιτοκόλι. Σελ. 10

Αλέξανδρος Ισαρης: Πιθανόν ο Ισαρης και ο Γουλιανός, Αλέξανδρος Ισαρης, σε ηλικία 61 ετών, Πολιολογικής καλλιτεχνική, γενναίος από τον οποίον είναι το μνημείο του αόλιανού της Σάφου, τη μετάφραση των έργων του Ρίλκε και του Μπέριαντερ. Απολλόβητος επίσης με τη φωτογραφία, τον ποίηση, την αρχαιολογική και τη γραμματική.

Μήνυμα εμπροχής στις διεκδικήσεις Νέες υπερηφάνσεις από Τουρκία

Μήνυμα προς την Αόλινα ότι η ρωσική εισβολή στην Ουκρανία και η έντονη σύρραξη δεν μείνουν τις διεκδικήσεις της Αγκωρας στο Αόλινο αποτέλεσμα οι χθυσνές πιέσεις τουρκικών μαζικών πόλεων από άλλωνάες νταίες, μόλις πέντε ώρες μετά την έναρξη των εκκρούσεων στα ρωσικοουκρανικά σύνορα. Η Αόλινα παρακαλούμ με ψυχραμία αλλά και ετοιμότητα για συνεικόμενα τουρκικά κινεματοποιίες, στο πεδίο καθίας και παρτορά, μόλις λίγα 2 ώρες μετά τις διαδικασίες ελληνοτουρκικού διαλόγου. Σελ. 6



Ο Ελληνοαμερικανός με καταγωγή από τη Λήμνο Μόθου Μπυζάνος.

ΜΑΘΙΟΥ ΜΠΟΥΖΑΝΟΣ
Κυνηγός αρχαιοκαπιλών
 Ο βοηθός εισαγγελέας του Μαννάτη μιλάει στην «Κ»

«Ο υποθέσεις είναι σαν τα 4 πόδια μου», δεν μπορεί για τις ξεχωριστά. Γιατί κάθε αντικείμενο που το βρούκαμε, για κάποιο μικρό χρομό η για κάποιο χρομό, σημαίνει κάτι. Τα αντικείμενα δεν είναι αριθμοί, κάθε ένα από αυτά εκπροσωπεί έναν πολιτισμό, μια ιστορία... Μεί στην «Κ» ο βοηθός εισαγγελέας του Μαννάτη Μόθου Μπυζάνος με οροφή τον επαναπατισμό 25 ελληνικών αρχαιοκαπιλών που είχαν πέσει στα δίχτυα κυλοώμενων παρόμοιας διαδικασίας πολιτιστικών θησαυρών. Σελ. 15

ΚΥΡΙΟ ΑΡΘΡΟ
Με την πυξίδα της Ιστορίας

Το σούρου δεν αώδωνόθι δίο τις βίας. Αυτά την καθοδηγητική αρχή επιβόλων στην Ελλάδα η πίστη στο διεθνές δίκαιο, ο ιστορικός της προσανατολισμός αλλά και το άμεσο εθνικό συμφέρον. Με αυτό το όδομένο, η πρωτοφανούς βαναυσότητας προσέοία να κατανασθεί η κυριαρχία μιας ευρωπαϊκής χώρας δεν μπορεί να βρει την Ελλάδα σε θέση ολιότεροίτες. Η αντικερήμενη προσέοία πρέπει να ανακαταστεί. Και η χώρα διαθέτει την οδικά πόξίδα για να βρεθεί πάλι, με τους σημειώσεις της, στη οσοία πίστη της Ιστορίας.

ΣΧΟΛΙΟ | ΤΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΥ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΑΡΑ

Γεωπολιτικός σεισμός

Οι τεκτονικές πλάκες της Ιστορίας κινούνται. Ουδείς γνωρίζει τι μέγεθος, το βάθος και τη διάρκεια του σεισμού που προκαλεί η χθυσνή εισβολή της Ρωσίας στην Ουκρανία. Το σούρου είναι ότι ο κόσμος μας αλλάζει ριζικά. Η θα δοίσει την ενίσχυση του συστήματος διεθνούς διακαβέρισης, και την αναδιάρθρωση της Ρωσίας (και, αντιστίως, την ενοθετέρωσή της ως μεγάλου, δύναμης) ή μπόλινουμε σε εποική απόλυτης, μρευστότητας και κενόνοια, κυρία γνώμης και κανόνες. Η 24η Φεβρουαρίου 2022 θα είναι η ημερομηνία ενός αλλολογοκού κελκιμένου, όπου οι κενάρες κλάρες διατηρούν μια κορημία με το δόλο, απίστευτα τη ρόλο και ούσε διασποράσαν σε ομπηναία ούτιτητα. Όταν μια μαρτυρική και μόνιμο μέλος του Ταρβόλου Ασηολογίας του ΟΗΕ ενοβόλλες σε γενοκίον κλάρα,

με επικερήμενα που αποσκοπών περροσάομο παρά να πε είναι τον δίο της πληθυσμώ παρά τη διεθνή κανόνια, απολοκότι ευθείας το διεθνές ούτιομε διακαβέρισης, και οι κλάρες ούτιομε μαρτυρική που ελελίσθησαν μετά τον Β' Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο. Ο Ρώσος πρόεδρος γνωρίζει ότι η πράξη του μπορεί να ανατίσει τις πλάες, τις κλάρες, απίστευτα απίστευτα ούτιομε ανατιθέμει με «οκρυότερες συνέπεις απ' όσες ούτιμε ποιασεί στην Ιστορία απ' όσες. Έλασζα να με οκούοι». Είναι σίπεές ότι δεν υπάρχει επιστροφή στον κόσμο που γνωρίζουμε. Η η διεθνής κοινότητα θα ούσιε φραβέλι για να σταματήσει να περλοδο πατόλας και βαρβαρότητας, όπου όποιο κλάρα μπορεί να καταποπά το διεθνές δίκαιο ως βόρος των

οδονάτων. Την τελευταία φορά που επικερήμενα τέτοιες συνέπεις, η Ευρώπη οδηγώθηκε στο 1939. Οι τελευταίες δεκαετίες δεν ερημώον αποδομώ. Η ΝΗΑ ούσιε έδωσαν το κακό παρόδε ήμα με ούτιομας κινώσε, ονοδύθησαν αυτοκίονα κούθεσπια σε πολλές κλάρες, η φακέλι ύθεμα δημοκρατία ορηβέτιβιτα έίνονα, ούοθενοβόρθηκε ο ΟΗΕ. Η καταπορφή, όμως, δεν είναι δε δορηνό. Ο Πούτιν αντιμετώπιζει δύο ούσιε βλάτια ερημώοι: η κλάρα του (με πληθυσμώ 144 εκατ. και ΑΕΠ 1,5 τριλ. δολάρια) δεν είναι παντοδύναμο: η μόνιμο κλάρα που θα μπορούσε να τον σπαρθεί, η Κίνα, έχει επενδύσει στις ούσιε κλάρες ούσιε βλάτια και ούσιε βλάτια. Με τις ΗΠΑ και την Ε.Ε. να ούσιε ούσιε, με την Κίνα να κατόπει το δίο της συμπερρω, ο Πούτιν –παράτι επικινώνας– θα είναι ρινός.

