

The Ukraine crisis in the Russian and British media: Manufacturing a confrontational mentality?

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ABSTRACT

This pilot study uses mixed methods following the framework of *generic frames*, *diagnostic* and *prognostic frames* (Godefroidt et al. 2016) to compare the news coverage of the Ukraine crisis in Russia and the UK from 30 November 2013 to 26 February 2014. *The Moscow Times* and *The Guardian* were chosen as examples of quality print media with online editions that are comparable in terms of quality, political stance, and more importantly – global targeting. Drawing from a broader work on the media systems (Vartanova 2012; Hallin and Mancini 2004), the study argues that while the Russian media reflected the crisis from various perspectives, the British media was characterised by unfairness and non-proportionality in reporting the crisis. The argument challenges the current perception that Russian news media are more propagandistic than British media, as the two newspapers did not always report the Ukraine crisis in confrontational lights.

KEYWORDS

comparative study, conflict, content analysis, framing, news

Introduction

The years 2014-15 were momentous years for Ukraine, as a wave of protests in the heart of Kyiv shook the foundations of the existing regime. From the moment the former Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich decided to postpone the country's EU Association Agreement (21 November 2013), Ukraine was plunged into, in the words of the Russian president Vladimir Putin, a 'civil war' between government and opposition (Thompson 2017). Highlighting the split between the pro-European west and Yanukovich's power base in the pro-Russian east of Ukraine, a peaceful demonstration supporting the country's pro-European course gradually developed into a succession of violent clashes separating families, communities, and the Ukrainian nation (Pikulicka-Wilczewska 2015, 2). On 20 February 2014, Kyiv saw its worst day of violence for almost 70 years. Violence broke out when a shootout occurred between protesters and police in Maidan Square. As clashes intensified, different groups joined, uniting liberals, moderates, technocrats, pro-European and far-right nationalists (Yuhas 2014).

Perceptions of this ever-changing conflict that readers have depends on how the media select and organise the information in a particular reporting angle. As Robert Entman (1993) points out the media can make certain perspectives about ideas more salient by framing them one way or another. Namely, by highlighting specific elements while downplaying others, framing functions to bring specific ideas for news audiences (Iyengar 1991). This concept has been linked closely to the agenda-setting theory, which is often termed a second level of agenda-setting (McCombs et al. 1997). McCombs (1972) explains the media's agenda-setting function as a 'process by which attention is distributed on a given agenda' (cited in Boydston 2013, 218), thus making some thoughts more salient. In accordance with these two theories, when different media narratives of the Ukraine crisis appear coming from different parts of the world, they have the potential to impact on public opinion and result in various perceptions about the crisis. Thus it is important to ask in what particular ways the different narratives of the Ukraine crisis contribute to the daily productions of news.

This pilot study uses mixed methods to compare the news framing of the Ukraine crisis in Russia and the UK from 30 November 2013 to 26 February 2014. This period marked the beginning of the 'Euromaidan' anti-government protests in Kyiv against President Viktor Yanukovich. Newspaper articles were collected from the British and the Russian media, as these two countries were politically most involved in the conflict, but differ geopolitically, economically, and culturally. The different framing practices in Russia and the UK is discussed

in the broader structure of the media systems of the two countries. The main research questions are as follows:

RQ1: To what extent have the selected British and Russian media paid attention to the Ukraine conflict during the period?

RQ2: What news frames were adopted in the mediated Ukraine conflict coverage; and what are the differences among the different media?

Based upon preliminary data, the study not only contributes to the recent research on the topic by looking at the Russian media in a comparative way, but also offers a valuable insight into the current media ecology where an increasing number of political and academic bodies have paid attention to combating Russian propaganda that are perceived as manipulating the public opinions more than the western media by propagandising, stretching the truth, distorting facts, or circulating disinformation (Robinson 2016). This paper begins with a theoretical background of media systems and war reporting. Second, a methodology section introduces the theories informing the method. The third section shows the results of empirical and analytic observations. The final section discusses the findings in light of the pertinent theories in the case of the Ukraine.

