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Reporting War and Conflict
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News Media Coverage of the Ukrainian Crisis
Complexity and new Dimensions

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my lovely daughter Katerina that on 19th November 2009 left this World to the World of the Angels. In the honor and memory of her smile as a stand of life, follow her attitude and braveness in all the difficult moments in your life, and remember that “it is not important how long you live but only the way you live”. 
The study examines the coverage of the Ukrainian crisis through the analysis of mass media platforms. Through the examination of Sputnik News (Russia), Huffington Post (USA) and BBC News (UK) websites the study aims to analyze the way that global news media framed the crisis in Ukraine, to understand the way that mass media cover crises and wars, and to realize how news media succeeded to identify new dimensions in the information space and warfare. There are evidences that a quite big number of the Western-Oriented & Ukrainian as well as Russian based stories contributed to the continuation or even the enforcement of the crisis. Both sides’ media efforts to a balanced approach included a degree of influence on their audience that most of the times strive to an “alternative reality”. Peace Journalism is less employed with the War Journalism being the first portion in this conflict, due to the surprising uprising of the crisis, the polarization of the conflict, the increased dangers on reporting in such conditions, the shift on how people receiving news, the new technologies and the internet. Finally, this study examines the level of news media influence to their audiences, translating reports and articles into Narratives that may have been used as tools of conflict propaganda by the belligerents as well as intentions to justify actions or support Diplomatic, Informational, Economical and Military aspects in the Ukraine crisis.
INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War and the globalization of communications are two significant factors that contributed to the change on how media influence the decision making process for foreign policy. News developments and the wide spread of high-tech technologies, transformed the future of media and, enforced a 24/7 continues flow of information. Issues like the Ukrainian Crisis converted in top news events, creates pressure and intensity for all key players but also global audiences, who each on his own benefit try to evaluate or summarize the ongoing global developments. The global media networks are shifting to an important factor whose involvement change the environment in which foreign policy and interests are exercised. Governments that did not establish clear strategies and external policies became more vulnerable in the critical stand and extended coverage of those global news media.

The global news coverage is without any doubt a significant factor since it sets in the agenda of most of the Governments “international crises” previously unnoticed. As the example in Ukraine we have to stand critically against the phenomenon of CNN effect since most of the times there are issues hided behind, important for foreign policy while the interpretations given are most of the times one-dimensional. There are cases such as when a specific goal exists for Governments, where, according Robinson, 2001, the agenda of the news is set by those Governments and not the global news media. Examining the Ukraine case, we can say that there is observed a phenomenon of collaborative attitude by the news media which are aligned with the respective governmental decisions. In this particular case where geo-political and geostrategic interests stake mass news media are used as mean to promote key players’ strategies (Russia, US, EU, etc). Their attitude is justified and viewed as a necessity and patriotic duty.

But there is important point to include here, the importance of mass news media and their way to influence the way that governments and diplomats shape and exercise their foreign policy. Since the external policy is a difficult and a complex procedure the rise of those networks (mass news media) increase its complexity as it

limits the decision makers⁴ In the same time we have to agree that mass news media create opportunities for real time release of information, a change that give an important tool for the promotion of strategic goals. In this perspective policy makers are forced to deal with reactions and errors that may be created by an extended critical coverage and challenge their traditional reactive role. Such discussions, interviews or coverage of events are promoted in many cases through the mass news media channels creating effects and somehow influence attitudes and perceptions of their audiences.

Let’s see deeper the complexity and the arising new dimensions in the Ukraine crisis and try to illustrate how media succeeded to identify part or in total all these factors. This study may need a deeper analysis in the overall timeline of the crisis that is still ongoing in future discourses to extract more valuable outcomes.

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“Covering a war means going to places torn by chaos, destruction and death, and trying to bear witness. It means trying to find the truth in a sandstorm of propaganda when armies, tribes or terrorists clash... Our mission is to report these horrors of war with accuracy and without prejudice.”

Marie Colvin, veteran war correspondent killed covering the Syrian protests

CHAPTER 1:
LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 FRAMES, REPRESENTATIONS AND WAR

Nowadays there is an increased use of technological tools/means, like internet websites and other social media networks, for news research, entertainment, discussions and communications in general. Even this interaction is created through a so called “interpersonal communication and relationship” media still continue to expand our world.

Media may not clearly define what we have to think and discuss about an issue but may influence our stance/beliefs towards the choice of an issue that may be part of our daily concerns and discussion. In this way Cohen\(^1\) (1963:13) pointed in his study the ability of media to set the agenda for the public opinion and the importance of each of these issues.

In the other hand, the distinction between which issues of this agenda they choose and what they are thinking about their choices is not so clear, something that Entman underlined (2007)\(^2\). But can media affect the way of peoples’ thinking successfully?

Thus, setting the public agenda the media set the hierarchy of the significance of the issues and the way they portray the news may affect effectively the views of their audiences. As Paletz and Entman suggest (1981:189)\(^3\), the media stabilize the dominant

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views, set priorities, magnify events and issues, and sometimes change opinions, ultimately, forming choices and selections. A very interesting study sets also the geopolitical and economical priorities of the West, explaining that conflicts occurring at the proximity to the metropolitan centers receive coverage at the expense of those occurring further away in less developing regions of the world (Virgil Hawkins, 2002).

Virgil Hawkins, noted that “By contrast, conflict in Africa, which has been, in the post-Cold-War, responsible for up to 90 percent of the world’s total war dead, suffered an almost complete media blackout. Coverage of the massive war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which caused in excess of one million deaths in the year 2000, was almost insignificant”. While technology has reduced the tyranny of distance, the commercial realities of news gathering have also affected the reporting of conflicts.

Talking about the content of the news and regarding media choices Tai and Chang define in a very good way that interesting news are those that the public is interested for but important news are those that the authors consider that the public needs to know. According to their research in most of the cases media succeed to identify almost always the agenda that is under the interest of the public but media not always succeed to reach the requirements of their audiences related with the coverage on specific issues or cases.

Another interesting aspect that we should have in mind is mediation, were media stand between individuals and the social world. It makes us no longer think about our connection to the political world without media (Livingstone, 2009). In this perspective events are organized including political ones, to get the higher degree of publicity and ensure a positive image with media coverage topmost in mind.

In line with the above institutions develop strategies that make the political world part of the overall media culture (Altheide and Snow, 1979). This dynamic has made the political world more attractive when looking in the content of the news as the evident area of the media logic. But a question has to be answered “as a point of reference against

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whom to compare news content?” We have still to know how media logic put about a wider political reality while still recognizing that both worlds, the political and media world become difficult to separate and in the same time independent.

In summary, I could argue that media not only shape the degree in which they inform their audiences in general, providing the main evidences for the worlds relevant views but also influence the way we use to evaluate and distinct the news agenda. The selection of news and their position in the several platforms determine not only the significance given to specific choices but also the importance that audiences will assume for this selection.

1.1.1 THE USE OF MEDIA IN IMAGE BUILDING

Traditional mass media operated by professionals and the new social networks run by both professionals and citizens are playing an increasingly important role in most of the last years’ military conflicts. This interaction between professional and citizen journalism often creates an alternative reality, sometimes far away from the ongoing events, not always by purpose. There are cases where these mixed entities (journalists & citizens) are not really completely aware about the roots and reasons behind the events, thus we could say that their reporting in such cases is going beyond intentions.

There are many questions regarding the impact of propaganda on the several media audiences, last years relying on the developments in the communication technology. Even it is difficult to identify such kind of organized propaganda campaigns, the repetitiveness of statements and expected reactions in such kind of references make it easier to identify. Information campaigns, like those that may create in a monolithic and fictitious way the picture of Ukraine, brought up space for new research projects that go beyond the statements themselves and their consequences to audiences.

This research aims to analyze the way that Ukrainian conflict has been covered from Western and Russian media networks and discourses used in order to frame the conflict.

First of all there is not simple or immediate influence of the media and simple release of stories do not make up minds, shape opinions and force the public to accept the
author’s point of view (H. Gaudet 1958). The multiplicity of information sources from different senders for the same event minimizes the effects on one sided information or disinformation, and brings more balance⁶. Furthermore, recipients are not simple passive consumers of information. They actively participate in the information process and contribute to the reconstruction and interpretation of news.

1.1.2 FRAMING AND REPRESENTATIONS

The process by which media influence public opinion is explained by the framing approach. Media framing determines the relevance of information and establishes a context for comprehension (Gamson, Hoynes and Sasson, 1992, Gitlin, 1980). Accordingly, frames influence what people think about and how people understand the world around them (Pan and Kosicki, 1993).

Media posts have a real degree of influence over events and may promote some aspects of these events making them more prominent. Erving Goffman, who understood frames as blueprints of interpretation which enable individuals to locate, notice, identify and give meaning to events taking place in their lives, and in the world around them, brought framing into the field of social analysis in 1986.

A frame organizes a kind of reality, providing ways to understand specific events and can change a group with loose features and facts into a coherent and readable whole, condensing and simplifying the reality of the world⁷. In this perspective we can say that frames are a natural and popular tool for making sense of reality. Moreover, apart from their role to select information, frames emphasize specific aspects of events, giving a better understanding and easier way to be kept by the recipients⁸.

An interesting study approaches news as a form of storytelling, analyzing the basic social myths, the archetypical stories on which news stories are based and rely for

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⁷ Robert D. Benford, David A. Snow (Volume publication date August 2000). Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment.” Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 26: 611-639
their structure. The myths include the hero, the victim, the good mother, and the trickster, and they are examined for how they re-enact a cultural repertoire that sustains social order (Lule, 2001). In this context the news content is tied to the ritual function of communication (Carey, 1989) rather than the transmission perspective of the effects tradition.

Following the above, qualitative methods are particularly marked in critical analyses of underlying power relations although it is entirely possible to combine qualitative and quantitative methodology. Thus, as an example, several case studies from Glasgow Media Group (1976, 1980) use both quantitative and qualitative measures to critique the performance of organizations, such as the BBC, for coverage of Labor relations, war and other controversies.

Both approaches to content are encompassed within the framing perspective, which has become a major thread in political communication research. Reese in 2001 argues that framing provides a way to tie news content to larger structures and develops new ways of capturing the power of media to define issues visually and verbally, thereby shaping audience perceptions.

According to McCombs and Shaw (1972) the ability to affect public perception and knowledge among individuals is one of the most important aspects of the mass communications power, which is increased by the framing process of news. Agenda setting and the Framing by the media reflects not only the personal perceptions and prejudices of journalists in interpreting conflict situations but also affect the opinion making process. They also argue that audiences not only learn through the media regarding conflict issues but also learn about the importance that most of the times attached and the emphasis journalists and authors place upon it.

One of the most significant dimension of the power of communications is the ability to effect cognitive change among people, which empowered by the framing of the news. According Entman (1993) framing occurs when the media choose a particular issue and make its aspects more prominent to promote a specific definition of a problem, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation. In the end, after going through all stages of an end product, observing, collating, writing, editing and publishing,
it is a combination of witness accounts, second hand accounts, tertiary comments and explanations, and the journalists’ own knowledge and predispositions (Ibid, P.36).

The framing of the Ukrainian conflict often comes under judgment by the journalists on both sides, pro-Russian and Western oriented, reinforcing prejudices and old enmities and make the press part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Although sometimes media reports do provide a positive perspective (Chattarji, 2006), both sides in the Ukrainian crisis have the tendency to report negatively on each other.

1.1.3 NEWS MEDIA IN THE INFORMATION WARFARE

The digital revolution of communications and the expansion of the news companies have affected both the nature and the speed of the information which reaches timely the audiences (Mottaghi, 2008). This effect, called sometimes as “CNN effect” was only a short phase towards these developments in this new globally interconnected information environment. Actually, the internet revolutionized communications; they have become the technical enables of this information environment. Limitations do not anymore exist expect those enforced by the national regulations and governments’ decisions.

Smartphone and other quick uploading means which enable users to upload information, images and videos on the social networks, in thousands of platforms and make them available worldwide became popular. There are no longer blind spots and all actions can be witnessed by anyone, in any place and in any time. And while the fundamentals of journalism, such authenticity, balance and accuracy, remain unaltered by those technologies, they do affect the user’s behavior and in this way news room paradigm, discussions and decisions (Aslam, 2010, P.346).

Technology and media give rise to many roles in the news networks in a different manner, to mediate, to be a medium or a mediator. Are they really different? The point is that they all imply the meaning of something bigger than itself, a messenger carrying bad or good news, helping people to communicate. With the modern information technology, it is difficult to conceal the deeds and misdeeds of a party or regime. But the same technology gives an enormous potential for manipulation of facts.
Media can play three main roles during a war, conflict or crisis. The first role is that of an observer, a critical element of the reality who, in an objective or independent manner, reporting on military operations. This role incorporates a high degree of professionalism for the journalists who have the skills to make critical judgments on the content and remain neutral. A second role related with journalists that take a clear position in their reporting of warfare, because of their own convictions, or to oppose the other side position and propaganda. The third role is that related with the internet where the media constitute the space where the conflict is taking place, serving as a tool of conflict, a battlefield used by the military.