Επιστροφή στα γραφεία

Στα φωτογραφία ενοβόλλες η επινδύναία γράμφο Ζεφφένες με έδρο το Μαννάτη. Τα γραφεία έχουν περροσάομο την ίδω πληροπία με ούτιο που είναι κατό την κλάρα πριν από την πανδημία, και μάλιστα στις πλέον πολιτισμικές ημέρες, και ούσιε προσημώον δυο κλάρα από την ημερο που οι περροσάομες ημερομηνίες επεκαρήμεκε, επεβόλλαν ούσιε εργαζομένους τους την τελεργρατία, ερημώοις της πανδημίας. Ερημώοι, πολλοί εργαζομένους έφεραν οι κλάρα τις ημερομηνίες στο γραφείο. Εκτός από την όρεση όσον αφορά την ελελίσθη της μηχανομακίς κρημίας, μεγάλο μέρος του εργατικού δυνάμωμο έχει ερημώομει ή έχει υνίστασι και, κατό ούσιε, είναι πιο οσορικός. Σελ. 11

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ΕΥΡΩ 1,30. ΑΡΙΘΜΟΣ ΦΥΛΛΟΥ 1.338

ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ 25 ΦΕΒΡΟΥΑΡΙΟΥ 2022

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ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ ΠΟΙΝΗ

25 ΜΗΝΕΣ ΦΥΛΑΚΗ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΝ ΣΑΒΒΙΔΗ

ΟΜΑΔΑ

ΤΟ ΣΑΒΒΑΤΟ 26 ΦΕΒΡΟΥΑΡΙΟΥ ΤΑ ΝΕΑ ΣΑΒΒΑΤΟΚΥΡΙΑΚΟ



ΤΑ ΝΕΑ



ΜΕΣΩ ΧΕΡΤΣΟΓΚ ΤΟ ΜΗΝΥΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΙΣΡΑΗΛ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ

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- Ποιοι δεν θα δουν καμία αλλαγή
- Τα νέα κλιμάκια και οι συντελεστές

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ΟΔΟΣ ΠΕΙΡΑΙΩΣ
Η ιστορία ενός άστεγου βιβλιοπώλη
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Τα τραγούδια μιας ζωής
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Ο ΚΩΣΤΑΣ ΟΝΙΣΕΝΚΟ ΓΡΑΦΕΙ ΑΠΟ ΤΟ ΚΙΕΒΟ «Κύριε, προστάτεψε τα παιδιά μας»



ΟΥΚΡΑΝΙΚΟ

ΤΑ 2+1 ΣΕΝΑΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΠΟΜΕΝΗΣ ΜΕΡΑΣ

Τι φέρνει η εισβολή

• Γιατί ο Πούτιν άναψε το φιτίλι εισβάλλοντας στην Ουκρανία • Ο κίνδυνος ενός γενικευμένου πολέμου και η έμμεση απειλή για χρήση πυρηνικών • Η ανατροπή της κυβέρνησης στο Κίεβο, ο πρώτος στόχος του Κρεμλίνου • Σχέδιο του προξενείου στη Μαριούπολη για απομάκρυνση των ελληνών ομογενών • Πόσο μπορούν να πιέσουν τη Ρωσία οι σκληρές κυρώσεις ΕΕ και ΗΠΑ • Μπάνιεντ: Θα απαντήσουμε αν...

ΚΡΑΧ ΣΤΙΣ ΑΓΟΡΕΣ, ΣΥΝΑΓΕΡΜΟΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΘΗΝΑ



Αγορά	Αλλαγή
Λονδίνο	-3,88%
Παρίσι	-3,83%
Φρανκ-φούρτ	-3,96%
Μιλάνο	-4,15%
Αθήνα	-6,42%

Καλαμπόκι: -5,00% (\$9,3475/bushel), -5,70%

ΓΡΑΦΟΥΝ ΚΑΙ ΣΧΟΛΙΑΖΟΥΝ Κ. ΓΙΑΝΝΑΚΙΔΗΣ, ΕΛΕΝΗ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΟΔΗΜΟΥ, Π.Κ. ΙΩΑΚΕΙΜΙΔΗΣ, Δ. ΚΑΛΤΣΙΩΝΗΣ, Η.Α. ΚΑΝΕΛΛΗΣ, Γ. ΚΑΝΕΛΛΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, Λ. ΚΑΡΑΓΕΩΡΓΟΣ, Σ.Τ. ΚΑΣΙΜΑΤΗΣ, ΧΡ. ΚΟΛΩΝΑΣ, ΜΥΡΤΩ ΛΙΑΛΙΟΥΤΗ, Γ.Π. ΜΑΛΟΥΧΟΣ, Δ.Ν. ΜΑΝΙΑΤΗΣ, ΜΙΧ. ΜΗΤΣΟΣ, ΤΖΙΝΑ ΜΟΣΧΟΛΙΟΥ, ΝΑΤΑΣΑ ΜΠΑΣΤΕΑ, ΚΙΤΤΥ ΞΕΝΑΚΗ, ΚΑΡΟΛΙΝΑ ΠΑΠΑΚΩΣΤΑ, Γ.ΧΡ. ΠΑΠΑΧΡΗΣΤΟΣ, Γ. ΠΑΠΠΑΣ, Γ. ΠΑΥΛΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΑ ΠΡΑΞΙΑ, Ι.Κ. ΠΡΕΤΕΝΤΙΣ, ΠΕΡΙ ΡΑΓΚΟΥΣΗ, Γ. ΣΙΑΚΑΝΤΑΡΗΣ, ΔΗΜΗΤΡΑ ΣΚΟΥΦΟΥ, ΕΛΕΝΗ ΣΤΕΡΓΙΟΥ, Ν. ΦΙΛΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ Σ. 2, 5-17, 21, 36-37, 54, 56

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Rolling Stone Greece
Ενα τεύχος γυναίκα υποθέσει!

- Εξι ανερχόμενες Ελληνίδες μουσικοί
- Ο φεμινισμός στην pop
- Η Πρόεδρος της Δημοκρατίας Κ. Σακελλαροπούλου γράφει για τους δίσκους που τη σημάδεψαν

48 ΣΕΛΙΔΕΣ Νησίδες
ΚΡΥΦΑ ΧΑΡΤΙΑ Πώς το ΕΑΜ έσωσε τον ραβίνο της Αθήνας

Η ΕΦΗΜΕΡΙΔΑ ΤΩΝ ΣΥΝΤΑΚΤΩΝ

Παρασκευή 25 Φεβρουαρίου 2022
Έτος 10ο / Αρ. φύλλου 2.741
Ευρώ 1,50

«Οποιοι ελεύθερα συλλογάζαι, συλλογίζαι καλά» Ρήγας-1790

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ΑΝΕΞΑΡΤΗΤΗ ΣΥΝΕΤΑΙΡΙΣΤΙΚΗ ΑΠΟΓΕΥΜΑΤΙΝΗ ΕΦΗΜΕΡΙΔΑ

09/02/2022

ΟΧΙ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΙΣΒΟΛΗ ΣΤΗΝ ΟΥΚΡΑΝΙΑ

Ο ΠΟΥΤΙΝ ΑΝΟΙΞΕ ΤΟ ΚΟΥΤΙ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΝΔΩΡΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΥΡΩΠΗ

ΜΙΑ ΑΝΑΣΑ ΑΠΟ ΚΙΕΒΟ,
Χάρκοβο και Μαριούπολη
τα ρωσικά τεθωρακισμένα

ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΕΣ ΚΥΡΩΣΕΙΣ
από τους «27» της Ε.Ε.,
Μπρίντεν και Τζόνσον