The Media Systems of the UK and Russia

The media within democratic societies are expected to play ‘watchdog’ roles, inform and educate about everyday issues, thus providing a public sphere for public discussion and political advocacy (McNair 2011). Regardless of this, there are different normative values /journalistic cultures among the media from different parts of the world (Waisbord 2013). Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini (2004) adopt four variables to gauge and compare different media systems covering Western European and North American democracies: media markets, political parallelism, journalistic professionalism, and state intervention. Accordingly, the media system of the UK falls into the Liberal Model, where the level of market mechanisms and commercial media and journalistic professionalism is high, with a low level of political parallelism and state intervention. Brüggemann et al. (2014) revisit the framework and suggest that the British media display a high level of state intervention. Elena Vartanova (2012) develops a Statist Commercialised Model to characterise the media system of Russia with a focus on the co-existence of governmental and commercialised media. Therefore, the level of journalistic professionalism is low owing to the strong state intervention and self-censorship; whilst political parallelism is embedded within oligarchy players for political and economic interests (Vartanova 2012; Oates 2013).

The Role of Media in War / Conflict

Attention paid to humanitarian dimensions was a feature of the media coverage of conflicts during the 1990s (Carruthers 2011, 142-43). This is how the so called ‘CNN effect’ emerged. Piers Robinson (2002) defines the CNN effect by focusing on all media impact upon political decision-making. He argues that the notion ‘is in the alleged influence of the media upon decisions to intervene during humanitarian crises with the use, or threat of use, of force’ (Robinson 2002, 2). While the CNN effect theory emphasises the power of media, there is also the ‘manufacturing consent’ thesis delivering a strong criticism to the media system (Herman and Chomsky 1988). The two theories have polarised the debate of media’s role in conflict with evidence provided to support both.

The manufacturing consent thesis has received widespread acceptance among scholars (Entman 1991; Entman and Page 1994; Robinson 2017; Hammond 2017). Their research on war/conflict coverage reach a similar conclusion that media reporting is compliant with the policy interests of governments. Carruthers (2011) with a focus on the framing of war coverage, likewise recapitulates that the media became voluntary co-conspirator in wartime propaganda. The empirical studies exemplify that news is shaped by the media’s construction of the conflict as per their interpretation and framing.

There are a variety of definitions of framing. Given the news orientation of this study, Entman’s definition is adopted. Entman suggests that selection and salience constitute essential part of the framing process. Thus a perceived reality is selected and made more salient in order to ‘promote a particular problem definition, a causal interpretation, a moral evaluation, and/ or treatment recommendation’ from the daily events (1993, 52).

Methodology

Framing Analysis: Generic, Diagnostic and Prognostic News Frames

This study uses mixed methods to identify the attention paid and the actual frames used by the British and the Russian media in their coverage of the Ukraine crisis. A deductive approach that involves predefined *generic news frames* consisting of six frames, and *diagnostic* and *prognostic news frames* was applied to scrutinise the news frames used. This approach was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, this approach could be easily replicated and could cope with large samples. Secondly, it could thus easily identify differences in framing between media (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). Thirdly, it offers an opportunity to examine whether this

applies to other global subjects: ‘how generic are those generic frames’ (Godefroidt et al. 2016, 781)? The six pre-defined generic frames are suggested by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and by Van Cauwenberge et al. (2009): the *conflict*, *human interest*, *economic impact*, *morality*, *responsibility*, and *nationalisation* frames. The combination of this set of frames has also been applied by Godefroidt et al. (2016) to scrutinise four countries’ news articles of the Syrian conflict in a comparative content analysis.

Journalists often inform the audience about the larger social, economic, or political context surrounding an issue (e.g., Pan and Kosicki 1993; Ojala and Pantti 2017). This is what Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow (2000) refer to as the *diagnostic* frames highlighting the wider backgrounds of the issue. Along with diagnoses, journalists may also suggest solutions for the problems to people. Snow and Benford characterise such solutions as the *prognostic* framing, referring to how the issues identified in the diagnostic frames are to be solved, aiming to offer desirable solutions to the issue. Therefore, the diagnosis and prognosis are major constructs of the consensus mobilisation (Klandermans 1984), potentially intending to produce support amongst individuals in news coverage.