An interesting aspect in the “weaponization” of the media has been set by Nissen in 2015, who places in his study the “new war” not only in space connected territory, but in the information space where ordinary people have the ability to influence the course of a conflict, its reception and decision makers’ actions through the use of information and communication technology.

Murphy and White (2007) in their study set the question: Can a Word Decide a War? They remark that the historical use of information as power was primarily limited to nation-states. Nowadays, a blogger can impact an election, an internet posting can recruit a terrorist, an audiotape can incite fear in the strongest of nation-states, and all these without specific rules. This new context changed the character of war and placed internet activity at the center of attention.9

The use of words have also a significant part in the discussions among the scholars in relation of how the content of reporting may side between Peace and Conflict Journalism, two areas with a lot of discourses and debate. War Journalism existed long before in the journalistic curriculum but Peace Journalism brought new ideas and new ways of reporting, writing articles and communicating with the public. The question in this field is: In which degree could peace journalism affect the way of peoples’ thinking and which could be the impact in attitudes and perceptions of mass media, especially the online, audiences?

While media effects theory is a complex and ongoing field of research, many studies show that mass media have significant impact and effects on public awareness, perceptions and sometimes behaviors such as buying decisions and voting. Marketers, CEOs, Public Relations professionals and military organizations in the last year’s initiatives know that mass media are important influencers affecting brands, reputation, corporation image and the success in communication campaigns. And mass media platforms through internet are a basic contributor in nowadays complex information environment.

1.2 PEACE AND CONFLICT JOURNALISM

Conflict theory analysis is a field that lies on the background for journalists looking to come closer to the roots of a conflict, thus be able to set the conditions for better looking for peace solutions through out a balanced, fairness and accuracy in reporting (Annabel McGoldrick and Jake Lynch, 2000). Peace Journalism is defined likewise “when editors and reporters make choices – of what to report, and how to report – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict” (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005).

Peace journalism shows backgrounds and contexts of conflicts; hears from all sides; explores hidden agendas; highlights peace ideas and initiatives from anywhere at any time (Lynch 2005).

Johan Galtung divide Journalism in Peace and War domains, making the assumption that Peace is strongly connected with the conflict Journalism and War is strongly connected with violence Journalism setting the framework for both in a different basis. According to Knightley (2000), war journalism is characterized by identification with one or the home side of the conflict, is action oriented focus and a superficial narrative with little content, background or historical perspective.


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Furthermore, there is a distinction of the Journalism in War and Peace by several studies suggesting that the one is looking in the visual effects and the other in looking to invisible effects in a conflict, with the later to be solution-oriented, that is actually a condition that has been set to separate journalism (Annabel McGoldrick and Jake Lynch, 2000).

In many editorials the word ‘conflict’ is used to mean ‘violence’. Understanding the difference is crucial to the war and peace journalism approach. Conflict is a process through which two or more actors (‘parties’) try to pursue incompatible aims or goals while trying to stop the other(s) from pursuing their goals. Violence defined as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm or deprivation. Violence often has lifelong consequences for physical and mental health and social functioning and can slow economic and social developments.

In the other hand Lynch and Galtung’s salient point is that “Objectivity is not the issue. Selection is the issue, the criteria applied and the codes and contexts in which the event is placed and interpreted”\(^\text{13}\). Talking about criteria there is one more dimension added in this argument, individual aspects or elsewhere personal selection of the contexts that may have influence substance, an effect based context. If someone make the assumption that a Journalist make hundred of choices everyday – which story to report, how to report them / what angles to take, etc then there is a concrete evidence that Journalists through reporting somehow include their own perspectives in reporting that may resulted in influence their audiences in one or an other way.

In addition, Johan Galtung argues that objectivity and balance are two terms that good standing in the ethics of Journalism\(^\text{14}\), two terms that do not stand alone when we are going to an analysis. The first as refers to the factual basis of reporting in favor of truth and untruth, and the later as means to give attention to all goals of the parties, attention to people as well as elites and attention to all phases of a conflict. Theory analysis is a field that lies on the background for journalists looking to come closer to the roots of a

\(^{13}\)“Objectivity in Journalism”, Lynch & Galtung 2010, p.53

\(^{14}\)Peace Journalism as an Ethical Challenge”, Johan Galtung, GMJ: Mediterranean Edition 1(2) Fall 2006
conflict, thus be able to set the conditions for better looking for peace solutions through out a balanced, fairness and accuracy in reporting (Annabel McGoldrick and Jake Lynch, 2000)\(^\text{15}\).

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David Loyn study emphasizes that there is a need for Journalism to refine existing practices\(^\text{18}\) in order to “fence us into the detriment of understanding”. Additionally, Loyn observation is that Peace Journalism is meaningless and unhelpful in a crisis and characterizes Peace Journalism the opposite of Good Journalism. Professor John Lofflin disagrees with the idea that Journalists do not have any responsibility other than reporting the news as accurately as possible.


\(^{18}\) David Loyn Good journalism or peace journalism? conflict & communication online, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2007
1.3 NEWS MEDIA AND PEACE JOURNALISM

The notion of peace has not yet conceptualized in relation with the news media. Furthermore, peace is not enough emphasized in the media and there is still open space for new studies since there is limited discourse on this issue. According Mandelzis there is a lack of perspectives on peace that further explains the absence of studies on this relationship around the mass media, communications and the culture of peace (Mandelzis, 2007, p.99).

While violence can be caused by a few people, the presence of peace requires the cooperation of many; a critical mass of people, groups, institutions, and the media. In other words, it is far easier for a few people to burn down a house. It takes many people to build a house, just as it takes many to build peace. Building a culture of peace requires mass changes in the way people think, their attitudes, and their behaviors.

Moreover, Malcolm Gladwell claims new ideas, attitudes or behaviors come about when three factors exist. First, ‘connectors’ or people who interact in many different social networks need to adopt this new idea, attitude or behavior. Second, ‘mavens’ or information experts need to buy into a new idea, attitude or behavior. Third, charismatic sales agents with powerful negotiation skills need to engage in persuading people to take on a new idea, attitude or behavior (Vladimir Bratic and Lisa Schirch, 2007).

Given the complex ways these four types of approaches interact to bring about real change, it is easy to see that the media has an important role in reaching many people with a message of structural change. Including the media as one component along with a combination of different forms of peace building strategies seems the most likely path to change. Some types of peace building projects aim to impact small numbers of people. The amount of behavioral and attitudinal change experienced by people exposed to these forms of peace building projects is likely to be in inverse relation to the number of people reached (Vladimir Bratic and Lisa Schirch, 2007).

The last years there is a significant shift in the media role in conflicts (Bratic & Schirch, 2008). According Hawkins (2011) peace is a process and not an event, and because the needs of the media corporations in going about the business of constructing news, do not fit well with the needs of peace related journalism (p.263). Tehranian (2007)
argue that the media are an active part in any conflict. Conflict makes the news, dramatic events, winners and losers, to sell and this kind of reporting has its own rewards, challenges and dangerous (Mogekwu, 2011)\(^9\).

In the other hand, a successful peace process requires patience and the news media demand immediacy. Peace is most likely to develop within a calm environment and the media have an obsessive interest in threats and violence. Peace building is a complex process and the news media deal with simple events (Wolsfield 2008, Hawkins 2011).

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

In order to evaluate the framing of the Ukraine conflict, I choose to examine the coverage of the Ukrainian conflict from selected global, multi-sources research media news platforms, including the Russian based Sputniknews.com\(^\text{20}\), the United States origin Huffingtonpost.com\(^\text{21}\) and the United Kingdom based bbc.com\(^\text{22}\) websites.

The selection of the “internet based news media platforms” is related with the wide spread network and the number of audiences they may reach as well as the extended coverage since the beginning of the Ukraine crisis. The specific period examined is the four months timeframe, from January 2014 to April 2014, where the main events took place in Ukraine, following territorial changes, the Crimea Annexation in Russian Federation and the Eastern Ukrainian population claims.

The collection of the articles and reports through the search engines, both internally in the platforms and externally directly by Google search engine, included the “key words”: Ukraine Crisis, Crimea Peninsula, Russia, NATO, Putin, EU, US. Reproduction of articles of other news media networks included in the research in line with

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20 Sputnik is an online news and radio broadcast service established by the Russian government-controlled news agency Rossiya Segodnya. Headquartered in Moscow, Sputnik has regional editorial offices in Washington, Cairo, Beijing and London. It focuses on global politics and economics and is geared entirely towards a non-Russian audience. Sputnik has been subject to accusations of bias and being a Russian propaganda outlet. Sputnik News is a successor to Russian state-owned RIA Novosti's international branch, which became defunct in 2013. Whereas RIA Novosti's output tended to emanate from a more concentrated base in Moscow, Sputnik's content is drawn from a number of international bureaus. In 2015, Sputnik announced its intention to broadcast in 30 languages, with over 800 hours of radio programming a day, covering over 130 cities and 34 countries. According to its chief Dmitry Kiselyov, Sputnik intends to counter the "aggressive propaganda that is now being fed to the world".

21 The Huffington Post was founded by Arianna Huffington on May 9, 2005. It has an active community, with over one million comments made on the site each month. The Huffington Post is a politically liberal American online news aggregator and blog that has both localized and international editions founded by Arianna Huffington, Kenneth Lerer, Andrew Breitbart and Jonah Peretti, featuring columnists. The Huffington Post became the first commercially run United States digital media enterprise to win a Pulitzer Prize.

22 The BBC took its present form on 1 January 1927 when Sir John Reith became its first Director General. Reith stated that impartiality and objectivity were the essence of professionalism in broadcasting. Allegations that the corporation lacks impartial and objective journalism have regularly been made by observers. Another key area of criticism is the mandatory license fee, as commercial competitors argue that this means of financing is unfair and has the result of limiting their ability to compete with the corporation. Also, accusations of waste or over-staffing occasionally prompt comments from politicians and the rest of the media.
the above research method. A monthly categorization by each selected platform performed in order to support the collection process and the metrics during the research. For a better and equal analysis of the size of the articles and reports the collected material was converted to Font “Arial 10” in a word document form in order to have a better comparative method of analysis. The size will be defined in Small: less than 12 lines, Medium: 13 to 24 lines and Big: above 25 lines.

As the unit of analysis the research considered a valid article or report when it contains text, text with photos, text and videos, photos with description. Simple photos and videos without text excluded from the research. Additionally, updates in articles and reports considered as one and comments on all the material collected did not included in this study. Each editorial is categorized according its size as well as all articles will be categorized according the date of publication.

This framing analysis provides both quantitative data on the frequency and nature of these platforms’ editorials on the Ukraine conflict and a more qualitative analysis of the editorials and content discourse about Ukraine and external entities interactions, including Westerns countries and Russia. Even the focus is mostly in the editorial titles which bring readers to the topic and the angle adopted (Van Dijk, 1988), the content analysis gives us more framing indicators for the outcomes of this study.

Each article is categorized into the following frames based on the dominant frame of the editorial taken as a single unit. The “Strategic Interest” frame (Gamson, 1992) where the story is not the conflict itself but rather the importance of the region in a “Global Chess Game”. The “Violence” frame where actions by the police and the military as well as violent content photos, videos and related references in visible or invisible effects are dominant to the editorials. The “Intervention Frame” where editorials emphasize the obstacles to intervention and justify nonintervention, or question these obstacles and find justification for intervention (Goffman, 1974).

Three more aggression frames are going to be examined during the qualitative analysis of this study. The “Russian Aggression” frame in terms of intensions for intervention related to the protection of its interests. The “Western Aggression” related to rhetoric and support of the non official Government of Ukraine and other related actions.
The “Ukraine Aggression” related to both the official government use of force and the protestors use of force to promote or to protect their interests.

According Galtung’s classification of Peace and War Journalism three more indicators are examined in this study. The results related with those indicators are consistence with other studies related with crisis, war and conflict situations. Galtung sees war coverage as falling into two categories – ‘war journalism’ and ‘peace journalism’. This is based on four broad practice and linguistic orientations (Lynch & McGoldrick 2005).

War journalism would focus on the conflict (visible effects of the conflict is reported), be propaganda-orientated (expose ‘their’ untruths, conceal ‘ours’), present elite voices, and portray victory over the enemy as the end goal. Peace journalism, for its part, would be peace-orientated (explore conflict formation, aim to prevent conflict), be truth-orientated (expose untruths on all sides), people-orientated (focus on suffering all over, focus on peacemakers as people), and solution-orientated (highlight peace initiatives, present solutions rather than ways to victory).

Following Galtung’s classification of Peace and War Journalism as well as this study research analysis, the three selected frames are: Consequences of war/violence frame, roots of the conflict frame and solution oriented frame. This part of the research is based on the frequency of appearance of these indicators in articles - reports, etc, as well as the findings that illustrated in the content of these research products. A monthly outcome analysis of the main findings measures the shift of those media platforms towards the Ukrainian crisis during the time of the research.

In this perspective the three frames have been selected: Consequences of war/violence frame related with visible and not visible effects, the roots of the conflict frame in order to understand better the history towards a possible solution and last the solution oriented frame as a suggestion for options to get out of the crisis/war/conflict.

The following questions will be also a subject of discussion through this research in the effort to identify the level of news media influence to their audiences and their use as a tool of conflict - propaganda:

**Question 1:** Which is the level of Media mediation - republishing political aspects?
Question 2: Are there identified intentions to build or promote information?