«ΒΟΜΒΑ ΔΙΑΣΠΟΡΑΣ»
και στις αγορές χρήματος,
ενέργειας και εμπορευμάτων

ΑΝΤΙΠΟΛΕΜΙΚΕΣ ΑΝΤΙΔΡΑΣΕΙΣ
σε πολλές χώρες αλλά και στη Ρωσία

ΠΟΛΥΣΕΛΙΔΟ ΑΦΙΕΡΩΜΑ
ΡΕΠΟΡΤΑΖ,
ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΕΣ,
ΑΝΑΛΥΣΕΙΣ ΚΑΙ
ΑΝΤΑΠΟΚΡΙΣΕΙΣ

ΣΥΣΣΩΜΟΣ Ο ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΟΣ ΚΟΣΜΟΣ ΚΑΤΑΔΙΚΑΖΕΙ ΤΗ ΡΩΣΙΚΗ ΕΙΣΒΟΛΗ

Κατερίνα Σακελλαροπούλου:
Το Κρεμλίνο θέτει σε κίνδυνο την ασφάλεια σε όλο τον κόσμο

Κ. Μητσοτάκης:
«Καταδικάζουμε την ωμή βία που θα σκοτώσει πολλούς αθώους»

Αλ. Τσίπρας:
«Καταδικάζουμε απερίφραστα την εισβολή της Ρωσίας και την αναθεωρητική λογική στην οποία βασίζεται»

ΣΕΛ. 9-18, 40

ΟΧΙ ΣΤΟΝ ΠΟΛΕΜΟ



AP PHOTO

War Journalism Where There's No War: Critical Discourse Analysis of Russo-Ukraine Conflict in Pakistani Elite National Press

By Muhammad Tarique & Lubna Shaheen[±]*

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan (PMIK) visited Russia in the wake of news coverage of the Russian military escalation against Ukraine on Feb 24, 2022. His and all other diplomatic efforts however failed and the war was started. For conflict resolution mass media boundaries, the wars could be managed (if not avoided) by preemptively mediating through Peace Journalism (PJ) model. Scholars hold that by applying the PJ framework of peace-war discourses in news media, conflicts can be averted from their violent outcomes (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Shaw et al., 2011; Tarique & Shaheen, 2022), and then manage for peaceful resolution (Hoffmann, 2014). Furthering the mediatization of wars, more methodological fronts were introduced which hold that PJ resulted well by supplementing it with critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Ottosen, 2010; Lynch & McGoldrick 2013; Shaheen & Tarique 2022). Due to the importance of the Russo-Ukraine conflict, the elite Pakistani national press had attracted vast coverage. The research investigates the journalism stances taken by the mainstream Pakistani press before the start of the Russo-Ukraine war. Selection of one month period till the start of the war found that Pakistani national journalism didn't follow the rules of conflict resolution emancipated by the PJ. On the CDA fronts, and in line with the best orientation of the PJ, the research suggested that overall War Journalism (WJ) syntax was ensued with meaningless hyperboles juxtaposed with local and global semantics. The time period was selected to give allowance of the major assumption of PJ theory which advocates preemptive intervention by journalists.

Keywords: mediatized Russo-Ukraine War, PJ theory, peace-war discourses, violence, CDA, elite Pakistani national press, (ex)Prime Minister Imran Khan

Media, Public Opinion and Implications

The aim of print media is to inform but the way they inform the public is questionable. Because of the pervasiveness of the media's portrayal, they assume the position of “public political discourse in the form of a dialogue and generate replies from others” (Mehan et al., 1990). Mass media Conflict resolution researchers believe that media more often become the mass organ to accentuate and augment conflicts which resultantly divide opinion and cause-specific spheres of public opinion giving birth to dominant voices over ‘other’ and becoming provocative for ‘them’ (Tarique, 2017). The research also holds that absence of ‘weak’ voices representing ‘others’, either in minority or otherwise, takes such a

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stand most of the time against peaceful rebirth and regeneration of ideas (Tarique, 2017). For example, the evolution of nuclear conversation and the US nuclear policy in the 1980s were debated in such a syntax due to which the Ronald Reagan government's discourses of nuclear deterrence lost the nuclear control narrative which consequentially undermined the regime's deterrence and further opening of new media discourses which resulted in the dangerous proliferation of nuclear arsenals (Mehan et al., 1990).

Wars are horrible, and the Russia-Ukraine war is no exception. In wars, truth is the main casualty, where the journalists' restraint to counter-check multiple resources (Pavlik, 2022). In the Pakistani setting of journalism, the pursuit of truthful reporting is increasingly compromising due to the lack of basic journalism orientation, relevance and spirit, the literacy level of journalists and their outdated (re)sources adaptation (Tarique, 2017), the argument has also been iterated in the research which holds that the journalists do not investigate the stories and usually become the organ of the state (Tarique & Shaheen, 2017). Turning to the other side and since restrictions of advocacy model(s) for journalists (like PJ) (Appendix), Artificial Intelligence based software journalism has been trying to evolve the options with inter-faculty involvement of algorithmically generated software journalism to avoid propaganda and fake news (Tarique, 2022).

Critical Discourse as a Framework of Analysis (CDA)

The CDA discussion expands on the (power) abuse, injustice, and inequality that result from it, as well as the emancipation of the whole belief system (ideology) (van Dijk, 1993). As an academic movement, CDA is a way of analyzing from a critical perspective and frequently centers on hypothetical ideas of force (power), belief system (ideology) and control (domination) (Baker et al. 2008). It discursively sees the text to find out the biasness, especially in the news reports and government communication. And if it comes together with PJ, a mere objective reporting of an event doesn't well conclude the reported event. For the PJ, "the text is an engaged and committed partner of the event, and doesn't see itself as a dispassionate and objective event; it is a form of intervention in social practice and social relationships" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Mass media since their larger impacts are the major carrier of powers and ideologies in their texts. Carrying the dominant political and ideological discourses bring opportunity, optimism, and hope for peace, whereas inappropriate violent discourses diminish trust-building among people and nation (Mandelzis, 2007). Taking Oslo Accord between Palestine and Israel as a case study, Shinar (2003) elucidates that "the use of inappropriate discourses bears negative consequences". How 'metaphors' in the news media language can kill, has also been elucidated in the pretext of the 2003 Iraq war, like 'Games of Saddam', 'the Patience of the White House', 'Making the Case' and 'Selling the Plan' etc. (Lule, 2004). Similarly, the word 'countdown' was used as a '*metaphor*' and assumed that the upcoming event of hitting Iraq was inevitable. Same as, '*hyperboles*' are extreme exaggerations "use to make a point valid" (van Dijk, 2005). The usage of hyperbole '*everywhere*- it is war everywhere'

is usually used for a single event, and ‘tricks- the alleged admission of force against the enemy’ are the CDA framework usually used in violent conflicts.

Historical Traces of the Ukraine-Russia Conflict

As a result of the dissolution of the United Soviet States of Republics (USSR) and the creation of Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1991 (Miller, 2017), Ukraine emerged as an independent state. Russia however was hesitant to give Ukraine an independent status because of its fertile soil, vast yields, and majority-Russian origin population (Qualls, 2009). The capital city of Ukraine, Kyiv was a part of Russia until the 9th century AD when war caused it to be split apart (Kuzio, 2019). But in the 13th century, Ukraine had been reclaimed during Katherine-the Great’s rule. Crimea, a territory of Ukraine, was also given to Ukraine by Khrushchev in 1954, but the USSR at the time never approved of it (Chatterjee, 2014).