The Sample

This pilot study scrutinises the news frames used between 30 November 2013 and 26 February 2014. This period marks the beginning of the ‘Euromaidan’ anti-government protests in Kyiv against President Viktor Yanukovich due to his refusal to sign the country’s EU Association Agreement. Several critical events are included. Articles on the topics were collected from two newspapers – one Russian and one British for two reasons. First, Russia played a major role in the conflict between the West and the East, although President Putin denied its involvement. Second, Britain was the first country that suggested excluding Russia from the Group of Eight and played a key role in designing sanctions on Russia. Thus, the two countries were conflicting parties in the Ukraine crisis with different foreign policies. The focus of this study is on English-speaking media. It is important to look at the English language presence of the Russian media because this is the one that is outward facing attracting intense global public attention. *The Moscow Times* and *The Guardian* were chosen because they both are quality print media with online editions and are comparable in terms of quality, circulation rate, political stance, and more importantly – global targeting. Although *The Moscow Times* enjoys lesser popularity than *The Guardian*, Juyan Zhang and Shahira Fahmy state that the newspaper is ‘a major publication in Russia that takes critical stances toward the government’ (2009, 523).

Accordingly, *The Moscow Times* enjoys a journalistic excellence with *The Guardian* making a comparable analogue in terms of their independent journalistic practices.

Articles from *The Guardian* were collected from Lexis-Nexis databases, while *The Moscow Times* articles were collected from its official website where the print version of archives were available. For *The Moscow Times* articles, the researcher downloaded all the issues within the period, and looked through each issue to retrieve the relevant articles with regard to the Ukraine crisis to ensure credibility without omission. 117 articles from *The Moscow Times* were selected for the final sample. To obtain the data from *The Guardian*, the keywords: *Ukraine, protest, Yanukovich, Putin, and Russia* were input into the search engine of the database. The search initially generated 223 articles. The decision to exclude an article was made during the coding procedure. The final sample was reduced to 78 articles mainly due to duplication. Overall, a total sample of 195 articles were selected for analysis.

Approach for Identifying News Frames

Generic frames

The analysis of the six generic frames contains a series of 21 yes/no questions stemming from Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and Van Cauwenberge et al. (2009). Some of the questions were not applicable to this study, thus some changes have been made to account for the specific subject of analysis (*Appendix I*). This modification followed Godefroidt et al.'s (2016) approach that was used for identifying generic news frames in the reporting of the Syria war. The conflict frame was identified through four questions on the contentious situation. In light of the subject the second question from Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) (i.e. does one party-individual-group-country reproach another?) was altered: instead of 'reproach', 'fights, riots, and confrontation' (Godefroidt et al. 2016) were used. The human interest frame was scrutinised through four questions on the extent to which the story is personalised. Again Semetko and Valkenburg's last question (i.e., presence of visual information in the story?) was not applied, as visual analysis is not part of this study because the archives used do not always contain visual information. In addition, three items on financial impact were used to assess the economic impact frame; and three items on moral information were used to assess the morality frame. The responsibility frame was examined through five items interpreting which party is to be blamed for the issue. Finally, the nationalisation frame was investigated through two questions about the connection between Ukraine and Russia, and between Ukraine and the UK.

Diagnostic and prognostic framing

All articles were also scrutinised for proposed causes of and solutions to the Ukraine crisis. Based upon Godefroidt et al.'s (2016) approach to evaluating diagnostic and prognostic frames, six questions were developed to measure potential diagnoses and eight questions were raised to scrutinise the potential prognoses (*Appendix II*). Rather than all-encompassing 'diagnostic/prognostic framing', specific causes and solutions were chosen to be looked at, because this allowed us to draw parallels with the policies carried out by the countries involved (Godefroidt et al. 2016). The researcher worked out the possible diagnoses pointing towards political, socio-economic, religious factors, human rights abuse, geopolitical factors, specific triggers (and/or other causes). These six elements were determined by the guidance from Godefroidt et al. (2016), a close reading of the articles, and paying attention to recent studies about the roots of the Ukraine crisis (e.g., Ojala and Pantti 2017). The 'rest' category was aimed to offer an opportunity to suggest a new category once more coding was complete (Godefroidt et al. 2016). The prognostic solutions could be: military action, change in government, diplomacy, financial intervention, internal reforms, and removal of the military weapons arsenal (and/or other solutions). Again, the 'rest' category was aimed to offer an opportunity to suggest a new category once more coding was complete. As a result, the external assistance was added as a separate option. By this means, this researcher should be able to generate a substantial list of diagnoses and prognoses. To confidently determine which diagnostic or prognostic frame it was, it was of significance to state 'specific elements that needed to be mentioned clearly' (Godefroidt et al. 2016, 787).