Question 3: Are there defined visually emotions in the reports (photographic content)?

Question 4: Are journalists’ own knowledge and predispositions included in their reports?

Furthermore, a revision of the role of the media in conflict situations under the Ukrainian case study is going to be discussed after the outcomes of this research method. According to the theoretical framework that has been developed above, the following hypotheses are made:

Hypothesis 1: Due to the intense commercialization of the media the news presented in a dramatic way which is manifested by their selected frames.

Hypothesis 2: The strategic framing, due to its emphasis on the analysis of actions and communication manipulation of the actors, expected to show high correlation in reporting, especially in the state controlled media.

Hypothesis 3: Due to historical dimensions and the undercurrent tension between East and West in the post-cold war era most of the reports are negatively charged.

Hypothesis 4: The number of articles and reports on the situation in Ukraine expected to be high according the situation on the ground and the degree of influence several actors added.
CHAPTER 3
OVERALL STUDY FINDINGS

In total, 993 editorials have been examined in this research study in a period of 120 days, from January to April 2014. Sputnik News website had the best and helpful search engine for the search of editorials related with a certain period of time. Furthermore, Sputnik News website used an extensive number of editorials describing daily the chorological sequence of the events in Ukraine as well as describing the Global developments on the Issue.

On average 8.3 daily editorials on Ukraine conflict appeared in the research mass media networks under this 120 days study. More precisely, an average of 3.1 editorials appeared in January, 5.5 in February, 11.1 in March and 13.3 in April 2014. The apex of commentary was 24th April 2014, with 33 editorials on the topic, and the nadir only few days in the whole period with none. April was the highest rated month from the four months according the summary of the overall outcomes as presented in Graphics 1, 2 & 3.

Graphic 1: Summary of Editorials per Month per Social Network
Graphic 2: Monthly Summary of Editorials per Medium

Graphic 3: Monthly Size of Editorials per Medium
The pages’ number where the news story appears shows the importance of the news for each website. First far from the other two according its coverage in the Ukrainian crisis was Sputnik News with a sum of 773 editorials, second the BBC News with a sum of 144 editorials and last the Huffington Post with 76 editorials.

The results show that most of the editorials have been middle sized stories 406 with the short editorials sized 256 and the large sized 331 in total. Even this categorization seems to be balance there are differences between the media networks examined in this study.

More precisely, Sputnik News appears more middle sized editorials with an organized structure without photos or videos references. In a small number of stories the photos that included in the stories related mostly with Russia and its interests excluding violent scenes. Russian speaking populace and national symbols are mostly evidenced.

In the other hand BBC news network appears larger sized editorials. In almost each of its editorials started with a video or/and photos including political, diplomatic or institutional interviews as well as violent footages from demonstrations among the belligerent. There is an extent use of violent photos is many editorials even the content looks like more balanced presenting both the East and the West story. Additionally, professors and analysts take part in editorials as well as a summary of events evidenced following the sequence of the events. Specialized analysts had their own part in many editorials.

Finally, Huffington Post had mostly large sized editorials with extend analysis and explanations on the situation. Due its large size of each editorial more than one frames identified in several editorials. Even more articles have been found in .ca and .co.uk the study focus only in the .com network (US). Many editorials started with a video and ended with a photo presentation from Ukraine.
Table 1: Summary Results of the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results:</th>
<th>Question: Monthly Number of Editorials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer</td>
<td>Sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2014</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>154</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results:</th>
<th>Question: Size of Editorials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer</td>
<td>Sum Per%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2014</td>
<td>26S, 28M, 43L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>35S, 46M, 73L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>77S, 216M, 106L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results:</th>
<th>Question: Strategic Interest Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer</td>
<td>Sum Per%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>60/154 – 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>103/343 – 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>114/402 – 28%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results:</th>
<th>Question: Violence Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer</td>
<td>Sum Per%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2014</td>
<td>45/97 – 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>55/154 – 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>30/343 – 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>40/402 – 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results:</th>
<th>Question: Intervention Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer</td>
<td>Sum Per%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2014</td>
<td>31/97 – 32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>60/154 – 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>112/343 – 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>125/402 – 31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results:** Question: Russian Aggression Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Sum Per%</th>
<th>Huffington Post</th>
<th>BBC</th>
<th>Sputnik News</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2014</td>
<td>6/97 – 6%</td>
<td>1/10 – 10%</td>
<td>0/23 – 0%</td>
<td>5/64 – 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>23/154 – 15%</td>
<td>0/13 – 0%</td>
<td>5/38 – 13%</td>
<td>18/103 – 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>71/343 – 21%</td>
<td>8/31 – 26%</td>
<td>12/33 – 36%</td>
<td>51/279 – 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>67/402 – 17%</td>
<td>3/22 – 14%</td>
<td>8/50 – 16%</td>
<td>58/327 – 18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results:** Question: Western Aggression Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Sum Per%</th>
<th>Huffington Post</th>
<th>BBC</th>
<th>Sputnik News</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2014</td>
<td>10/97 – 10%</td>
<td>1/10 – 10%</td>
<td>1/23 – 4%</td>
<td>8/64 – 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>21/154 – 14%</td>
<td>1/13 – 8%</td>
<td>5/38 – 13%</td>
<td>15/103 – 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>56/343 – 16%</td>
<td>7/31 – 23%</td>
<td>16/33 – 48%</td>
<td>33/279 – 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>43/402 – 11%</td>
<td>4/22 – 18%</td>
<td>10/50 – 20%</td>
<td>29/327 – 9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results:** Question: Ukraine Aggression Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
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<th>Huffington Post</th>
<th>BBC</th>
<th>Sputnik News</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2014</td>
<td>25/97 – 26%</td>
<td>1/10 – 10%</td>
<td>5/23 – 22%</td>
<td>19/64 – 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>26/343 – 8%</td>
<td>6/31 – 19%</td>
<td>3/33 – 9%</td>
<td>17/279 – 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>33/402 – 8%</td>
<td>2/22 – 9%</td>
<td>10/50 – 20%</td>
<td>21/327 – 6%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Results:** Question: Consequences of War/Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Sum Per%</th>
<th>Huffington Post</th>
<th>BBC</th>
<th>Sputnik News</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Answer</td>
<td>Sum Per%</td>
<td>Huffington Post</td>
<td>BBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>25/154 – 16%</td>
<td>2/13 – 15%</td>
<td>7/38 – 18%</td>
<td>16/103 – 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>55/402 – 14%</td>
<td>4/22 – 18%</td>
<td>10/50 – 20%</td>
<td>41/327 – 13%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Results:**

**Question: Roots of the conflict**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Sum Per%</th>
<th>Huffington Post</th>
<th>BBC</th>
<th>Sputnik News</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2014</td>
<td>68/97 – 70%</td>
<td>5/10 – 50%</td>
<td>14/23 – 61%</td>
<td>49/64 – 77%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>61/154 – 40%</td>
<td>4/13 – 31%</td>
<td>10/38 – 26%</td>
<td>47/103 – 46%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>100/343 – 29%</td>
<td>19/31 – 61%</td>
<td>8/33 – 24%</td>
<td>73/279 – 26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>84/402 – 21%</td>
<td>8/22 – 36%</td>
<td>18/50 – 36%</td>
<td>58/327 – 18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results:**

**Question: Solution Oriented**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Sum Per%</th>
<th>Huffington Post</th>
<th>BBC</th>
<th>Sputnik News</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2014</td>
<td>9/97 – 9%</td>
<td>1/10 – 10%</td>
<td>5/23 – 22%</td>
<td>3/64 – 5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>15/154 – 10%</td>
<td>1/13 – 8%</td>
<td>5/38 – 13%</td>
<td>9/103 – 9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>24/343 – 7%</td>
<td>4/31 – 12%</td>
<td>6/33 – 18%</td>
<td>14/279 – 5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>26/402 – 6%</td>
<td>3/22 – 14%</td>
<td>7/50 – 14%</td>
<td>16/327 – 5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Explanation example:** The 3/10-30% Strategic Interest Frame means that 3 out to 10 editorials included this framing as well as the 30% is the percentage of this relationship. The Sum Per% follows the same rule but as a sum of all editorials. Referring to the size of editorials the three letters S, M and L mean Small, Medium and Large editorials respectively.
3.1 CASE STUDY 1 – SPUTNIK NEWS RESULTS

3.1.1 GENERIC STUDY’S OUTCOMES

On average 6.4 daily editorials on Ukraine conflict appeared in Sputnik News internet platform under this 120 days study. More precisely, an average of 2.1 editorials appeared in January, 3.7 in February, 9.0 in March and 10.9 in April 2014. The apex of commentary was 24th April 2014, with 30 editorials on the topic, and the nadir few days in the whole period with none. April was the highest rated month from the four months according the outcomes as presented in Graphic 4 and Table 1.

![Graphic 4: Frequency of Editorials](image)

Looking at the graphic 4 there are two significant points. Firstly, there are a huge number of editorials covering the Ukrainian crisis, 773 in total. Secondly, the highest number of editorials represents medium size texts. Going deeper in this analysis there is one more point to be added: This is related with photos. Photos are not included in most of the editorials and no reference in violence is related with photos.
In order to categorize the editorials according this framing analysis and due to the large number of medium and large sized editorials, there are cases where more than one frames have been identified in specific editorials. All identified frames have been categorized according this study with an effort to select the most dominant frame in each editorial according the content analysis.

Following the above, the larger number of editorials, more than one-third, focused on Russian – US and other actors’ intervention in the Ukrainian crisis trying all to justify their involvement. The intervention frame is related to “Justify nonintervention or find justification for intervention”. The pick was in February with 42% with an average of 33% to 34% for January, March and April. Looking at the numbers of editorials there is an increase from January to April from 22, 43, 93 and 107 respectively.
The intervention frame included: High ranking Western politicians and diplomats visits to Ukraine, including EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton support to the pro-European protestors\textsuperscript{23}; the invalidating of the 1997 and 2010 agreements with Ukraine by law from Russian President Vladimir Putin after the annexation of Crimean Peninsula\textsuperscript{24}; Russian lawmakers delegation visits in the Eastern Ukraine amid waves of protests in the region against the country’s coup-imposed nationalist leadership\textsuperscript{25}; American lawmakers laws for sanctions against Ukrainian officials if violence is used against pro-European protestors\textsuperscript{26}; the statement by Putin in journalists in Brussels “we will stand by our partners in Ukraine no matter who leads the Ukrainian government and holds dialogue with us”\textsuperscript{27}; President Joe Biden urged Yanukovych to install new Cabinet of ministers that would “take Ukraine in the direction of Europe: according the White House, US & EU officials support to demonstrations in the Munich Security Conference”\textsuperscript{28}; Euromaidan was organized by US authorities - American writer\textsuperscript{29}, and more.

Another significant number of editorials, more than one-fourth, focused on Russian - US and EU strategic interests. Extended was the global chess game in the energy sector\textsuperscript{30,31}, NATO\textsuperscript{32,33} and its expansion to Russian border\textsuperscript{34}, Ukrainian tradition

relation with the East, strategic importance and historical relationship of Crimea Peninsula for Russia\(^\text{35}\), pointing readers’ attention to the importance of Ukraine’s location as the threshold between East and West competition\(^\text{36}\). The competition was intense during January with 34% and February with 38% but evident during March and April, both with 25%. Talking in numbers there is continues increase in editorials from 22, 39, 71 and 81 framing in the global chess game.

The **Strategic interest frame** included examples like: Russian energy giant Gazprom changes in gas price and the energy game in general by all sides\(^\text{37}\text{38}\text{39}\), Russia’s zero-sum game with the West in the former Soviet republics\(^\text{40}\), the repeatedly accusation of Kremlin to US and its allies of meddling in Ukrainian affairs\(^\text{41}\text{42}\), the laws for

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registration of foreign agents (NGOs) in Russia and the US\(^{43}\), the connection with crisis with other former conflicts\(^{44}\) and crises\(^{45}\), the role of other global powers / forces like China\(^{46}\), the intelligence game with leaks of phone conversations\(^{47}\), the reference on NATO expansion on Eastern Borders\(^{48}\) and NATO use of the Ukraine crisis to resolve its own problems\(^{49}\), Switzerland’s Federal Council decision to halt permits on the export of military products to Russia and cease talks with Moscow on an agreement on free trade, and more.

**Violence frame**, including *direct, cultural or structural violence findings*\(^{50}\), was dominant during the first two months but minimized in March and April where minor references identified in the editorials. This is a significant shift if we compare the outcomes of the research: 48% in January, 37% in February and 8% for both March and April. In numbers of editorials violence frame had its pick in February with a sum of 38 and less employed during March and April with 21 and 27 respectively.

**Russian Aggression Frame** related with *“intentions for intervention for the protection of its interests”* is increased from January to April 2014. There is significant shift from January to February from 8% to 17% respectively. Additionally, talking about numbers of references in the content of editorials there is also a significant shift from February to March and April 2014 from 18 to 51 & 58 editorials respectively.