Russia courted pro-Russian factions inside Ukraine after 1991. In the 1990s, Russia had driven the West out of Eastern Europe and established its rule in what it refers to as the “near abroad”⁶⁶. In 2014, Russia finally succeeded in establishing its titular government in Crimea, and it has since continued to attempt to support pro-Russian movements in the Eastern Ukrainian provinces of Luhansk and Donetsk (Kuzio, 2019). Since Russia’s invasion and occupation of Crimea in March 2014, the conflict has been rampant throughout Ukraine’s eastern regions (Gorbach, 2021).

Moscow recently moved to stop NATO’s further eastward expansion by filing two draft agreements on December 17, 2021. Additionally, it was meant to prevent the alliance from stationing troops along Russia’s borders or deploying long-range weaponry in countries in Europe that would pose a danger to Russia. Moscow requested that NATO revoke the 2008 summit declaration that suggested that Georgia and Ukraine might join the NATO alliance to achieve this. It should clearly announce that it will desist from further growth, especially in the post-Soviet space, and withdraw all troops stationed in Eastern Europe after May 1997. Moscow was violating both the European Security Charter and the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act (Richter, 2022).

In January 2022, the proposals were discussed bilaterally with the US in Geneva, and multilaterally with the OSCE and the NATO-Russia Council. Richter (2022) stated the West demanded that Moscow withdraw its troops from the Ukrainian border after rejecting Moscow’s requests for a halt to NATO expansion.

Russia however had maintained that it is not planning an invasion and that Western countries are jeopardizing its security as NATO approaches its borders. The Kremlin has come up with a list of security demands, including guarantees that Georgia and Ukraine won’t join NATO and a cancellation of some ex-Soviet states’ force deployments (Kibry, 2022).

In and around the situation discussed above, the present study frames the following question;

Q1. Which media discourses in terms of peace-war journalism are moved by the mainstream Pakistani National Press to portray the Russo-Ukraine War?

Methodology

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is used to explore an in-depth understanding of the Russo-Ukraine war portrayal (i.e., discourses) in Pakistani newspapers. The categories of the CDA, are lined-up with the categories defined. The research paper aims at finding out the 'construction of war when there was no war' with special reference to the PJ. Having a supervisory and advisory position in critical media research, PJ holds that conflicts should be seen and intervened preemptively- a framework to be followed by the journalists.

Table 1. *News Discourses*

US discourse (Including allies, as well as NATO)	<i>Biden orders nearly 3,000 US troops to Eastern Europe to counter Russia (WJ)</i> [the US and NATO escalation]
UN discourse	<i>Deeply worried- UN chief says time to defuse Ukraine crisis; "Abandoning diplomacy for confrontation is not a step over a line, it is a dive over a cliff (PJ)</i>
Pakistani discourse	<i>Pakistan is not part of any bloc- PMIK (PJ)</i> [If the media support Russia or any one party in the conflict (WJ)] [If media mediate among parties talking all sides (PJ)]
International discourse (Outside and Russian Bloc)	<i>Turkey ready to accommodate a flood of refugees (WJ)</i> <i>China urges the U.S not to go further down the wrong path (WJ)</i> [Taking one side in the conflict]
Ukrainian discourse	<i>Ukrainian president asks for western support (WJ)</i> [Western support is needed against Russia]
Russian discourse	<i>Russia rejects claims it was responsible for the cyberattack on Ukraine (PJ)</i> <i>Russia would ensue war if concerns are not addressed: (WJ)</i> [Concerns are always addressed through peaceful means and dialogues rather by ensuing war]

Selection of News

Four major English language dailies are taken for their respective coverage of the Russo-Ukraine war.

Express Tribune

The second largest and most popular Pakistani English national daily. The date-based archive data algorithm of the newspaper from <https://tribune.com.pk/listing/2022-02-01> was taken from 1st to 25th February 2022.

Pakistan Today

The third largest Pakistani English national daily. The data was taken from <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/01/> from February 1, 2022 to February 25, 2022 archive.

Dawn

The leading English national daily of Pakistan. Date-wise and page-wise news data was taken from <https://www.dawn.com/newspaper/front-page/2022-02-01> from February 1, 2022 to February 25, 2022 archive.

The News

It's a leading group's English national daily, <https://e.thenews.com.pk/lahore/01-02-2022/page1>. The algorithm of the site of daily doesn't permit searching within the e-paper. The data was taken from February 1, 2022 to February 25, 2022.

Analysis***US Discourses*****Fomenting War Hysteria without War**

In one of the descriptions of the newspaper, “**US says war appears imminent**”¹ and spread of war to other flash points “... if war between the US and Russia doesn't **materialise** then perhaps Iran or N Korea will **spark something similar**”². Another news story ‘*semantically moves*’ the failed diplomacy “...**constant vigilance** is needed ... **timeline and growing number** and capability of **Russian forces close to Ukraine** could suggest the window for **diplomacy is shutting**³ ...”. Well before the start of the war, and when the diplomatic efforts were being deployed to stop the clash, the news media were framing to immediately start the war.

Pakistani national press also portrays such ‘*moves of strategic persuasion*’ which meaningfully blurred the idea of the start of the war. Incidents are ‘*metaphorically*’ portrayed and ‘*hyperbolically*’ exaggerated (**millions of refugees** without war) with ‘*credible source*’ (the US officials) to ‘*manipulate their falsehood*’ “**A full invasion would also prompt the flight** of **millions** of refugees

¹<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/17/us-says-war-appears-imminent-after-shelling-on-ukraine-front-line/>

²<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2341986/is-a-world-war-coming>

³<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342262/russian-forces-at-70-of-level-needed-for-full-ukraine-invasion-us-officials-say>

and IDPs in Europe, Washington **believes**"⁴. 'Strategic persuasive moves' by quoting American satellite reports as hardcore evidence "Russia has mobilised **more than** 100,000 forces along its borders with Ukraine and is **also in the process** of shifting **heavy weapons** to create ground for an **all-out** invasion. ... **prove that** President Putin will play **such a big** gamble ..."⁵.

'Persuasive war moves' are frequent and 'semantically' deployed in many 'localised syntactic structures' from the headline, to the body text and within, to the start and the finish lines in news reports. For the syntax-semantics relatives, it holds that 'the sentence meaning (syntax) is a function of the meaning of its parts (semantic)' (van Dijk, 1980). On examining the persuasive techniques used to support the power in the US-Iraq war, to Fairclough (1998), 'Linguistic manipulation is consciously used in a devious way to control the others' (p. 537). Similarly, the newspaper claims the power axis (a shift from the US to Europe) as legitimate in its moves (either wrong or right both), the former ambassador of Pakistan to the US, UK and UN said "French officials **claimed** the talks had moved the crisis towards **de-escalation** with Putin agreeing to continue talks in a **spirit of compromise**"⁶.

The US is responsible for provoking war as "US, India, Australia and Japan meet to deepen bulwark against China"⁷ and fomenting war hysteria in several news items, such that "Russia slams U.S. '**hysteria**' about 'imminent invasion of Ukraine'"⁸. "Moscow denies any such plans and has accused the West of **hysteria**"⁹, and "Ukraine crisis — and Russia, China and the US; While Western media builds war **hysteria**; the Ukrainian government and public downplay the threat of Russian invasion"¹⁰.