Results

Press Attention

To answer the first research question examining the attention paid to the conflict, the overall reporting quantities and the length of coverage by the media were generated. In purely quantitative terms, first, the Ukraine crisis enjoyed substantial attention paid by the Russian media between 30 November 2013 and 26 February 2014, reflecting the geopolitical interest of the Russian government. The number of articles in *The Moscow Times* was 117 occupying 60% of the whole sample of 195 articles. Conversely, *The Guardian* offered a slightly moderate attention to the crisis with 78 articles (*Table 4.1*). Second, press attention was also measured in their coverage length. Averagely, *The Moscow Times* published longer articles, with a mean length of 702 words, than *The Guardian*. Longer stories also suggests the media's effort to

investigate an event more exhaustively. This is evident in *The Moscow Times* offering more diagnostic frames than *The Guardian*.

Press attention of *The Guardian* did not intensify until a Ukrainian journalist was beaten on 27 December 2013 causing great focus on human rights. Such human-oriented attention ran in parallel with the media's preferences of the human rights violations and the government's crackdowns frames (diagnosis). *The Moscow Times* however paid little attention to the issue and offered only 120-word coverage. The use of frames by the two newspapers is going to be discussed in detail in the next section.

Table 4.1: Press attention by the media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014

	Quantity	Mean Length
The Guardian	78 (40%)	684
UK		
The Moscow Times	117 (60%)	702
Russia		
Total	195	

Framing of the Ukraine crisis: Generic news frames

The second research question investigated the differences in framing between the two newspapers. At first, in both media outlets, the coverage provided in the period revealed the existence of a high level of interest in the conflict frame (Table 4.2). Looking at the differences in more detail between the two newspapers, there was a significant gap between the uses of the economic consequences frame. One notices that *The Moscow Times* during the period employed more economic frames with 21 out of 117 articles (18%) compared to *The Guardian* with only 3 representing 4% of the 78 articles. The crisis disappeared from the British media from 18 to 27 December 2013, while the Russian media constantly reported in favour of economic consequences frame. The coverage explained how Ukraine would benefit from Putin's deal to recover from the present economic crisis, while the EU offered no full membership with little financial aid for the country. The implication is clear: Yanukovych's refusal to sign the country's EU Association Agreement and turn to closer economic and political ties with Russia was a wise choice; although the EU claimed that Brussels had prepared a document showing the long-term benefit that could have flowed to Ukraine over seven years. The efforts aimed to divert the attention from the general perception that Yanukovych should be responsible for the Ukraine crisis, to a rather glorified one that Yanukovych committed himself to dealing with the country's current debt crisis in the bigger

picture for all Ukrainians interests. Such means of misdirection leads to an appeal to the readers that either you are supporting the EU who could not guarantee a promising economic future, or Russia who will solve the country's financial problem immediately with a further bonus of being a member of the Eurasian Union.

Table 4.2: Distribution of the Generic frames by the media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014

	The Moscow Times	The Guardian	Total
Conflict	55 (47%)	40 (51%)	95 (49%)
Responsibility	24 (21%)	20 (26%)	44 (23%)
Economic consequences	21 (18%)	3 (4%)	24 (12%)
Human interest	11 (9%)	12 (15%)	23 (12%)
Nationalisation	5 (4%)	1 (1%)	6 (3%)
Morality	1 (1%)	2 (3%)	3 (2%)
Total	117	78	195