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50 Annabel McGoldrick and Jake Lynch, 2000 (p.9-12).
**Russian Aggression frame** is dominant during the Referendum preparation and the Annexation of Crimea as well as related with Russian Exercises\(^{51}\) in the close borders with Ukraine\(^{52}\). Moreover, the rhetoric for the involvement of the West\(^{53-55}\), the unaccepted interim government in Ukraine characterized as “far right”\(^{56}\), the counter sanctions in EU and the West\(^{57-59}\) are part of this frame, direct phone call from Russian leader Vladimir Putin to US President Barack Obama that Moscow reserved the right to protect its own interests and those of Russian speakers in the event of violence breaking out in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea\(^{60}\), S-300 systems, statement that “highly effective in shooting down most modern aircrafts would greatly increase the risk to planes conducting unauthorized over flights of Crimean airspace”\(^{61}\), and more.

**Western Aggression Frame** related with “Rhetoric and support to non official government or related diplomatic, political and military actions” has its pick on February
2014 with 15% following a lower degree of 13% on January 2014 but it is lower in March with 12% and 9% overall. Comparing the Russian and Western Aggression Frame we can say that there are inversely chronicle results in this four months research.

**Western Aggression Frame** included: *Expansion of NATO and related activities in the close border with Russia*, US, EU and other Nations’ imposed sanctions against Russian officials and the suspended cooperation in certain areas, statements by US officials like Hillary Clinton that any project to “re-Sovietize” the region will find US to oppose them (talking about Moscow-led Customs Union which include Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan as a precursor to the Eurasian Union), and more.

Regarding the **Ukrainian Aggression Frame** there is a significant shift from January (30%) and February (19%) 2014 to March (6%) and April 2014 (6%). Even the number of references is almost the same, 19 – 20 – 17 – 21 respectively, the representation of editorials related with “both the official government & the protestors use of force to promote or to protect their interests” reduced significant the last two months, both in a portion of 6%.

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Ukraine Aggression Frame evidenced in this four months period included: acts of violence against protestors or by protestors\(^70\), the targeting of journalists\(^76\), and the deportation of film groups from Russian REN-TV as well journalists from the Rossiiskaya Gazeta newspaper from Ukraine\(^79\), take over of administrative buildings\(^80\) in Lviv, Uzhhorod, Lutsk, Khmelnytskyi, Zhytomyr, Sumy\(^81\) and other areas\(^82\) of Ukraine which Oleskandr Yakymenko – head of the Ukrainian Security Forces – described as “deliberate terrorist acts”, the voting of from the Ukrainian interim president of tough
“anti-separatism measures”\textsuperscript{83}, Ukrainian parliament passed law increasing penalties for separatists to up to 15 years in prison and allowing the confiscation of property belonging to those convicted of the crime\textsuperscript{84}, and more.

Almost all (more than three-fourth) editorials had references in Ukraine - Russian - US and EU diplomats and officials’ thesis/expressions on Ukrainian crisis issues, mostly from meetings – conferences – media engagements – and more public statements. There is evidence that more than the half of the editorials ended with a sentence related with the thesis expressed by the officials as identified in this study. Examples of the main findings are as follow: “… ouster of President Viktor Yanukovych\textsuperscript{85}” or “… Rejected an association agreement with the European Union in favor of closer ties with Russia\textsuperscript{86}” or “… pull back from closer ties with the European Union, a move that sparked the current wave of anti-government protests\textsuperscript{87}” or “Moscow has insisted that a federal form of government is the only way out of the protracted political crisis in Ukraine\textsuperscript{88}”, “… a unitary state which is de-facto split into a Ukrainian-speaking west and a Russian-speaking east and south” or “Until Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in 1954 transferred the territory to what was then the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Crimea was officially a part of Russia\textsuperscript{899091}".

Furthermore, language used in the editorials included expressions like: “Former Soviet nation”, “ex-Soviet neighbor”, “neighboring Ukraine”, “traditional ally”, “pro-Russian Crimean Peninsula”, as well as “criminal activity of radical elements from the opposition”, “radical elements”, “extremists” and “terrorists”, “neo-Fascist youths”, “Power in Ukraine was seized by nationalists”, “heavily ethnic Russian-populated region”, “Russian sensitivity over perceived disrespect for World War II monuments”, and more.

3.1.3 PEACE & WAR JOURNALISM INDICATORS

The consequences of war/violence frame had its pick up in January with 31% going down the next three months with 16% in February, 12% in March and 13% in April. Looking in the number of editorials the is a pick up in April with 41 references in the consequences of war/violence mostly related with visible effects: people wounded, killed, tortured, displaced as well as invisible effects like: Addiction to revenge and victory, racism, fear, no confident for the future, and more.

Regarding the roots of the conflict frame it is highly rated especially in January 2014 where the pick of the findings with 77% of the editorials were included related references from recent up to historical dimensions, as the following: “The rejection from the President Yanukovych of an association agreement with the European Union in favour of closer ties with Russia”\(^\text{103}\). “The weak Ukrainian economy much of which is reliant on outdated heavy industry, the devastating impact of the recent global financial crisis, Rampant unemployment, the corruption of the Ukrainian government”\(^\text{104}\), “Russia-Ukraine Gas Conflict”, “The largely Russian-ethnic Crimea was gifted to Ukraine undemocratically by Soviet leaders 60 years ago”, “Ukraine is a major re-exporter of Russian gas to Europe, and political wrangling between the former Soviet states has led to serious disruptions in supplies in the past, especially in January 2006 and January 2009 when deliveries were temporarily halted over payment disputes”\(^\text{105}\), “Early legislative initiatives being considered by Ukraine’s parliament, where the agenda is now dominated by the erstwhile opposition, include a proposal to drop Russian as an official language, that has provoked alarm among the ethnic Russian minority in the east of the


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country, where Yanukovych drew much of his support, as well as expressions of concerns from Moscow, and more.

**Graphic 6: Peace / Conflict Journalism Indicators**

The **solution oriented frame** was the less employed in Sputnik News limited to suggestions related with “elections and federalization of Ukraine” in separate states, a proposal that has been seen positively by both US and Russia. But both solutions included Russian’s considerable concern related with the unaccepted legitimacy of the Ukrainian interim government, which is characterized as “Radical” or “Terrorists” or “Extreme Right”. The monthly average is about 5% with a pick in February to 9% of the editorials.

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3.2 CASE STUDY 2 – BBC NEWS

3.2.1 GENERIC STUDY’S OUTCOMES

On average 1.2 daily editorials on Ukraine conflict appeared in BBC News internet platform under this 120 days study. More precisely, an average of 0.7 editorials appeared in January, 1.4 in February, 1.1 in March and 1.7 in April 2014. The apex of commentary was 1st April 2014, with 6 editorials on the topic, and the nadir 38 (32% of the 120 days) days in the whole period with none. April was the highest rated month from the four months according the outcomes as presented in Graphic 4 and Table 1.

Looking at the graphic 7 there are four significant points. Firstly, there is focus on the coverage of the Ukrainian crisis during these four months of 2014 with a sum of 144 editorials. Secondly, the highest number of editorials represents large size texts. Going deeper in this analysis there is one more point to be added: This is related with photos and videos. Almost each if not all the editorials included photos and videos from the beginning of the editorials as well as through out all the text most of them related with
violence, political figures from the global chess game and symbols (church, Flags, monuments). The fourth point is related with maps. There is an extended use of maps and images in many editorials with an effort to explain better the situation in the area.

Examples include: The location of the clashes (satellite image with description)\(^{109,110}\), the separate Ukraine provinces/areas\(^{111,112}\), Crimea case between Russia and Ukraine\(^{113}\), Russian population in former Soviet Republics and NATO expansion in Europe\(^{114,115}\), Gas travels from Russia through Ukraine\(^{116}\), the Moldova Trans-Dniester case\(^{117}\), images shows Russian troop formations deployed in western Russia\(^{118}\), Russian as native language in Ukraine\(^{119}\), Russian Forces in Crimea under 2010 deal\(^{120}\), and more.

Another interesting point for BBC News is that in the end of many editorials prompt the visitors to complete a form and write their aspect in the article or send more info from Ukraine, like:

“Are you in Ukraine? Have you taken part in the protests in Kiev or other cities? Send us your experiences using the form below\(^{121}\).”

or

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"Are you in Ukraine? What is your reaction to this news of Russian troop deployment? Email us at haveyoursay@bbc.co.uk adding 'Ukraine' in the subject heading and including your contact details. Or share your thoughts using the form below.\(^\text{122}\).

or

"Are you in Crimea or the wider region? What are your thoughts on recent events? Email us at haveyoursay@bbc.co.uk with the subject heading 'Crimea'. Or fill in the form below.\(^\text{123}\).

or

"Are you in the region? Send your comments, experiences and contact details to haveyoursay@bbc.co.uk with the subject heading 'Crimea' or fill in the form below.\(^\text{124}\).

From a journalistic professional approach this integration patterns of interactive features in news media websites draw two areas of journalistic work – the relationship with audiences and medium-related best practices. The first is based on the level of relationships with their audiences, how they allow them to contribute in the news content – consuming the content, influencing the content, or passing it beyond the news site; the second is based on the characteristics of features – textual or visual content. News media only benefit from applying features that allow users to interact with content, but the point is to find ways this interaction to be without influence.

News media applications are extending the information and communication technology landscape in the public sector and are used to increase transparency, participation and collaboration. The success, impact and performance of these new forms of bi-directional and networked interactions can provide insights to understand compliance with the communication policy of the medium or/and the author. The extent of practices and technological features of the main news media platforms, is a new area for study the online interactions to any mission support and the results on their tactics. Implications for both researchers and practitioners can be discussed in these studies.


3.2.2 FRAMING STUDY OUTCOMES

In order to categorize the editorials according this framing analysis and due to the large number of large editorials, there are cases where more than one frames have been identified in specific editorials. All identified frames have been categorized according this study with an effort to select the most dominant frame in each editorial according the content analysis.

Following Graphic 8, the larger number of editorials, more than one-third, focused on Russian – US and other actors’ intervention in the Ukrainian crisis trying all to justify their involvement. The intervention frame is related to “Justify non intervention or find justification for intervention”. The pick was in January with 35% with an average of 30% to 34% for February, March and April. Looking at the numbers of editorials there is an increase from January to April from 8, 13, 13 and 15 respectively.

Graphic 8:
Focus of Editorials
The intervention frame included: The statement by the US Secretary of State John Kerry “We believe deeply that the people of Ukraine want to affiliate and want to be associated with Europe and they want to turn in that direction”\(^{125}\); Russia’s upper house of parliament approval for the use of Russian forces in Ukraine\(^ {126}\); the bugged phone conversation of Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland disparages the EU over the Ukraine crisis\(^ {127}\); Russian President address to his Security Council that the Ukraine crisis is an inter-Ukraine issue “arose not through our fault, but we are involved in it, one way or another”\(^ {128}\); the controversy over the use of snipers\(^ {129}\) and firearms by the Ukrainian Government or/and the protesters with dispute about the identity of the snipers\(^ {130}\); Ukrainian Security Service chief statement that Russian Federal Security Services (FSB) operatives had been involved in planning operations against the protesters\(^ {131}\); the Ukrainian interim government statement about a campaign orchestrated from across the borders in Russia\(^ {132}\); Moscow questioning the legitimacy of the Ukrainian interim leaders and the recall of its ambassador from Kiev\(^ {133}\); Western support over the new interim government in Ukraine\(^ {134}\), the EU and US clash with Russia in Munich for the orientation of Ukraine\(^ {135}\); and more.

Another significant number of editorials, more than 40%, focused on Russian - US and EU strategic interests. Main points were: the new East-West hostility and the

possible impact in other global issues like “the Iranian nuclear talks” – “the war in Syria” – “the uncertainty over North Korea”; the major industrialized global powers G7 actions against Russia; the global chess game in the energy sector; NATO Eastern Europe Built-up close to Russian border and NATO military response options; and historical references to other conflicts/crises.

The **strategic frame** or **Global Chess Game Frame** had its pick during March with 52% and April with 46% but less employed during January and February, with 13% and 39% respectively. Talking in numbers there is continues increase in editorials from 3, 15, 17 and 23 dominant in the global chess game frame.

More evidences on the **Strategic Interest Frame** included: The statement by the EU Enlargement Stefan Fuele who characterized the decision of the Ukrainian President Yanukovych to refuse to sign an EU – Ukraine Association Agreement as contradicted Ukraine’s “European Aspirations” amid Russian economic pressure, adding US and EU countries deep concerns; the EU leaders agreement to reduce energy dependence on Russia in parallel with co-operation deals (EU Association Agreements) with Georgia and Moldova, two former soviet republics; the competition over the fundamental question “who is the legitimate authority in Ukraine” between Russia and the West.

Western powers support the interim government while Russia supports the President Victor Yanukovych and characterize the interim government as “far-right extremists”

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with “xenophobic, anti-Semitic and neo-fascist” views; NATO foreign minister’s agreement to suspend all practical civilian and military co-operation with Russia\textsuperscript{146}, the alliance air drills held over the Baltic States\textsuperscript{147}, and Russia’s recall of its top military representative at NATO in Brussels; references to Serbs (interviewed by journalist) who admit to be in Ukraine to help the Orthodox brothers (characterized in the editorial as Chetnik – nationalist Serbs who fought in the Yugoslav wars)\textsuperscript{148}; and more.