Russian Danger - Ground for Carrotting and Threat for Sticks

The carrot and stick policy is seen in US discourses of coverage, also the dangerous Russia. The '*persuasive peace-war mixed moves*' as well as '*undesirable outgroup but still-it-counts*' are seen "... Blinken **stressed** that Washington remained open to finding a **diplomatic solution, but warned** of a 'united, swift and severe' response if Russia does invade Ukraine. ..." and Russia is more dangerous than the US "... Blinken and Lavrov, both veteran diplomats who have encountered each other for years, Blinken is known for his **unflappable calm** and Lavrov for his **mordant intensity**"¹¹ ...". In the news title and the adjoining text "US, Russia hold talks on Ukraine war fears ... **US increasingly worried** that **Russia will invade despite warnings** of severe reprisals ..."¹², and at another

⁴Ibid.

⁵<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343226/dangerous-russia-ukraine-standoff> .

⁶<https://www.dawn.com/news/1674949/russia-may-use-surprise-pretext-to-attack-ukraine-us>.

⁷<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/11/us-india-australia-and-japan-meet-to-deepen-bulwark-against-china/>.

⁸<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/13/russia-slams-u-s-hysteria-about-imminent-invasion-of-ukraine/>.

⁹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1674949/russia-may-use-surprise-pretext-to-attack-ukraine-us>.

¹⁰<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342798/ukraine-crisis-and-russia-china-and-the-us>.

¹¹<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/927038-us-russia-hold-talks-on-ukraine-war-fears>

¹²Ibid.

moment, it is portrayed as “**Russia**, which already fuels a **deadly insurgency** in **eastern Ukraine** that has **killed more than 13,000** people since 2014, **demanding guarantees** that NATO never admit the former Soviet republic in Moscow’s old sphere ... US has declared the idea a **non-starter** and **accused Russia** of **undermining** Europe’s post-Cold War order ...”¹³.

The use of **surface structures** in the news text where the text carries a different meaning than the actual meaning “PRC (Peoples Republic of China) has been a major partner in **reducing the pain of the US/Western sanctions** against Russia after the war in Georgia (2008) and Crimea (2014)”¹⁴.

US (Russia)-THEM (the US, Allies and NATO) Binary

A specific us-them binary where Russia (as vigorous US) versus the US, allies and NATO (as weaker THEM) is found “the **US/Western media builds the war hysteria**; the **Ukrainian govt besides European powers** like Germany, **downplay the threat** of an ‘imminent’ Russian invasion ... invasion would ostensibly solidify a **fractured NATO**; ... invasion keeps **US/NATO** guessing and somewhat **divided** in response”¹⁵. The situation repeats where the **US and the allies (them)** have been portrayed as ignorant & weaker. Comparing the present situation with the US withdrawal from Afghanistan without convenient facts, the PMIK has added that the Americans did not learn from Afghan history, “The whole **mission of the US** in Afghanistan was ‘**based on a false premise**”¹⁶. The US attack would “... expose **differences** within the **Western coalition** ... intensified **East-West polarisation** ... tensions **soaring to a new high** ... **US-led NATO countries and Russia** ... **President Vladimir Putin**, witnessed **several waves** of NATO’s eastward **expansion**, has **now** drawn a **red line** insisting on a **halt to more expansion** ... regards this as a **threat to Russia’s security** and **intrusion** into its ‘**sphere of influence** ... Pentagon announced the **deployment of 3,000 troops** to Poland, Germany and Romania in **addition** to around **8,000 troops** already on **standby**”¹⁷. It exposes the newspaper construction of the US’s wrongful intention of *interfering Russian region*.

At another time, the US alone is blamed responsible for the crisis, and the West is all exonerated and ask for diffusing the tension “... the **world will be dragged** into the **old cold war era** if the issue is not resolved ... France’s Emmanuel **Macron** to defuse tensions **reflects Europe’s preference** to avert conflict by diplomatic means. Macron’s **addressing Russia’s security concerns** ... **struck a different note from Washington**, which has continued to insist that a **Russian invasion is imminent** ... **growing East-West mistrust** and confrontation ... **world** increasingly riven into **two competing blocs**”¹⁸. ‘*Juxtaposing*’ the irresponsible role of the US here is attached with the Afghan crisis by not pouring aid to Afghanistan “American Aid: “After 40 years, in an attempt to punish the

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342798/ukraine-crisis-and-russia-china-and-the-us>.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342896/pm-imran-dismisses-west-suspicion-about-cpec>.

¹⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1675009>.

¹⁸Ibid.

Taliban government, a huge humanitarian crisis is unfolding in Afghanistan. If Afghanistan descends into chaos because of the [Western] sanctions, as its 75% economy depends on foreign aid, this will be the **biggest man-made human disaster**”¹⁹.

West Needs Russia

But at the same time, without energy-rich Russia, the West can't serve its lifeline. The news highlights such concerns in terms of energy needs as, “**35% of European gas needs are met by Russia ... make a potent threat**”²⁰.

The US is Weak

The discourses are found where the US has been portrayed as weak “Biden battles accusations of ‘weakness’ against US rivals”²¹, wrong “China urges the U.S. not to go further down the wrong path”²², looser “Why big nations lose small wars: A case study of the US-Afghan conflict; The USA fell into known traps”²³.

UN Discourse

From the EU, to the SAARC and the ASEAN, the blocs are everywhere considered less likely to avert crises. Within the SAARC, Pakistan herself has been the facing the victim in Kashmir dispute. Despite the UN resolutions on Kashmir otherwise, the ‘popular’ Indian Bollywood industry keeps drumming up broader war journalism to dumb the reality (Tarique & Shaheen, 2021).

The War between West and Russia on Ukraine

It was not until Feb 15, 2022, that the top world forum, the UN was given coverage regarding the implications of the standoff²⁴, the body text of the news revolves around the West and Russia without taking responsibility by the UN itself. Not a single rule, or law has been formulated (according to media) to divert the any such war(s). The “UN chief Antonio Guterres warned that ... time to defuse tensions between Russia and the West over the Ukraine crisis ... de-escalate actions ... Calling for an end to incendiary rhetoric ... heightened tensions ... increased speculation ... potential military conflict in Europe ... Russia's top diplomat Sergei Lavrov and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dymtro Kuleba ... Guterres remained convinced that Russia will not invade Ukraine”²⁵.

¹⁹<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342896/pm-imran-dismisses-west-suspicion-about-cpec>.

²⁰<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342798/ukraine-crisis-and-russia-china-and-the-us>.

²¹<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/03/biden-battles-accusations-of-weakness-against-us-rivals/>.

²²<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/07/china-urges-u-s-not-to-go-further-down-the-wrong-path/>.

²³<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/08/why-big-nations-lose-small-wars-a-case-study-of-the-us-afghan-conflict/>.

²⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343597/deeply-worried-un-chief-says-time-to-defuse-ukraine-crisis>.

²⁵Ibid.

The category also mirrored in multiple news items and opinions, such as “Russia’s military build-up near Ukraine is growing, not shrinking, warns West; Russia’s defense ministry said its forces were pulling back after exercises in southern and western military districts”²⁶, “Biden to Putin: Step back from the brink of war with Ukraine; US and NATO allies are prepared for whatever happens: Biden”²⁷, “payoff from Russia-US clash on Ukraine: Erdogan”²⁸, “Ukraine crisis: The West Versus Russia”²⁹, “Diplomatic flurry to avert Russia-NATO clash over Ukraine”³⁰.

Pakistani Discourse

Pakistani elite press although couldn’t have a reasonable shopping list to suggest to stop the PMIK to visit Russia during the war, the earliest warning and alerts by the US regarding the Russo-Ukraine war were also played down “the US spoke the issue to the PMIK before his visit”³¹.