With the most used conflict frames in both media outlets, the researcher found no statistically significant differences between the two, reflecting the extent of dispute among the key parties over the crisis. *The Guardian* devoted slightly more coverage with 51% compared to *The Moscow Times* which received 47%. The second most commonly used frame was the responsibility frame. As the table shows, the frame came with 21% and 26% of coverage attention in *The Moscow Times* and *The Guardian* respectively. *The Guardian* was more likely to reflect the involved parties' efforts to pursue a long-lasting solution to the crisis, and the engagement in the blame game. This might also explain why the media applied more human interest and morality frames compared with the Russian media. The implication is double-fold: One may suggest that *The Guardian*'s relatively higher interest in the blame of the former President Yanukovich for his crackdowns proves that the media still plays an important role as a watchdog in a democratic society by holding politicians accountable. Alternatively, the newspaper also seems to conform to international norm in which human values are at the core. The formulated norm is based on the value of 'equality, democracy, and freedom' aiming to develop equal rights of peoples and to maintain universal peace (Charter of the United Nations 1945). By highlighting Russian-backed Yanukovich with his 'anti-freedom' issues, the emotional feeling of 'to do something' could be spread on a moral level. Such salient indicator and use of emotionally related frames reveals an interventionist nature with an unfair downplay of other viewpoint. For example, *The Guardian* rarely mentioned how the protesters started

attacks and the injuries in the riot police during battles, while it gave extensive coverage to Yanukovich's disputed use of brutal force to suppress the pro-democracy protests. Therefore, there is no equal treatment of the subject by the media who took it upon themselves to justify the 'good' anti-government forces. A shared commonality between the two newspapers drives this point further. In introducing Yanukovich as one of the major players in the crisis, the media often brought up his petty criminal record accusing him of replicating the Soviet past in terms of criminal order and corruption. The demonization of him mobilises the idea that the basic values of the current society are endangered under Yanukovich's ruling, which thereby polarised the Ukraine crisis into a matter of Good vs. Evil.

Apart from the economic frame, the nationalisation frame was the only one that *The Moscow Times* used more than *The Guardian*. Though the nationalisation frame attracted a total of 3% of coverage attention, *The Moscow Times* contributed most to the quantity, with 5 articles out of 117 (4%) in comparison with *The Guardian* of 1%. Finally, the morality frame hardly appeared in any of the samples during this period, with minimal differences between the two countries.

Framing of the Ukraine crisis: Diagnostic and prognostic framing

The study explored the prevalence of each diagnosis and prognosis with a focus on the differences among newspapers. Generally speaking, the vast majority of the articles (88%) offered explanations of the cause of the conflict to their readers, but with a small number (26%) of solutions. Frequency analyses (*Table 4.3*) showed that, overall, the global dimensions came on top with a total of 39% of coverages explaining the root of the issue and the current situation between the West and the East. Political causes (19%) were moderately mentioned. A particular trigger was less frequently cited with 17%, while human rights violations received 9% of the coverage. The articles hardly touched on the socio-economic causes (4%) and religious prescriptions (0%). As the table shows, 89% of *The Moscow Times* sample offered diagnostic frames, whereas *The Guardian* provided almost the same percentage of 86%. Each newspaper favoured the global dimensions frame with small differences. However, the most difference between the two hinged on their uses of the particular triggers frame. *The Moscow Times* employed the frame in 11% of their coverage, mentioning the Yanukovich government's crackdowns as the main reasons of the escalation of the Ukraine crisis. *The Guardian*, however, used the frame as their second most frequent one (26%), with a number of 20 out of 78 articles. Another small difference between the two media was the political causes frame, where the percentage for *The Moscow Times* and for *The Guardian* were 21% and 15% respectively.

While *The Moscow Times* mentioned the socio-economic causes, *The Guardian* did not mention this at all. The two media, nevertheless, had something in common, in terms of the similar amount of the use of human rights violation frame, and in terms of their zero mention of religious prescriptions.

Table 4.3: Distribution of the diagnostic frames by the media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014

	The Moscow Times	The Guardian	Total
Global dimensions	49 (42%)	27 (35%)	76 (39%)
Political causes	25 (21%)	12 (15%)	37 (19%)
Particular triggers	13 (11%)	20 (26%)	33 (17%)
Human rights violations	9 (8%)	8 (10%)	17 (9%)
Socio-economic causes	8 (7%)	0	8 (4%)
Religious prescriptions	0	0	0
Total	104	67	171

The vast majority of *The Moscow Times* articles (84%) did not provide prognostic solutions, compared to *The Guardian* with 59%. The two did not give attention to the military action and the dismantling military weapons as possible solutions at all, due to the nature of the events during this period. The solutions they tended to offer were the external co-operation with almost the same percentages (*Table 4.4*), in terms of the EU assistance or talks, the cooperation either between Russian and the opposition party in Ukraine, or between Russia and the EU, and the tripartite negotiations. Additionally, *The Guardian* was significantly in favour of the change in government, while *The Moscow Times* barely mentioned it. This however further proves *The Guardian's* omission of information that intends to discredit Yanukovich regime. The first wave of suggestion of the solution from *The Guardian* occurred right after the first casualties of a protest that burst dramatically into violence on 22 January 2014. The second wave occurred around the time when confrontation reached a peak on 18 February with 18 people reported dead. *The Guardian* frequently recommended the change in government through broad focuses on the direct quotes from politicians and the protests' voice to topple the Yanukovich regime and require a snap election.