**Violence frame**, including direct, cultural or structural violence findings\textsuperscript{149}, was dominant during January and February but less employed during March and April. More precise **Violence frame** was dominant in January with 35%, February with 37%, March with 9% and April with 18%. Talking about numbers 8 out of 23 editorials identified in January, 14 out of 38 editorials identified in February, 3 out of 33 editorials identified in March and 9 out of 50 identified in April. There are cases where the same pictures from clashes / injuries were found in more than one of the editorials.

**Russian Aggression Frame** related with “intentions for intervention for the protection of its interests” is not evident during January 2014. Russian Aggression Frame has its pick in March 2014 with 36% while is lower during February with 13% and April with 16%. Additionally, talking about numbers of references in the content of editorials there is also a significant shift from February to March 2014 from 5 to 12 editorials respectively while a decrease follows in April with 8 editorials out of 50. Russian Aggression frame is dominant during the Referendum preparation and the Annexation of Crimea as well as related with Russian Exercises in the close borders with Ukraine. Moreover, the rhetoric for the involvement of the West, the unaccepted interim government in Ukraine characterized as “far right extremists”, the counter sanctions in EU and the West are part of this frame.

\textsuperscript{149} Annabel McGoldrick and Jake Lynch, 2000 (p.9-12).
Evidences include also the Russia’s upper house of parliament approval of Putin’s request to use Russian forces in Ukraine\textsuperscript{150}; Russian MPs proposal for new laws that would make it easier for Russia to incorporate parts of Ukraine, and allow Russian citizenship to be fast-tracked\textsuperscript{151}; Russian foreign minister’s warning to Kiev against any attempt to join NATO\textsuperscript{152}; Russian troops and local Crimean militias seize of local buildings threatening staff and patients (hospital in Simferopol)\textsuperscript{153}; The blockage of Ukrainian troops across Ukraine by Russian troops; Russian foreign minister’s statements that Russia was defending human rights against “ultra-nationalist threats”\textsuperscript{154}, Russia is in de facto military control of the Crimea region, and Russia was ready to protect “the rights of Russians and Russia-speaking people in Ukraine, using all available political, diplomatic and legal means\textsuperscript{155}; and more.

**Western Aggression Frame** related with “Rhetoric and support to non official government or related diplomatic, political and military actions” has its pick on March 2014 with 48% following a lower degree of 4% in January 2014, 13% in February 2014 and 20% in April 2014. Comparing the Russian and Western Aggression Frame we can say that there are parallel chronicle results in this four months research.

**Western Aggression Frame** included:  *Warnings by US officials\textsuperscript{156,157} with effect on US-Russia relations and the Russian’s international standing\textsuperscript{158}; Western countries sanctions against Russia including arms embargo, asset freezes and more\textsuperscript{159,160}; NATO*
built-up to the eastern Europe – close border with Russia including Air Patrols\textsuperscript{161} by UK, US and France warplanes in the Baltic States, Romania and Poland amid fear for Russian further intentions in the area\textsuperscript{162}, forces (battle groups) deployment, exercises for collective defense to protect its members in Eastern Europe, NATO leadership warnings to Russia about grave consequences\textsuperscript{163}, and related actions and activities; and more.

**Ukrainian Aggression Frame** related with, both, the official government and the protestors’ actions, activities and use of force, to promote or to protect their interests has its pick in January 2014 with 22%. There is a reduction during February 2014 with 13% and March 2014 with 9%. April has an increase of Ukrainian Aggression Frame with 20% of the editorials. Going to numbers again **Ukrainian Aggression Frame** is law during the first three months with 5, 5 and 3 respectively, with a pick during April with 10 editorials referring to such actions and intentions?

Evidences included: *acts of violence against protestors or by protestors*\textsuperscript{164,165}; *new laws restricting public protests*\textsuperscript{166}; the acting interior minister’s statement about “very tough” response to Pro-Russian protesters seize of buildings\textsuperscript{167}; the use of loudspeakers by the police about to begin “an anti-terror operation” using armored vehicles\textsuperscript{168}, dismantling barricades and firing grenades and water cannon; Ukrainian security forces use of force against the eastern Ukraine protests\textsuperscript{169}; Opposition groups encourage members of their social network to come to the scene, bringing bottles for Molotov...
cocktails and bombs; MPs in Kiev vote to allow to hold joint military exercises with NATO and other nations on Ukraine soil; Journalists, cameramen or protesters kidnapped and beaten by security forces; and more.

Almost all editorials had references in Ukraine - Russian - US and EU diplomats and officials thesis/expressions on Ukrainian crisis issues, mostly from meetings – conferences – media engagements – and more public statements. BBC News looks more balanced in comparison with the other two networks. There are also choices and expressions identified by the authors that put their own aspect on the crisis.

The use of words, choices and expressions that may fuel the Ukraine crisis in their audiences, include: The mass demonstrations were initially triggered by President Yanukovych’s last-minute rejection of the EU partnership deal; Yanukovych’s government to ditch a proposed association and free trade deal with the EU in November – under heavy pressure from neighboring Russia; The crisis in Ukraine was sparked when Mr Yanukovych pulled out of a planned trade deal with the EU last November in favour of a $15bn (£9bn) bailout from Russia; “Believe me, the police are very aggressive not only in Kiev during the clashes but also in everyday life across the country” (protester’s interview); Russian President Vladimir Putin met his embattled Ukrainian counterpart Victor Yanukovych; EU and US clash with Russia; He denies being a paramilitary – but it is clear he’s a Chetnik, the nationalist Serbs who fought in
the Yugoslav wars and now sporadically appear elsewhere as mercenaries\(^\text{179}\); armed men believed to be Russian\(^\text{180}\), and more.

Furthermore, language used in the editorials included expressions like: Neighboring Russia\(^\text{181}\); Western condemnation\(^\text{182}\); Western countries\(^\text{183}\); Kremlin and the West\(^\text{184}\); pro-Kremlin\(^\text{185}\) or pro-Moscow\(^\text{186}\) Ukrainian President; Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which were part of the Soviet Union during Cold War\(^\text{187}\); pro-Russia troops\(^\text{188}\); ethnic Russian Crimea\(^\text{189}\); advancing “fascists”\(^\text{190}\); neo-Nazis\(^\text{191}\); Western politicians\(^\text{192}\); pro-EU West of Ukraine\(^\text{193}\); pro-Russian forces\(^\text{194}\); the West and Kiev\(^\text{195}\); and more.

3.2.3 PEACE & WAR JOURNALISM INDICATORS

The consequences of war/violence frame had its pick up in January with 26% going down the next two months with 18% in February and 15% in March while have been higher during April with 20%. Looking in the number of editorials there is a pick in April with 10 references in the consequences of war/violence mostly related with visible effects: people wounded, killed, tortured, displaced as well as invisible effects like: Addiction to revenge and victory, racism, fear, no confident for the future, and more.

Regarding the roots of the conflict frame it is highly rated especially in January 2014 where the pick of the findings with 61% is, while April follows with 36%, and February and March with 26% and 24% respectively. Talking about numbers there is a similar rated sequence with 14 up to 23 editorials in January, 10 up to 38 editorials in February, 8 up to 33 editorials in March and 18 up to 50 editorials in April.

Graphic 9: Peace / Conflict Journalism Indicators
References included for example: “President Victor Yanukovych decision to cancel a deal with EU”\textsuperscript{196}; “The unrest took place amid ongoing anti-government rallies against the government’s decision to pull out of a landmark deal with the European Union”\textsuperscript{197}; “Kiev’s decision to reject an EU deal in November triggered the protests”\textsuperscript{198}; “Under pressure from Moscow, President Yanukovych had refused to sign a far-reaching association and trade agreement with the EU”\textsuperscript{199}; “… widespread government corruption and abuse of power”\textsuperscript{200}; “No-one wants to invest here, because they can’t be sure of getting their money back because everything is so corrupt. That means there are very few jobs here.”; “About 1% of the population monopolizes all the wealth”\textsuperscript{201}; “Crimea peninsula ... part of Russia until 1954 and host to its Black Sea fleet ...”\textsuperscript{202}; Russian’s much repeated claims that the revolution in Kiev had unleashed hordes of neo-Nazis determined to sweep across the eastern Ukraine and drive out its Russian speaking population in a pretext to cover the real strategic reason for the military intervention in Crimea\textsuperscript{203}; Russian’s most immediate task is to prevent Ukraine from joining Western economic and security structures such as the EU or NATO, to keep the country in suspended animation as a buffer zone, belonging to neither East and West\textsuperscript{204}; Several developments - including police attacks on student protesters, severe new anti-protest laws, and the abduction and beating of opposition activists - caused the demonstrations to spread and intensify\textsuperscript{205}; Ukraine’s national currency has plunged to its lower official level ...

against the US dollar since its inception nearly 18 years ago; Ukraine, seen by some as the birthplace of Russian Orthodoxy, has been pulled between East and West for centuries; and more.

The solution oriented frame had a satisfactory degree according this analysis. January was the higher rated with 22% while February, March and April follow with 13%, 18% and 14% respectively. Talking about numbers April is leading with 7 up to 50 editorials, March follows with 6 up to 33 editorials, while January and February have both 5 editorials from 23 and 38 respectively.

Suggested solutions include among others: Formation of an international "contact group" to mediate in the crisis and seek changes in the constitution that would require Ukraine to uphold military and political neutrality; Russian Proposal - Ukraine to become a federation in region respecting minorities, given much more power over local economy, finance and foreign trade, as well as language, traditions, religious practises, education, cultural ties abroad and relations with neighbouring states, including Russia ... Russia Proposal – Kiev would retain state-wide functions like defence, foreign policy and the legal system; Constitutional Proposal – Opposition’s draft proposal in essence calls for a return to 2004 constitution that shifted key powers from president to parliament. Reforms would see president stripped of powers to appoint PM, cabinet members and regional governors – and possibly snap elections; The US Proposal – developed in consultation with Ukraine and other European countries, include halting the military build-up near Ukraine’s border, the deployment of international monitors in Crimea to protect the rights of Russian speakers, and the return of Russian troops there to their bases; and more.

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3.3 CASE STUDY 3 – HUFFINGTON POST

3.3.1 GENERIC STUDY’S OUTCOMES

Graphic 10: Frequency of Editorials

On average 0.6 daily editorials on Ukraine conflict appeared in Huffington Post internet platform under this 120 days study. More precisely, an average of 0.3 editorials appeared in January, 0.5 in February, 1.0 in March and 0.7 in April 2014. The apex of commentary was 6th February and 1st April 2014, with 6 editorials on the topic, and the nadir 62 (52% of the 120 days) days in the whole period with none. March was the highest rated month from the four months according the outcomes as presented in Graphic 4 and Table 1.

As it is shown in Graphic 10 the following points are identified: There is focus on the coverage of the Ukrainian crisis during these four months of 2014, especially during March and April, with a total sum of 76 editorials. Secondly, the highest number of editorials represents large size texts. Going deeper in this analysis there is one more point to be added: This is related with photos and videos. Some editorials started with a video...
related with the crisis in Ukraine, including: violent scenes212213214215, political figures statements and symbols (orthodoxy216, flags217, statues218219). Another number of editorials do not include at all videos or photos but have extended observations and analysis on the Ukraine Crisis case220221 and limited use of maps used mostly related with hypothetical alternatives to do without Russia energy supplies to Europe222.

3.3.2 FRAMING STUDY OUTCOMES

In order to categorize the editorials according this framing analysis and due to the large number of large editorials, there are cases where more than one frames have been identified in specific editorials. All identified frames have been categorized according this study with an effort to select the most dominant frame in each editorial according the content analysis.

Following the above, a larger number of editorials, more than 43%, focused on the 
**Strategic Interest Frame**, related with not the conflict itself put the importance of the 
region in International Politics. The highest framed month is March with 49%, while keep 
its high percentage through out all these four months. More precisely January is rated 
with 30%, February with 46% and April with 45%. Looking at the numbers of editorials 
there is an increase from January to March with 3, 6, and 15 respectively, while April has 
a number of 10 editorials related with this frame.

![Graphic 11: Focus of Editorials](image)

Main points regarding the Strategic Interest Frame included: *The diverging 
interests – and of the importance of Ukraine between the US – Russian*; *Europe’s angst 
over antagonizing Moscow has for six years caused NATO to fudge Tbilisi’s (Georgia) 
membership aspirations; European skeptics including Germany, fear that allowing 
Georgia into NATO will drag the alliance into a confrontation between Georgia and 

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Russia over territorial currently occupied by Russia forces; China’s modus operandi in the chess game of foreign affairs, the China-Russia alliance and concerns about ethnic separatism in western China; The energy sector dependence on Russian natural gas supplies to Europe and China, including alternate routes for supply from the East to the West; Ukraine is a strategic actor in the provision of Europe in gas, and the consumption of Russian gas in the country is still very high; A Crimean Scenario in the Balkans; The combination of geopolitical tensions on the short run, and the improvement of global economic fundamentals on the medium run give little chance of a gas prices decrease; Explaining the geostrategic global chess game: Today, as Ukraine’s example shows, the revision of borders is not done through military means but political means, through plebiscites. It’s a new way of waging wars with the same results; Russia – American relations; and more.