The US Hinders Pakistani Needs

“Pakistan is a gas deficient country ... our North-South Gas pipeline has suffered a **delay** because of the **US sanctions** ... we were negotiating for the construction of the pipeline. ... lifting of sanctions on Iran will also help Pakistan get the cheapest gas.”³²

The ‘*syntax*’ reveals otherwise “Not aware of any oil deal with Pakistan, says Russian envoy”³², the ill-timing visit was still portrayed as to cater the Pakistani needs. News portrayed the PMIK as ‘charismatic’ as both leaders agree to extend the meeting duration to ‘resolve every problem’ of Pakistan- mutual, friendly, bilateral, regional, economic relations, everything was on the slate, in an opinion title “... Ukraine crisis: Schedule of Imran-Putin meeting changed, **duration extended to 3hrs**”³³. The center stage agenda according to news discourses was ‘Russian petrol’ “Russia-Ukraine **conflict** may **jolt** Pakistan’s economy; Rising oil prices due to political tensions can have a devastating effect on growth prospects”³⁴. From ‘*global to their local semantics*’, discourses are conveyed “Ukraine crisis: Petroleum prices may rise by up to Rs7 per liter in Pakistan; ... Petrol price increases in Pakistan by Rs12.03”³⁵. On ‘February 15’, the government dropped a

²⁶<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343943/russias-military-build-up-near-ukraine-is-growing-not-shrinking-warns-west>.

²⁷<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343756/biden-to-putin-step-back-from-the-brink-of-war-with-ukraine>.

²⁸<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/02/erdogan-seeks-payoff-from-russia-us-clash-on-ukraine/>.

²⁹<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/05/ukraine-crisis-the-west-versus-russia/>.

³⁰<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/07/diplomatic-flurry-to-avert-russia-nato-clash-over-ukraine/>.

³¹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1676813>.

³²<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/968736-not-aware-of-any-oil-deal-with-pakistan-says-russian-envoy>.

³³Ibid.

³⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2341183/russia-ukraine-conflict-may-jolt-pakistans-economy>.

³⁵Ibid.

major bombshell on the people by **increasing** the price of **petrol by Rs12.03 per liter** due to an **increase in the prices** of crude oil in the **international market**. Moreover, according to (Baker et al., 2008) ‘*Concordance analysis*’ by ‘*juxtaposing*’ Afghan issue, China’s Winter Olympics side by side with the Western anti-Holy Prophet (PBUH) remarks, the national press attracts Afghans extra-favors, the “PM thanks Russian president for ‘emphatic’ statement against insulting Holy Prophet (PBUH)”³⁶. Giving extra care to the Afghan issue also to China attract a positive ‘*concordance*’ for Afghanistan and China whereas negative ‘*concordance*’ for the US “September last year, the two leaders had telephonically talked after the Taliban took control of Kabul in August in the wake of the **chaotic exit of the US-led foreign forces** from Afghanistan. ... PMIK and Putin discussed Afghanistan. ...”³⁷.

International Discourse

The news were also registered of countries including China, Turkey etc. (Russian Bloc), Canada, UAE, Kuwait and Iraq (the US Bloc).

The newspaper portrayed ‘*in-group communist regimes*’ vs ‘*the out-group US and the West*’ in their ‘*argumentation*’, ‘*attribution*’ and ‘*structure of polarization*’ where the Indian follies are also brought where she fails to honor the human rights issues. The opinion reads as “People’s Republic of China (PRC) emerged badly bruised from colonial occupation by the UK, US, France, Portugal, Germany and Japan, after the fall of Ming Dynasty (1644) till its independence in 1949 ... The communist consolidation was opposed by the powerful US/West ... Ever since **rising, China** is the centre of mostly ‘**hostile**’ **attention** by the US/NATO ... The **Western Grand Strategy** ... its ideological mentor the Soviet Union ... **both China and Russia** ... **India has supported Russia** **India had voted in 2020 against Ukraine**-sponsored resolution condemning human rights violations in Crimea at the UN General Assembly”³⁸.

In another opinion, China’s role is centripetal to Russia as “China-Russia alliance against the US & allies: IK’s visit to Russia: context and circumstances; Growing Sino-Russian partnership has a very meaningful context in how Russia-Pakistan relation may also gain impetus”³⁹. The opinion where China is analysed the same way as “When terrain is the winner; in war, there are three domains that will determine the outcome of an undertaking: time, space and terrain, Opinion, pro-Russia”⁴⁰. Also “World cannot afford another Cold War: PM Imran”⁴¹. China is highlighted in the cold war era as “RCEP: A Geopolitical Gain for China; Another brick in the Great Wall against the US”⁴². In the situation where the US role of invoking war by arming the region has been portrayed as “China urges

³⁶<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2339094/imran-putin-agree-to-liaise-on-afghan-crisis>.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342798/ukraine-crisis-and-russia-china-and-the-us>.

³⁹China-Russia alliance against the US & allies: IK’s visit to Russia.

⁴⁰<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2341829/when-terrain-is-the-winner>.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/04/rcep-a-geopolitical-gain-for-china/>.

U.S. to revoke plan of \$100-million arms sale to Taiwan region” and “The US approves \$100mn arms sale to Taiwan for missile upgrades”⁴³.

The title of the news item reports the Canadian authorities concern that “Canada pulls troops from Ukraine amid **fears of Russian invasion**; temporary repositioning of forces does not signal end of the mission” “Force protection is the top priority for our training mission, of which operational security is a key component”⁴⁴. ... At another time, Canadian frustrated concerns are highlighted as “... tension **between Russia and the West** continues to escalate ... **‘immediately leave Ukraine ... I urge all Canadians to make the necessary arrangements to leave the country now’** ... Kremlin could be planning **another military offensive... ex-Soviet neighbor**”⁴⁵

And same is the situation for the UAE, Kuwait and Iraq rather opening up diplomatic fronts, the countries opt to pull out their nationals to give way to Russians to invade defenseless Ukraine “UAE, Kuwait, Iraq urge nationals to leave Ukraine amid tension; Tension escalates along Ukrainian border amid fears of possible Russian invasion”⁴⁶, and “UAE, Kuwait, Iraq urge nationals to leave Ukraine ... amid **fears of Russian**”⁴⁷.

Ukrainian Discourse

Marginal Ukraine Versus Mighty Russia

For the columnist, it is ‘*presupposed*’ that Russia is fully controlled by President Putin and for him ‘Ukraine is lifeline to Russia’ and ‘contrary to the fact that Ukraine has the right to live independently i.e., “... not just **President Vladimir Putin** but the **Russian mindset**, overall, which is unable to comprehend that Ukraine has been an independent country since 1991”⁴⁸. Additionally, stronger and nuclear Russia can’t be harmed by retaliation from Ukraine and its allies. Baker et al. (2008) hold that the ‘*juxtaposition*’ of such words in the national press developed a deceitful genre with the constant ‘irrational’ characterization in connection to ‘reputable’. In the context of mediatized wars, the use of ‘*collocations*’ in communication structures at the start of war unfolds the war without reference to the use of any force (Lukin, 2019). In the minds of the readers ‘*Collocation*’ is not a mere ‘*juxtaposition*’, but rather ‘an order of mutual expectancy’, where words are mutually expectant and prehended (Firth, 1957). The same is so in the caption story, “Ukrainian servicemen walk by a damaged vehicle ... Russia launched a **massive military operation** against Ukraine, in Kyiv”⁴⁹. In the news story “... the **fatal shelling** of a residential building in

⁴³<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/08/us-approves-100mn-arms-sale-to-taiwan-for-missile-upgrades/>.