The financial intervention and the internal reforms frames were marginally preferred by *The Guardian* attracting 5% and 6% of the articles, in comparison with *The Moscow Times* with 1% and 3%.

Table 4.4: Distribution of the prognostic frames by the media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014

	The Moscow Times	The Guardian	Total
External co-operation	13 (11%)	9 (12%)	22 (11%)
Change in government	2 (2%)	14 (18%)	16 (8%)
Internal reforms	3 (3%)	5 (6%)	8 (4%)
Financial intervention	1 (1%)	4 (5%)	5 (3%)
Military action	0	0	0
Dismantling weapons	0	0	0
Total	19	32	51

Discussion

This study uncovered that both the Russian and British media resonated with national foreign policy establishments as the manufacturing consent thesis suggests (Herman and Chomsky 1988). Despite *The Moscow Times*' generally critical stance towards Russian government in the coverage of the Ukraine crisis, the media showed an alignment with Russia to a certain degree. This can be tracked from the media's use of the economic consequences frame highlighting the bright side of Moscow's deal with purposes of misdirection, justifying and naturalising Russia's involvement. The strategy was particularly obvious at the beginning of the conflict when Russia was in the crosshairs and topped headlines globally. However, Russia's financial aid did not seem unconditional. To pay the price for Ukraine's rescue plan on the economic front, a termination package with EU was the first step to transition to the final win-win situation of multilateral relations within the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union.

In contrast, *The Guardian* largely presented the protests in Ukraine in a positive light to support the battle for freedom and democracy. Nevertheless the media seems more likely to 'facilitate the engineered outcomes' by the western establishments, through 'manufacturing a type of consensus reality' with omission of information (Henningesen 2017). By giving the public a sense of urgency regarding the Ukraine crisis through the human-interests lens, alongside omission of information and negative representations of Yanukovich and Putin, the media morally contributed to the call for Western politicians to intervene in the crisis against Russia that is perceived as the enemy in the geopolitical realities (Ojala and Pantti 2017). This however

has resurrected the knee-jerk Russo-phobia of the Cold War, which may cause a deeper misunderstanding of the rather complex Ukraine crisis (Putz 2016).

These characteristics of the media coverage of the Ukraine crisis fit in with previous literature documenting governmental influence on the work of journalists in conflict (e.g., Bennet 2003; Carruthers 2011; Keeble 1998). For instance, Keeble (1998) famously argued that the British coverage of the 1991 Gulf War played a crucial role in propaganda function through various reporting routines. In this study, on the one hand, the Russian media served the propaganda function aiming to search public support for the deepening conflict and glorify them. The influence of Putin's vertical power (Vartanova 2012) alone might have resulted in the media's submissive role; it is also vital to take into consideration the limited journalistic autonomy and the journalistic culture in terms of self-censorship (Oates 2013). Furthermore, the evidence from *The Moscow Times* being critical of Russia for the most part can be explained by what Vartanova (2012) claims the existence of commercial media in Russia. On the other hand, the British media's downplay of information that was as important as the inclusions (Entman 1993) showed a consensus with EU leading to subsequent rounds of sanctions on Russia and intensifying anti-Russian rhetoric. As Brüggemann et al. (2014) argue the state intervention plays an important role in the British media industry. Richard Sakwa (2015) suggests that geopolitics between the West (e.g., EU, NATO) and Russia for influence in the post-Soviet space is key to understanding the Ukraine conflict. Accordingly, the British media helped promote Western values via selectively covering the crisis, resonating with the West's political position in detaching Ukraine away from Russia (Boyd-Barrett 2017).