Intervention frame related with “justifying non intervention or find justification for intervention have been less employed than the Strategic Interest Frame. It has its pick in February with 31% while January has minor references with only 10%. March and April have 19% and 14% respectively. Numbers of editorials with dominant the intervention frame are: 1 out of 10 in January, 4 out of 13 in February, 6 out of 31 in March and 3 out of 21 in April.

Evidences on the Intervention Frame included: Russia will not allow itself to lose its once-satellite state so quickly; “Vladimir Putin emphasized according a

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Kremlin’s report that, in the case of a further spread in violence in eastern regions (of Ukraine) and Crimea, Russia maintains the right to protect its interests and the Russian-speaking population that lives there\textsuperscript{232}; Ukraine Launches “Anti-terrorist Operation” against Pro-Russian Separatists\textsuperscript{233}; Ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine have falsely claimed to be under assault to justify Russian intervention\textsuperscript{234}; Maidan Square protests in Kiev to be prosecuted so as to avoid a further escalation of tensions, especially in the restive east of Ukraine\textsuperscript{235}; and more.

Violence Frame, including direct, cultural or structural violence findings\textsuperscript{236}, was dominant especially during January with 60%. February, March and April are less framed in the Violence with 23%, 19% and 18% respectively. Talking about numbers 6 out of 10 editorials identified in January, 3 out of 13 editorials identified in February, 6 out of 31 editorials identified in March and 4 out of 22 editorials identified in April. Videos and photos from clashes and violent scenes where part of the Violence Frame. The same photos according references have been circulated across social media platforms. Evidences include also: targeted attacks against journalists and peaceful protestor\textsuperscript{237}, pro-Russian demonstrators’ violent clashes with supporters of Ukrainian new authorities raising the Russian flag over government buildings in several cities; and more.

Russian Aggression Frame related with “intentions for intervention for the protection of its interests” is not evident during January and February 2014. Russian Aggression Frame is evident during March and April 2014, and has its pick during March 2014 with 26% while is lower during April 2014 with 14%. Talking about numbers the

\textsuperscript{236}Annabel McGoldrick and Jake Lynch, 2000 (p.9-12).
following we have 1 up to 10 editorials in January, no editorial during February, 8 up to 31 editorials in March and 3 up to 22 editorials in April with findings about this frame.

The findings include among others: Vladimir Putin emphasis that in case of a further spread in violence in eastern regions of Ukraine and Crimea, Russia maintains the right to protect its interests and the Russian speaking population that lives there; Russian parliament approval for the use of force in Ukraine; the seizure of Crimea Peninsula by Russian forces; The Russian forces solidified their control of Crimea and unrest spread to other parts of Ukraine; Russian President use of the weighty terms “Novorossiya” and “New Russia” to references to some regions of Ukraine during a long televised questions & answers, for what many Ukrainians raised their brow; Russia’s warning to EU and other Western powers not to meddle in the Ukraine crisis, and more.

Western Aggression Frame related with “Rhetoric and support to non official government or related diplomatic, political and military actions” has its pick on March 2014 with 23% following a lower degree of 8% in February 2014, 10% in January 2014 and 18% in April 2014. Comparing the Russian and Western Aggression Frame we can say that there are almost the same results in this four months research.

Western Aggression Frame included: Canada recalling its ambassador from Moscow and pulling out of the G8 process being chaired by Russia as well as excluding Russia for the future G8 meetings (according the Prime Minister Stephen Harper statement); US Defense secretary phone call to his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu that Moscow’s military intervention risked creating further instability and an escalation

“that would threaten European and international security”; Western countries sanctions and visa bans to Ukrainian and Russian officials as well as the US National Security Advisor Susan Rice warning for a new round of sanctions that would focus on what she called “very significant sectors of the Russian economy”; the symbolic comparison of Putin and Milosevic as blood brothers, both consolidated their power by escalating ethnic conflict and the use of religion to manipulate emotions; and more.

Ukrainian Aggression Frame related with the official government, the protestors and others’ actions, activities and use or intention to use of force, to promote or to protect their interests has its pick in March 2014 with 19%. Keeping low this frame is evident in January with 10%, February with 15% and April with 9%. Going to numbers again Ukrainian Aggression Frame has the same allocation during these four months with 1, 2, 6, and 2 editorials respectively.

Evidences included: acts of violence against protestors or by protestors; the clash between Ukrainian Ministers and oppositions leaders in inside and outside the country meetings; Ukraine’s acting interior minister, Arsen Avakhov, said that a warrant has been issued for the arrest of Yanukovych and several other officials for the “mass killing of civilians”; Ukraine’s acting President Oleksandr V. Turchynov order “Ukraine’s armed forces to full combat readiness and Ukrainian soldiers to open fire if

attacked by Russian troops or others"; Ukraine Launches ’Anti-Terrorist Operation’ Against Pro-Russian Separatists; pro-Russian demonstrators raising the Russian flag above governmental buildings in several cities and anti-Russian politicians calling for mobilization; and more.

Almost all editorials had references in Ukraine - Russian - US and EU diplomats and officials thesis/expressions on Ukrainian crisis issues, mostly from meetings – conferences – media engagements – and more public statements. Huffington Post looks more one-sided in comparison with BBC News network while Sputnik has its own stand on the situation, justifying Russian’s actions. There are also choices and expressions identified by the authors that put their own aspect on the crisis that create and keep the tension between the West and the East.

Examples include: Yanukovych sparked the protests in November when he spurned a trade pact with the 28-nation EU and turned instead to Ukrainian’s old master Moscow for financial support; Political turmoil in Ukraine pushed President Victor Yanukovych from office following massive pro-democracy protests after he rejected a partnership agreement with the EU in favor of deepening his country’s historical ties with Moscow; The violent scenes further escalated this ex-Soviet republic’s political crisis and showed a rift among opposition leaders, one of whom fought bravely to stop the violence, while others condemned the events from far; Russia’s Lurch Towards Fascism: Moscow’s Ukrainian operation has been accompanied by ever-mounting pressure against media and other critics of the regime; Moscow feels that it alone has

the right to employ anti-Semitism as a weapon of political warfare\textsuperscript{256}; Critics of Putin say that Kremlin-controlled Russian media have fuelled unjustified fear of the new Kiev leadership in the east of Ukraine, where Yanukovych had his power base\textsuperscript{257}; and more.

Furthermore, language used in the editorials included expressions like: Russian Influence\textsuperscript{258}; pro-Western Ukrainian Government\textsuperscript{259}; Russian-speaking population\textsuperscript{260}; China-Russia alliance\textsuperscript{261}; new Cold War\textsuperscript{262}; Westerners; East-West struggle (r.256); An elephant in a China Shop\textsuperscript{263}; post-Soviet Russia\textsuperscript{264}; Moscow-backed president\textsuperscript{265}; Western official\textsuperscript{266}; ethnic Russians in Eastern Ukraine (r.258); pro-Russian separatists (r.255); the West and Kiev; and more.


3.3.3 PEACE & WAR JOURNALISM INDICATORS

The consequences of war/violence frame had its pick up in January with 20% without significant differences for the next months. February is less employed with 15% while March and April have employed 19% and 18% respectively. Looking in the number of editorials there is a pick in March with 6 up to 31 editorials while January has framed with 2 up to 10 editorials, February 2 up to 13 editorials and April with 4 up to 22 editorials. Consequences of war/violence mostly related with visible effects: people wounded, killed, tortured, displaced as well as invisible effects like: Addiction to revenge and victory, racism, fear, no confident for the future, and more.

Regarding the roots of the conflict frame it is highly rated especially in March 2014 where the pick of the findings is 61%, while January follows with 50%, April follows with 36% and February follows with 31%. Talking about numbers there is a similar rated sequence with 5 up to 10 editorials in January, 4 up to 13 editorials in February, 19 up to 31 editorials in March and 8 up to 22 editorials in April.
References included for example: “Ukraine’s crisis began in November when Yanukovych, at Moscow behest, abandoned a free trade pact with the EU for closer ties with Russia”\textsuperscript{267}; “Political turmoil in Ukraine pushed President Victor Yanukovych from office following massive pro-democracy protests after he rejected a partnership agreement with the European Union in favor of deepening his country’s historical ties with Moscow”\textsuperscript{268}; “Russia will not allow itself to lose its once-satellite state so quickly”; “Overwhelmed with the support from the west, the Kiev protesters succeeded to oust President Yanukovych, an action that backfired violently and sparked angry protests in the eastern and southern parts of the country”\textsuperscript{269}; “Ukraine has struggled with corruption, bad government and short-sighted reliance on cheap gas from Russia. Political unrest has pushed up the deficit and sent exchange rates bouncing, and may have pushed the economy back into a recession”\textsuperscript{270}; “Ukraine currently describing the Russian moves in the Crimea as an outright invasion or act of aggression in violation of international norms and sovereignty, mainstream commentators resorted to to-be-expected simplistic explanations focused primarily on Putin. All context and understanding of even the very recent history disappeared, only to be replaced by facile talks of a new Cold War and good versus evil framings”\textsuperscript{271}; “Russia provides oil for a large portion in Europe, oil that just so happens to travel through Ukraine”\textsuperscript{272}, “These mistakes together with the lack of unifying leaders, Ukraine today is plunged into a serious political crisis which might further destabilizing the country by polarizing into

pro-Russians versus pro-West and threaten its territorial integrity through more referendums for annexations,”

The solution oriented frame had a very limited degree contribution according this analysis. April was the higher rated with 14% while January, February and March follow with 10%, 8% and 12% respectively. Talking about numbers March is leading with 4 up to 31 editorials, April follows with 3 up to 22 editorials, while January and February have both 1 editorial from 10 and 13 respectively. Suggested solutions include references only to negotiations and/or elections. As a paradigm an editorial reporting suggested: “Ukraine have to decide in democratic elections whose side they are on: European Union or Euroasian Union. They should elect the government and the president in democratic elections.”

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CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

4.1 MEDIA MEDIATION, AGENDA SETTING AND FRAMES

Until now it seems that international public opinion still remains divided over the causes and consequences of the events that took place from the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, the character of the Euromaidan protests, Russian troops into Crimea, the nature of the military conflict in south-eastern areas of Ukraine and the level of the Western interference within Ukraine and beyond its borders. This is partly due to the fact that a variety of representations were visible in media reports. This diversity on reporting the Ukraine crisis actually reflects the nature of the global media organizations’ function nowadays, a 24/7 environment under budgetary pressures and with few permanent correspondents around the globe.

Ukraine was part of all international headlines as well as internet platforms during the time of this research. Russia’s Sputnik News editors showed to be very skilled and effective to provide news stories in the form of reporting, statements or news releases by key Russian and Western figures from the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis. Consequently, according the extended coverage by the Russian Sputnik News website, the language used in international media reports and the framing was most likely shaped by the Russian sources. English language used by this internet platform had the benefit to reach out widely in the western audiences. This language and reporting coming out for Sputnik News was somehow affected many media outlets, Western or not, bringing the desired Narrative of the originators. The Western internet platforms, BBC News and Huffington Post, follow the same direction in republishing political aspects in their editorials had an opposing orientation from Russian Sputnik News website, tilt more to the West.

Regarding Question 1, talking about the level of media mediation – republishing political aspects, we can agree that all the above mass media provide powerful channels of information between the political elite, decision makers and their audiences, thus this level of mediation considered very high. What we know about ongoing political process related with the Ukraine events comes primarily from the media. In general, people do learn from mass media not only factual information about
public affairs and what is happening in the world, they also learn how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis placed on it by the mass media. Considerable evidence through this research shows that editors play an important part in shaping our social reality. They do this during their day-to-day task of choosing and displaying news.

A significant point for all these internet platforms is that the English speaking Russian population around the world is about 5.48% of the total Russian population\textsuperscript{277}. Looking in the structure of the websites Russian Sputnik News include an easy selection language drop menu of 31 different languages, most of the in the Eastern Eurasian area. Huffington Post has a similar drop menu of 15 languages but not include the Eastern Eurasian countries while a relevant menu has not been identified in BBC news website. This choice is important for the access of a wide number of populations around the world and especially the interesting area.

Especially the first months, regardless the political statements and differences between the East and the West, the messages came out of Ukraine by all the three websites examined in this study were mixed, portraying the protesters either as instigative with fascist elements which had the aim to destabilize the country or as citizens against the government’s decisions having different orientation. Furthermore, they portrayed not as a unified and cohesive group, and while they did efforts to get their messages out to the international media, they were not so successful in doing so. That’s why it looks like to be difficult to assess the impact of international reporting on Ukraine story in the public opinion globe wide. This kind of reporting, presenting only information that can be indisputably verified has worked against the larger goal of providing an accurate picture.

One function of the media is agenda setting, not telling people what to think, but rather in what order and how much emphasis will be placed on the issues (McCombs, 2004). The framing of the conflict through the use of specific phrases and discourses as revealed from our analysis, ‘former Soviet nation,’ ‘referendum,’ ‘neighboring Ukraine’, ‘neo-Fascist youths’, ‘heavily ethnic Russian-populated areas’ or ‘illegitimate, right wing government’ appear in reports, impact audiences approach on the issue.