⁴⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343398/canada-pulls-troops-from-ukraine-amid-fears-of-russian-invasion>.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343396/uae-kuwait-iraq-urge-nationals-to-leave-ukraine-amid-tension>

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343226/dangerous-russia-ukraine-standoff>.

⁴⁹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1677361>.

Kyiv”⁵⁰. The news story spreads across columns along a photograph of a longer line of smoke-emitting tanks ‘tells the story’ “...Ukrainian President will meet Russia as Putin **alerts nuclear deterrence forces** ... the Ukrainian President states that the **invading Russian troops ... biggest assault on a European** state since **WWII** ... the negotiations between Kyiv and Moscow is set to take place at the Belaurussian- Ukrainian border which is **nearby Chernobyl-** the site of the **world's worst nuclear disaster**”⁵¹. The ‘collocation of text’ as ‘nuclear deterrence forces’ and ‘long lines of smoke’ in the news headlines and the caption both. Here the news refers mighty Russia vs the abandoned Ukraine to hell and give no place to hide. The picture story ‘presupposed’ the war policy of the ‘mighty invader’ would kill them-Ukrainians without seeing consequences. Putin: “... NATO’s **aggressive statements** and Western **economic sanctions** against Moscow ...” with the ‘presupposition’ that the NATO has ‘no right’ to be aggressive against Russia. On the other hand, “... Zelensky in a video **message from the streets of Kyiv** ... We have withstood against enemy ... the fighting goes on ... Ukraine lodges complaint against Russia at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ... The ICJ **does not have the mandate** to bring criminal charges against individual Russian leaders.” with the ‘presupposition’ that ‘poor’ Ukrainians can’t win over the ‘mighty’ Russians on-ground and in the Hague based ICJ- a distant remedy for Ukraine.

Giving a prominent headline space by the top national daily, the headline story quoting major international news distribution agencies “...Ukraine airbases **knocked out-** says Russian military”⁵², resonates the tons-of-effects upon the policymakers that the Russians can’t be sidelined by threats merely and she should be considered a mighty force of war, has not started yet, the journalists roll up the sleeves to ‘actively’ participation in war arena in terms of ‘if it bleeds, it leads. In another place, “...it was **Ukraine, not Russia**, where the economy was eroding the fastest under the threat of war ...”⁵³, astonishingly signifies that (weak) Ukraine will pay the price of war and not (mighty) Russia. The villains are heroic in the eyes of journalists!

Even if the sanctions (*bad impacts for the US*) are harming Russia, she is strengthening herself “Russia remains **engaged with the PRC** in advanced technology, in addition to computers and broadcasting equipment in return for gas”⁵⁴.

Unreliable West

One of the news reveals that even the ‘previous Western sanction’ couldn’t prove beneficent. Ukrainian president showed otherwise the US, West and the allies are doing against Russia. The low-tone of the Ukrainian president has been brought forth by newspaper’s gatekeepers as, “... Banking sanctions part of a new round of **sanctions** aiming to impose ... cost on Moscow for the invasion ...

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²<https://www.dawn.com/news/1676782>.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342798/ukraine-crisis-and-russia-china-and-the-us>.

Zelensky reiterated his openness to talks with Russia in a video message, saying he welcomed Turkey and Azerbaijan to organize diplomatic efforts ... so far have faltered. “We aren’t going to lay down weapons, we will protect the country”⁵⁵. Ukraine's weakness can also be seen “it had begun hard talks on a ceasefire, immediate withdrawal of troops and security guarantees with Russia, despite fatal shelling of residential buildings in Kyiv”⁵⁶. In a news story, the marginal Ukraine requests the West to act now with power against Russia “Ukraine neighbors close air space to civilian flights as Russia’s Putin launches ‘military operation’: Ukraine ‘knockout’- Russian military: Ukraine imposes martial law: ‘Act immediately’⁵⁷.”

The West is also portrayed as not-a-savior of Ukraine but rather containing-Russia “Russia-Ukrainian crisis: A tragedy in making? Saving Ukraine is secondary, NATO wants to contain Russia”⁵⁸.

Russian Discourse

Russian Demands

According to the Pakistani media, the US is made responsible for not availing the chance to avert the clash “... Perturbed by the increasing NATO military presence in Russia’s neighborhood, Putin had sought security guarantees from Biden ... NATO kept the doors open and beefed-up Ukraine’s military defence...” The national press scripts Russian demands as ‘righteous’ even if ‘annexure’ of Crimea “... Russia had already **annexed Crimea** without invoking **much** of the **global hue and cry**...”, and claimed over Donetsk and Luhansk “...step toward reintegrating the self-declared Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics ...”⁵⁹ The Russia’s war was highlighted in terms of “Russian securities: The Kremlin hunt for Kyiv; Russia doesn’t want war, but security”⁶⁰.

Powerful Russian Nationalism Guarantees Safe Ukraine

More than once, the selected opinions by the national press gatekeepers, Russia was depicted as ‘mighty’. In CDA, ideologies are pursued, straight and in reverse order both, such a move where ‘powerful us’ is depicted in a common reversal move- one of the techniques of CDA used in ‘contemporary race talk’, media represent members of ‘powerful us (majority group)’ as ‘victims’ of discrimination and ‘political correctness.’ (Augustinos & Every 2007, p. 138). Russians were considered as beleaguered and at another time they are emboldened by the media “The Post-Cold War **humiliation of disintegration** of the Soviet Union would not be lost on many **influential and powerful nationalist** circles within Russia now ... Nor would the actors behind this **epic saga** remain **unchallenged if Russia** could ever challenge **them** ... **polar bear** is harmless in

⁵⁵<https://www.dawn.com/news/1677361>.

⁵⁶<https://www.dawn.com/news/1679957>.

⁵⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1676782>.

⁵⁸<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/14/russia-ukrainian-crisis-a-tragedy-in-making/>.

⁵⁹<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2341183/russia-ukraine-conflict-may-jolt-pakistans-economy>.

⁶⁰<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/17/the-kremlin-hunt-for-kyiv/>.

hibernation; otherwise, it is a **deadly predator... tough, enduring and adaptable**⁶¹. In another opinion, Russia's support of cold war rivals, are 'structured' as "**From cold-war rivals to 'friends'**"; bilaterally, Russia and Pakistan are keen to expand their economic ties"⁶², and the support of Eastern European countries for Russia "Armenia, Turkey **resume first flights in two years**"⁶³.

"The **people of Ukraine will defend** their motherland with full force and prevent a Russian invasion at all costs ... there is **no hardcore evidence to prove** that President Putin will play such a big gamble and put his country in jeopardy"⁶⁴. The overall '*discourse strategies*' draw favors for Russia due to 'Ukrainians are Russian ethnic', 'Russians wouldn't attack Ukraine to kill own Russian race' otherwise the Russian population would be against Putin for putting Russian race into jeopardy. Russian nationalism in international perspective has also been highlighted in the opinion titled, where the former ambassador of Pakistan to the US, UK and the UN tries to make the '*Russian such act of war solidify the nationalism in the region against US hegemony*' "Echoes of the cold war: The **Ukraine crisis has pushed Russia and China into a tighter embrace and exposed divisions in the West**"⁶⁵.