Finally, the lesser use of nationalisation frame in both newspapers differs from previous studies (e.g., Godefroidt et al. 2016). The study also failed to find the frequent use of morality frame, which is in line with the findings of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and Godefroidt et al. (2016). These may challenge the framework of the Generic frames. Yet it is also important to reiterate the nature of the material used that may have affected the result. The study only covered the very early stage of what only later came to be known as the 'Ukraine conflict'. Thus, rather than the military conflict, the Euromaidan protests were the focus. During this period, neither Russia nor the UK was officially involved in the conflict that ensued. This means that it is not feasible to question the applicability of the nationalisation and morality frames in war coverage. It brings to the issue of limits of this study, further research with sufficient data would be essential to complement the findings of this study. Nonetheless, the study seems to validate previous analyses in relation to the high occurrences of the conflict,

responsibility, economic, and human-interests frames, thus adding to our understanding of the dynamics of news framing of conflicts.

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Appendices*Appendix I The twenty-one framing items**Generic Frames***Conflict frame**

Does the story revolve around disagreement between parties, individuals, groups, countries?

Does the story refer to fights, riots, and confrontation between two or more parties, individuals, groups, countries?

Does the story refer to two sides or more than two sides of the problem?

Does the story refer to winners and losers?

Human interest frame

Does the story provide a human example or 'human face' on the issue?

Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings?

Does the story emphasise how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problems?

Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?

Economic consequences frame

Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?

Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved?

Is there a reference to economic consequences of (not) pursuing a course of action?

Morality frame

Does the story contain any moral message?

Does the story make reference to morality, God, and other religious tenets?

Does the story offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?

Responsibility frame

Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the issue/problem?

Does the story suggest some level of the government (including President Yanukovich) is responsible for the issue/problem?

Does the story suggest that an individual or group of people in society (including any coalition of the rebels) is responsible for the issue/problem?

Does the story suggest solutions to the issue/problem?

Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?

Nationalisation frame

Does the article mention a connection between Ukraine and the individual country?

Does the article articulate or quote the ideas of national politicians or persons that are active on a national level?

Appendix II Diagnostic and prognostic framing

*Diagnoses***Political causes**

Does the article mention corruption, a lack of political freedom, power struggle between competing oligarchs, and/or unfair elections as a (possible) cause of the Ukraine crisis?

Socio-economic causes

Does the article mention inflation, rising unemployment, poverty or a lack of prosperity, limited educational opportunities, social insecurity, and/or generating gap between young and old Ukrainians as a (possible) causes of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?

Human rights violations

Does the article mention infringement or lack of the freedom of speech, opinion, religion, equal rights or human rights in general, and/or war crimes against civilisation or the violation of international law as a (possible) cause of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?

Religious prescriptions

Does the article mention Ukrainian Catholics or Christians, disagreement between diverse religious groups, and/or the character or culture of religious groups as a (possible) cause of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?

Global dimensions

Does the article mention disputes between Western powers and Russia, Russian ties, new cold war, and/or regional ambitions with limited resources as a (possible) cause of the Ukraine crisis?

Particular triggers

Does the article mention the shooting of the people, the many (innocent, civilian) victims and/or a violent attack as a (possible) cause of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?

Others

This is a residual category for unforeseen causal elements

*Prognoses***Military action*****Intervention***

Does the article mention suppressing the fights with action by their military and/or a no-fly zone as a (possible) solution of the Ukraine crisis?

Assistance

Does the article only mention military assistance as a (possible) solution of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?

Rejection

Does the article mention that any military action is rejected or will only deteriorate the Ukraine crisis?

Change in government

Does the article mention the dismissal of President Victor Yanukovich or his entire regime and/or the appointment of a new government as a (possible) solution of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?

Financial intervention

Does the article mention economic cooperation with other countries of the international community to provide financial support and/or economic measures against one or more parties involved as a (possible) solution of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?

Internal reforms

Does the article mention internal negotiations or reforms in terms of political issues, socio-economic issues, religious issues, and/or the improvement of human rights as a (possible) solution of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?

Dismantling military weapons

Does the article mention the removal of the Russian stockpile of military weapons as a (possible) solution of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?

External assistance

Does the article mention external co-operation or negotiations in terms of political issues, socio-economic issues, religious issue, and/or the improvement of human rights as a (possible) solution of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?

Others

This is a residual category for unforeseen remedial element.