This way of build or promote information is related with the message production role of the media and how they depict or elsewhere portray the events. Consciously or not the media distorts events through their reporting. Looking in the overall reporting of the Ukraine crisis for the entire research we have to agree that news media platform tend towards the negative and the dramatic often made things seen worse than they are. Furthermore, a lot of editorials favor one side’s policy or the other, tailored images and their analyses with preexisting opinions and preferences. All these outcomes tend to agree with the view shared by Question 2 of this research. Hypothesis 1 of the survey also confirmed according the above.

Therefore, we could say that news media platforms, by disseminating a range of political or decision makers’ opinions, enable the public to make choices and enter the national or/and international life. Moreover, media in general, is the supplier of information that the general public and political elites need to form political opinions and make political decisions. Additionally, the mass media are understood as important mechanisms in ensuring the principles of modern democratic societies. Also, they likely may evoke a variety of responses because audiences translate media messages through their own values. Thus, media frames news into narratives (series of stories), another role of the media, using familiar references as a method to help their audiences make sense of information in way that they are familiar (Entman, 1993).

The advances in information technology have led people nowadays to rely on easy communication and readily available information--both in their personal lives and their nations, who for the most part, have rightly welcomed these changes. Information is used nowadays from both the military and the society. Low-cost, easily accessible online networks act as a force multiplier by increasing networking and organizing capabilities. The ability to rapidly disseminate graphic images and ideas to shape the public narrative transforms social networks into a strategic weapon in the hands of all the parties engaged in conflict.²⁷⁸

Going throughout the overall findings, the Ukraine crisis was reported in simple recognizable and repeated related stories, most of which are related with protesters vs police, East vs West, and a new Cold War Era. This led the Ukraine crisis increasingly being represented mostly as a power of struggle between Russia

and the West or/and US/EU, rather than an independent subject of international affairs. This is also evidence that partially shares the view of the Question 2 of this research.

Unlike Russian Sputnik News, Western media editorials, especially in the first two months (January and February 2014) included violent scene videos and images about Ukraine during the Euromaidan protests. The following choices by the authors of the editorials gave a dramatic tone and most likely create emotional reactions to their audiences: *clashes between the police and the protesters, deaths and injuries of both sides, attacks in journalists, etc.* Many of these dramatic and violent images were widely circulated and in some cases repeated, and used in many top photos lists for 2014. This rationale shares the view of Question 3 that verified widely only in the Western internet platforms. In the other hand, Sputnik News looks more controlled in the use of images that do not have any aggressive visual character in its editorials.

Furthermore, all three websites examined in this study dominated their reporting during the first four months of 2014 by two representations: Firstly, Ukrainians (the protesters/people of Ukraine) were making a pro-European choice; they were ready to face the police and security forces to stand up to their European values. This has been combined with several points of reference like the use of symbols, EU flags, music, the size and endurance of the demonstrations, and more. Secondly, Ukraine was divided between the West and the East-South, with the first would like to joint the EU and the later prefer to get closer ties with Russia. The first connected with the presence of western supporters to the protesters and the second with attention to the President Victor Yanukovych and his relation with Russian president Putin.

More precise, dominant in all platforms was the success of the protests to ouster President Victor Yanukovych who fled to Russia. Controversial references, in one hand charged him as the main responsible for the violence that sparked during the protests in the end of 2013 and beginning of 2014, while others presented him as a political figure that even was in favor with closer ties with Russia could prevent the referendum for the Annexation of Crimea to Russia as well as would like to see Crimea Peninsula as part of Ukraine and not Russia\(^{279}\). Moreover, most editorials

connected the Ukrainian President with Russia Leader Vladimir Putin, causing the impression that the Ukrainian president maintains a close relationship with his Russian counterpart.

In the other hand, the interim government of Ukraine has been portrayed as the result of the ousting of the President Victor Yanukovych which took the power with the support of the right sector and radical parties in Ukraine. This was the issue that raised questions about the legitimacy of the new government, mostly by Sputnik News, but the issue is evident also in BBC News and Huffington Post in some references, mostly related with the Russian claims. The following reference written by By Bridget Kendall Diplomatic correspondent, BBC News, illustrates the overall dominant story characterize a wide number of the research editorials: “Western powers say it is the new interim government in Kiev, authorized by the Ukrainian parliament. Russia says Kiev is in the hands of an illegitimate government of "far-right extremists" with "xenophobic, anti-Semitic and neo-fascist" views, installed as the result of a "coup d'etat", which deposed President Victor Yanukovych illegally”.

Crimea case has its own part within the news coverage in this fourth months’ timeframe. The overall reporting for Crimea was under fog caused misunderstanding and difficulties to follow. Actions and statements by the Russian leaders and reporters were deliberately clouding the fast-moving events, creating many mixed messages to their audiences. This misunderstanding was empowered by the handling of Western journalists who in most times prevented to film or were intimidated, according the reports. The situation was fuelled also with reports of heavily armed forces presented in Crimea without insignia and with the Western media identified them sometimes as Russian and sometimes differently than Russians.

The reproduction of news and political statements, thesis or/and announcements did not include all the historical dimensions for Ukraine and especially Crimea peninsula. This may affect directly the cognitive field of their audiences but also indirectly affect the control access to the minds of the public at large. This does not mean that elite opinions and ideologies are simply imposed, inculcated, or otherwise passively adopted by the public, but only that their discursive

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resources are such that they are better able than other social groups to influence interpretations and social beliefs and to marginalize or suppress alternatives that are against their interests (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1990). For example, even many reports, in Sputnik News and BBC News, included reports with the fact that Crimea had been transferred to Ukraine by Russia in 1954, no reference identified in all three internet platforms noted other dimensions like for example “the Tatar relationship with the peninsula that was the homeland of Crimean Tatar when conquered by the Russians in the 18th century”. Instead of this kind of references there are many others related with crisis areas like Kosovo, Yugoslavia, Syria and Libya, Czechoslovakia, Moldova, and more?

A very interesting issue is the appearance during the end of February and the beginning of March references to “information warfare”. Satellite images along with hybrid war indicators that were used by the West against Russian involvement, and from the other hand Russian references to West high representatives’ visit in Ukraine supporting the protesters as well as leakage in phone conversations are only part of this exchange between the Western and the Russian debate. The use of images or not, the terminology used in the reports, information presented or omitted in all these three media internet platforms are reasons that justify the appearance of a kind of “Information Warfare” that affected also the media outlets. This is an additional reason to confirm that the entire issue of what happened in Ukraine and especially Crimea, how, why, and the outcomes, are still subject to debate, even today.

The competitive area and the importance of the information space forced the Ukrainian Government to establish the “Ministry of Information”\textsuperscript{289} in late 2014. The proposal for this establishment was related with the protection of “Ukraine’s information space from Russian propaganda and counter propaganda in Russia, in the temporarily occupied territories of Crimea and eastern Ukraine. In accordance with the Ministry’s Regulations, it is the main body of the central executive power system in the field of safeguarding information sovereignty of Ukraine, in particular in terms of distribution of socially important information inside and outside Ukraine, as well as providing functioning of the state information resources. An early function of this new entity in Ukraine is the establishment of an “Internet army”, rallied by the Ukrainian Ministry of Information, distributed online media which calls information about military encirclements "Russian propaganda"\textsuperscript{290}.

Table 2: Summary of Differences and Similarities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sputnik News</th>
<th>BBC News</th>
<th>Huffington Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of Photos</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Videos</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Maps</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence Scenes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite Images</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes\textsuperscript{291,292}</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements / Announcements by Political &amp; Military Leaders</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Orientation</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Neutral to West</td>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Available</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


4.2 THE COMBINED DOMINANT NARRATIVE, HYBRID WARFARE AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Ukraine Conflict has a unique character. It combines several newly developed mechanisms by global powers and actors in order to push forward their political intentions or even plans. The use of the military is not anymore the only use of force since an aggressive use of a blend of soft and hard power, a combination of snap exercises, deception, cyber attacks, political and economic pressure as well as propaganda consist the new arena/tools of warfare, namely “Hybrid Warfare”. The combination of all these elements creates among others confusion as well as overwhelm, even divide.

There is no universally accepted definition of hybrid warfare which leads to some debate whether the term is useful at all. But the exploitation of the methods by NATO and Russia as well as the academic debate on the issue gives a dynamic for this kind of warfare that actually include three areas of warfare: conventional warfare, irregular warfare and cyber warfare. Scott Jasper and Scott Moreland, suggests the following areas for analysis in the Hybrid Warfare: Blended Tactics, Flexible and adaptable structure, Terrorism, Propaganda and information warfare, Criminal activity and Disregard for International Law.

Content analysis of all these three internet platforms includes indicators in such areas (described in the first two paragraphs) of Hybrid Warfare by all actors including the West and Russia. The point is that even both soft and hard power is used during the Ukraine Conflict, deterrence or defends need hard power tools to confront the threats. Let’s see which references included indicators for Hybrid Warfare engagement by the parties involved in the conflict:

293 Scott Jasper, CAPT, USN (ret) is a lecturer in the Center for Civil-Military Relations and the National Security Affairs Department at the Naval Postgraduate School.

294 Scott Moreland is deputy program manager for multinational exercises in the Center for Civil-Military Relations at the US Naval Postgraduate School. His current areas of research include the global commons and comprehensive approach to crises.

### Table 3: Hybrid Warfare Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hybrid Warfare Tool</th>
<th>Sputnik News</th>
<th>BBC News</th>
<th>Huffington Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snap Exercises</td>
<td>Yes2^96</td>
<td>Yes2^97</td>
<td>Yes2^98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>Yes2^99+300</td>
<td>Yes3^01+302</td>
<td>Yes3^03+304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber Attacks</td>
<td>Yes3^05</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes4^06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economical Pressure</td>
<td>Yes3^07+308</td>
<td>Yes3^09+310</td>
<td>Yes3^11+312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propaganda</td>
<td>Yes3^13+314</td>
<td>Yes3^15+316</td>
<td>Yes3^17+318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proxi Forces / Agents</th>
<th>Yes^{319\cdot320}</th>
<th>Yes^{321\cdot322\cdot323}</th>
<th>Yes^{324\cdot325}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism</td>
<td>Yes^{326\cdot327}</td>
<td>Yes^{328\cdot329}</td>
<td>Yes^{330\cdot331}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Warfare</td>
<td>Yes^{332\cdot333}</td>
<td>Yes^{334\cdot335\cdot336}</td>
<td>Yes^{337\cdot338}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The above indicators are not targeting any of the actors of the Ukraine Conflict. They just make clear that editorials succeeded to identify these elements of the political or military actions, statements, announcements or comments that introduce the basic elements of a Hybrid Warfare. Even as an effort from all sides to justify their actions and to blame the opposing side, whichever is this side, the evidences have a clear message. Ukraine Conflict was part of a systematic and extended global chess game where all sides used any possible mean to promote their interests. This is also additional reasoning that tends to agree with the Question 2 of this research.

The concept of “hybrid warfare” even first appeared in 2002 in a thesis by William J. Nemeth describing the way Chechen insurgents combined guerrilla warfare with modern military tactics and the use of mobile and internet technology. Have been the last years often part of political and academic debates “hybrid warfare” combine both conventional and non-conventional methods traditional understanding of military operations in their war fighting strategies. The term was primarily used to refer to the strategy of non-state actors, especially after the Russian operations in Crimea and the situation in the Eastern Ukraine. The combination of the technology and the availability of cyber-led hybrid threats is what make these threats so potent. Media could be used for influencing the public opinion as a means of psychological operations both at home and abroad.

In this influencing field of the public, there is a crucial arena of global politics, mass Communications or elsewhere Strategic Communications, in which global powers work to undermine each other and further their own interests at others’ expense. The ability to project narratives to influence foreign audiences is therefore

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339 Social Media as a Tools of Hybrid Warfare, Anna Reynolds, May 2006
considered a matter of national security in the new doctrines, as it consists also the ability to control the circulation of narratives at home.

Strategic Communications is the new area to shape and manipulate public opinion, internally within the state and externally getting the support of the wider international community. To doing so, a well developed plan created by experts in communication is required in order to create the framework within which all communications have to be consistent, coordinated and synchronized. The mechanism even different among all players relies on messaging, the delivery of well organized story line, which carefully connect historical factors with recent developments in order to orchestrate actions, images and words.

There is a wide spread last years’ literature and discourse on the issue. This modern technical and global shift for the interaction with audiences also created long discussions in most of the national and international political-military organizations that the last years are working to build and maintain a consistent relationship between and among their bodies in order to promote their foundation values. In this perspective this new field of communication integration, Strategic Communications, incorporated in structures and doctrines.

Douglas MacArthur, an American general best known for his command of Allied forces in the Pacific Theater during World War II, said “One cannot wage war under present conditions without the support of public opinion, which is tremendously molded by the press and other forms of propaganda”. Internet, and as part of it, websites, evolves, and its usage changes and expands, so do its characteristics. This is in part due to the fact that social networks are linked to technologies and platforms that enable connectivity and creation of interactive web content as well as collaboration and exchange among participants, the public and the media.