Conclusion

'*Persuasive moves*' have longer and sharper effects on public opinion (Van Eynde, 1973). It appears to be a war between the US and its allies, rather between Russia and Ukraine, according to the Pakistani national media. Among them, the moves like '*moves of strategic persuasion*' blur the idea of war and exaggerated the consequences. When there was no war, the US discourse concentrated war fever, in meaning and description like words have their global and permanent meanings when it comes to war and peace (Beer, 2001). Panic and anxiety were caused by representations of the category news reports to the height of their hyperbolic exaggeration. In yet another US discourse, examples of earlier Russian invasions were highlighted and Russia was seen as a threat. It has been noted that certain discourses present Russia as "stronger us" and the US and its allies as "weaker them" and ignorant, like the US Afghanistan invasion is tagged with the aid, in the present situation. It is also revealed that the UN has no idea to castigate the usurpers in wars.

It's also a prevalent discourse that the US and its allies failed to defend the Ukrainians in their hour of need, which the Russians had evaluated carefully and prepared themselves well before the attack. Even though the Kremlin has

⁶¹<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342798/ukraine-crisis-and-russia-china-and-the-us>.

⁶²<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2344478/from-cold-war-rivals-to-friends>.

⁶³<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/03/armenia-turkey-resume-first-flights-in-two-years/>.

⁶⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343226/dangerous-russia-ukraine-standoff>.

⁶⁵<https://www.dawn.com/news/1675009>.

⁶⁶<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2341309/us-and-uk-ready-to-punish-putin-associates-if-russia-invades-ukraine>.

guaranteed the US and NATO that there will not be any such move against Ukraine and Georgia (on numerous occasions), it appears that the Russians took courage to attack Ukraine after evaluating the “lack of back” by the friends of Ukraine. More or so the discourses here by Pakistani media reveal that it is not the war of Russia and Ukraine but more than this is a war between the “West and the Rest”.

When it comes to the category “Pakistani discourse” on war, the national press strengthened the opinion that the US is putting barriers to Pakistani energy needs in concordance with the Indian acts the same and were never put to the criminals’ rostrum. For Pakistan, Russo-Ukraine war may cause an oil crisis, resultantly a significant spike in commodities costs, before war. Countries like China and Turkey were portrayed as the stronger Russian bloc, whereas Canada, and Gulf region were portrayed as US allies to some extent. Ukraine was portrayed as marginalized, powerless in the face of strong Russia.

In the Russia-Ukraine war, it is seen that mainstream selected press selected feature columns by non-journalists’ expert authors, diplomats, the foreign news services distribution and editorial write-ups. The less byline news coverage shows that either journalist couldn’t understand the regional diplomatic fronts or not ready to preemptively intervene the crisis.

The selected national press portrayed largely against the ‘undesirable out-group, as Russia, whereas the opinions carried the Ukrainian people and the government are the same race as that of Russia and for which the US, the West, the allies and NATO are guests-not-invited.

Future Agenda

The study may be extended to electronic media for the reason that the prime-time news bulletins of the national channels pick a dozen most important news to be relayed. Television represents the dominant reality (Liebes & Ribak 1991), so may be necessary to extend the debate in context of Pakistani national electronic media culture. With special reference to the foreign desk editors’ selection of the international news agencies contents distributed and consumed in Pakistan may also be needed to explore. As the social media perpetuate and propound the debate downward to the people, so it is also needed to explore the public opinion regarding Russo-Ukraine war. Since national language media (Urdu here) are considered the pulse of any nation so may be given a due weightage to Urdu Pakistani national media. Pictorial analysis may also be necessary for the understanding of the Russo-Ukraine war, as one photograph speaks one hundred words.

The agreements between the warring parties should also be put into the CDA framework of analysis for exploring their hidden aims and agenda.

As has been discussed above in the ‘UN Discourses- the contextual UN resolutions of such conflicts’ which media policy, laws, and reforms have been made or tabled by the respective countries under the UN auspices for a peaceful world.

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Appendix

Peace and/Conflict Journalism PJ	War and/Violence Journalism WJ/VJ
<p>1: Peace and/or conflict oriented/PJ1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [PJ1-1/Win-Win] Investigates the formation of conflict. X parties, Y aims, Z objects, general win-win orientation. [PJ1-2/Giving Latitude] Open space & time. Causes & solutions looked for everywhere, also in history & culture. [PJ1-3/Transparency] Make conflicts transparent. [PJ1-4/Empathetic] All parties are interviewed. Capacity for empathy, understanding. [PJ1-5/Creative] Conflict/war seen as the problem. Focus on creative conflict solutions. [PJ1-6/Humanization] Humanization of all sides, the more so the worse the weapons. [PJ1-7/Preventive/pre-emptive] Preventive: prevention of violence/war. [PJ1-8/Reporting Effects/Coverage of Effects/Covering Effects] Focus on the invisible effects of violence (traumas & reputation, structural & cultural damage). 	<p>1: War and/or violence oriented/WJ1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [WJ1-2/Win-Lose] Describes the conflict arena. 2 parties, 1 aim (victory) war, general zero sum orientation. [WJ1-2/Imposing/Putting Restriction] Restricted space & time. Reasons & solution sought on the battle field: "who threw the first stone?" [WJ1-3/Obscurity] Wars made obscure. [WJ1-4/We-Them/Us-Them /Propaganda] "We-them" journalism. Propaganda, vote for us. [WJ1-5/Complex/Problematic] They are seen as the problem. Focus on who gets the upper hand in the war. [WJ1-6/ Dehumanization] Dehumanization of others, the more so, the worse the weapons. [WJ1-7/Reactive] Reactive: only violence is worth reporting [WJ1-8/Spot Reporting/Covering Visible Scene/site] Only considers the visible effects of violence (Dead, wounded & material damage)
<p>2: Truth oriented/PJ2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [PJ2-9/Homogeneous Untruths Coverage] Exposes untruths of all sides. [PJ2-10/Their Lies need disclosure] Discloses all cover-up attempts. 	<p>2: Propaganda oriented/WJ2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [WJ2-9/One-Sided Untruths Coverage] Exposes the untruths of the others. [WJ2-10/Our Lies need not disclosure] Supports our cover-up attempts/lies
<p>3: People oriented/PJ3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [PJ3-11/All are Sufferers (of this unrest/conflict)] Focuses on all suffering; suffering of women, old people, children, gives the voiceless a voice. [PJ3-12/Wrongs committed by all/both-sides bring violence] Names all wrongdoers. [PJ3-13/People bring Peace] Stresses peace tendencies in the population. 	<p>3: Elite oriented/WJ3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [WJ3-11/We're Aggrieved/Sufferers] Focuses on our suffering; the men who make up the military elites; is their mouth piece. [WJ3-12/Their wrongs bring violence] Names their wrongdoers. [WJ3-13/Elite bring Peace] Stresses that only the elite can make peace.
<p>4: Solution oriented/PJ4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [PJ4-14/Creative] Peace= freedom for violence + creativity [PJ4-15/Information Disclosure] Points to freedom initiatives, also to prevent the expansion of the war. [PJ4-16/Peace lies in Culture] Structure & culture are important; a peaceful society. [PJ4-17/Follow ups] Reports about the post war phase; conflict solution, reconstruction, reconciliation. 	<p>4: Victory oriented/WJ4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [WJ4-14/Armistice] Peace= victory + armistice [WJ4-15/Information Concealment] Conceals peace initiatives as long as it is not clear who is winning. [WJ4-16/Peace lies in Agreements] Treaties & institutions are important; a controlled society. [WJ4-17/Absence of Follow ups] After the war is over, turns to the next source of conflict; goes back when the old one breaks again.

Source: Shaw, I. S.; Lynch, J.; Hackett, R. A. (2011).