Since the selected internet platforms reach a variety of audiences, domestic and international, in my thesis I identified the story line consisted a wider narrative that each of the main media organizations pushed out during the first four months of 2014 regarding the Ukraine Crisis/Conflict. The findings by each website analyzed in the following sections.
4.2.1 THE SPUTNIK NEWS DOMINANT NARRATIVE

The Ukraine Crisis seems to affect the already anti-western narratives that were a silence part in several Russian discourses even before 2013 – 2014 events (Smyth & Soboleva, 2014; Yablokov, 2014). References to historical patterns were part of series of plotlines that explained the study’s timeframe (2014) developments under a historical perspective, appear to be a narrative that attributed negative characteristics to the Ukrainian interim government, the West and EU states.

An example of this interrelated effort is the editorial with title “Russia Mulls Jailing ‘Nazism Whitewashers’ for 5 Years” referring to the World War II:

“People who attempt to "whitewash Nazism" will face fines and long prison sentences under legislation put forward Friday by Russia’s ruling party. United Russia’s bill would be based on the Nuremberg Trials of 1945-1949, lawmaker said. The trials, held by the Allies, convicted most surviving Nazi leaders of war crimes, denounced fascism and proclaimed most Nazi organizations as criminal. The bill also proposes to criminalize “dissemination of deliberate misinterpretations about the Soviet Union’s role in World War II”\(^\text{341}\).

The revolution in Ukraine was depicted as a “coup” fomented by the West in order to overthrow the government. Examples of this story include:

_Ukraine has been swept by unrest since last November when the so-called Maidan mass rallies began in Kiev. The country underwent a regime change resembling a military coup in late February, leading to the ouster of the legitimate president, Viktor Yanukovych\(^\text{342}\); Russia maintains the new Western-backed authorities in Kiev, who seized power in a coup last month, lack authority as they were not democratically elected to lead the country\(^\text{343}\); The parliament has voted to_

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impeach Yanukovych and called presidential elections for May 25. In a statement, he denounced the efforts to oust him as a coup.\(^\text{344}\)

Looking in the overall used language in most of the editorials included expression like the following and the example above; there is an attempt to give the demonstrators a profile of “radical elements”, “extremists” or “Nazis” and in this direction to absorb the legitimacy of the interim government in Ukraine:

“Neo-Nazi Svoboda party”\(^\text{345}\); “US also condemns violence committed by hooligans known in Ukraine as “titushki,” who are allegedly paid to provoke violence, as well as “targeted attacks against journalists and peaceful protesters.”\(^\text{346}\); Officials in Russia have limited themselves to condemning events in the neighbouring country as the work of “extremists” and “terrorists”\(^\text{347}\); “Russia’s Foreign Ministry on Wednesday condemned the violence in Ukraine but accused European leaders of refusing to admit that “radical elements” within the opposition are responsible for the carnage.”\(^\text{348}\); Power in Ukraine was seized by nationalists, neo-Fascist youths that represent an absolute minority of the people”\(^\text{349}\), and more.

These characteristics given to the protesters in combination with the vandalism of the Soviet-era statues presented in several editorials increase the tensions and the differences between Russia speaking and Ukraine Speaking population giving a justification to the protection of the Russian historical sides and populace. An example of how Sputnik News editorials illustrated this issue is the following:

“Euro news television channel swiftly pulled a picture of a vandalized Soviet-era military memorial from the head of its Facebook page Tuesday in the latest


incident to highlight heightened Russian sensitivity over perceived disrespect for World War II monuments”

Many editorials included a combination of stories that were systematically repeated throughout their content; several of them ended the editorials that look like part of a well organized media-narrative. Examples include:

“Anti-government protests in Ukraine began last November in the capital following the president’s decision to delay an association agreement with the EU in favor of closer ties with Russia, and have since spread to the country’s central and western regions”

“Officials in Moscow have accused the United States and its allies in Europe of meddling in Ukraine’s affairs, while Western governments have criticized what they describe as economic bullying by Russia to pressure Ukraine into tighter integration with its former Soviet neighbour.”

“Russian lawmakers, including Yarovaya, have also long criticized the “glorification of Nazism” in some post-Soviet republics, such as Ukraine and the Baltic states, which had resilient insurgencies that alternatively cooperated with and opposed both the Soviets and the Nazis during World War II. Many modern radical nationalists in these countries see the war-era resistance as national heroes despite their cooperation with the Nazis and, in some cases, involvement in genocide.”

“Protesters in Ukraine took to the streets in November after Yanukovych backed off from signing landmark trade deals with the EU. The movement has since transformed into a loose coalition of opposition groups seeking Yanukovych’s ouster. Earlier this week, the Ukrainian prime minister resigned, prompting the collapse of the government.”

Putin said he could not imagine how European partners would react if a Russian foreign minister came to

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crisis-hit Greece or Cyprus and addressed a crowd of protesters there”; “Not only Ukrainians take part [in violence], they are aided by a number of foreigners from other states who took part in various regional military conflicts and are now wanted internationally”; and more.

The above stories in Sputnik News editorials attaches characteristics to western governments, especially the US, such as arrogance, hypocrisy and inconsistency on the issue of crime, while having Putin and Russian’s leadership as the main messengers using their statements during speeches, interviews, public announcements, supporting historical and religion symbols, Russian interests global wide and the Russian speaking population, increase their prestige to the readers.

Another outcome in the analysis of the Russian origin Sputnik News is that more dominant storytelling issues pointed between the Russian and the western countries. As already mentioned in the above text lines the first is related with the western countries, and especially the US’s, interference in the global instability. Connecting the Ukraine Conflict with western unsuccessful campaigns in other global crisis areas sets a rule of failure to the Western countries to bring their “Values” around the world, wherever their have been involved. This gives also the character that Russia does like to see less involvement of the western countries in the internal affairs of other countries. Examples of relevant editorials are as follow:

“US Non-Lethal Aid to Ukraine Foreshadows Military Assistance”. ... Non-lethal aid is a precursor to Washington providing lethal aid to its proxies ... pattern was seen in the former Yugoslavia (Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo), in Libya and is currently happening in Syria ... The ghosts of Yugoslavia, Libya and Syria are starting to appear over Ukraine ... adding Ukraine is now on the brink of an “abyss” as the US has ignored the country’s shared history with Russia while trying to “pull the country into the West's orbit and thereby into the European Union and NATO”;

“ANALYSIS: CIA Director Brennan’s Trip to Ukraine Initiates Use Of Force ... It’s
clear that the CIA director’s presence in Kiev is much more than mere coincidence ... Despite the denials by the White House, it seems that Brennan’s visit was an attempt to, at the very least, express support for a violent crackdown on pro-Russian protesters and militants in Eastern Ukraine ... The reported presence of Greystone mercenaries in Ukraine is typical of the CIA using shadowy front companies with murky interconnecting relationships to carry out agency operations”358; “Russia’s upper house of parliament on Wednesday called for an end to what it has called interference by Western politicians in the internal affairs of Ukraine”359; “Russian lawmakers blamed foreign politicians for what they described as their interference in Ukraine’s political crisis”360; “A number of European and US politicians and officials have visited Ukraine over the past few weeks to meet with government representatives, as well to engage with, and sometimes voice support for, the opposition. That has drawn heated accusations from Moscow of Western interference in the former Soviet nation’s domestic affairs”361; “The US does not and will never have the moral authority to teach others about international norms and respect to other countries’ sovereignty. What about the [1999 NATO] bombings of former Yugoslavia and the [2003] invasion of Iraq on false pretences?... Under the guise of protecting its citizens, who found themselves in a zone of a conflict, the US invaded Lebanon in 1958, the Dominican Republic in 1986, attacked tiny Grenada in 1983, bombed Libya in 1986 and occupied Panama three years later. At the same time, they dare to accuse Russia of ‘military aggression’ when it tries to protect its compatriots who make up the majority of the Crimean population, Lukashevich said”362; “We do not want to be pawns in a geopolitical game (Leonid Kozhara, Ukraine’s foreign minister),” he said.

adding “we do not want anyone to interfere with our strategic partnership with Russia, but we are also drawn towards the European Union”\textsuperscript{363}; and more.

A significant narrative dominant from the beginning of the Ukraine crisis and especially the first months of 2014 was the energy plotline. Financial problems arose in the Russian energy Giant Gazprom from non-payment by Ukraine of Gas ($2.7 billion) in connection with the dependence of Europe on Russian origin Gas supplies as well as alternative routes from the East to the West, new energy routs of gas to Ukraine and the shale gas industry, is only a small part of this geopolitical game. Important in this storytelling issue is the significant engagement of the Russian leadership in statements, precautions, comments and announcements in several public and private meetings, including life online interviews. Russian leadership use this area also to highlight the so called “brotherhood” with their fellows in Ukraine, giving the overall impression that Russia gives specific privileges to the neighbouring orbit countries in this area (cheap prices). One significant outcome on this competitive area is that there is difficult at the moment to reduce Europe’s dependence on Russian gas, even it looks possible in the future but it will take time, money and sustained political will. The narrative include example like the following\textsuperscript{364}:

“Putin told journalists that Russia’s economic assistance was not designed to support a particular government but was an act of brotherly love for the people in neighbouring Ukraine, common people suffer. We want a minimal burden on citizens,” the Russian president said, the non payment BY Ukraine of Gas ($2.7 billion) was creating financial problems for energy giant Gazprom, Russia will be monitoring the economic situation in Ukraine because it wants guarantees that it will get the money back\textsuperscript{365}; “Russia agreed to drop its gas prices for Ukraine from $400 per 1,000 cubic meters to $268 starting January 1, in a deal between Ukraine’s state energy firm Naftogaz and Russia’s Gazprom formalized on Thursday. The new price level must be confirmed every quarter, according to the agreement, giving financial leverage for Moscow to deter Kiev from seeking closer ties with the EU in the

\textsuperscript{364}Even the references look long, there is only a small part of the editorials examined in this study (part of 773 total Sputnik News’ editorials).
future”; “It is important for us what economic policy they are planning to apply regardless of what political forces will lead the government,” Putin said”… “Russian President Vladimir Putin said his country will stick to its commitments to lend debt-strapped Ukraine $15 billion and reduce natural gas prices even if Ukraine’s new Cabinet of ministers is filled with opposition politicians” 367; “Russia bought $3 billion worth of Ukrainian bonds in December in a bid to support its neighbor’s economy. Russia also agreed to a 30 percent cut in the natural gas price for Ukraine, which owes Moscow $2.7 billion for gas supplies last year”368; “Russia agreed to supply Ukraine with $15 billion worth of loans and slash the price for gas in a December deal that was widely seen as a political reward for Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych after his decision to back off from integration plans with Europe and cement closer ties with Russia”… “Medvedev said Wednesday that delayed gas payments were still a problem despite the price cut ordered by the Kremlin last month”369; “Putin announced the $15 billion loan in December, a few weeks after his Ukrainian counterpart Viktor Yanukovych unexpectedly bailed out of an association agreement with the EU. Most of the money will come from the National Welfare Fund, created in 2008 to support Russia’s flagging pension system”370; “Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, near Ukraine’s border with Russia could pollute surface and underground water reserves used by local people, the ministry said. Ukraine depends on Russian imports of natural gas, but in recent years has been attempting to diversify its supplies by financing alternative sources of the fuel, particularly domestic reserves of shale gas. The exploitation of shale gas, which is locked in shale rock formations, has revolutionized the world gas market in recent years and threatened the traditional dominance of fixed pipeline suppliers like Russia. Ukraine signed two major shale gas
deals with international oil giants Shell and Chevron last year worth a combined $20 billion” 371; “Ukraine has ceased buying gas from Europe and will instead purchase the fuel solely from Russia, as it offers the lowest prices, Ukraine’s energy minister said Thursday” 372; “Kiev has been buying gas from Poland and Hungary over the last two years and was close to striking another gas deal with Slovakia in a bid to reduce its dependence on Russian supplies, amid political tension over Ukraine’s previous policy of gradual economic alignment with Europe” 373; “Ukraine stopped buying European gas at the start of January, Ukrainian news agency UNIAN reported Wednesday, citing operational data from gas transmission systems in Hungary and Poland” 372; “More than half of the 55 billion cubic meters of natural gas consumed by Ukraine each year comes from Russia, according to Reuters” 374, 375; “Stavytsky said in January that Ukraine would discontinue relatively small purchases of natural gas from Europe and instead only buy from Russia” 376; “Ukraine is a major re-exporter of Russian gas to Europe, and political wrangling between the former Soviet states has led to serious disruptions in supplies in the past, especially in January 2006 and January 2009 when deliveries were temporarily halted over payment disputes” 373; and more.

The narrative by Sputnik News website in summary: is full of aggression against other participants with an offensive character for Russian participants; use particular names and terms to evoke specific associations, labelling the same people with different names (neo-Nazis, extremists, fascists) that leads to different cognitive consequences; use historical references (World War II); use the international law to illegitimate the new Ukrainian government; deprecates the achievements by other nations (financial crisis, unity, collective defence); use ironic and sarcastic expressions 374, 375 (like Western governments have criticized what they describe as

374 “Konstantin Dolgov, the Russian Foreign Ministry’s Commissioner for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, condemned the attack as violating the principle of a free and democratic election and also criticized the West’s “shy silence” towards the reports”
economic bullying by Russia or Peskov, Russian President Vladimir Putin's press secretary, also slammed the West for its reluctance to listen to Russia’s confirmation that it has no troops in Ukraine); include extended conspiracy theories (foreign agents, NGOs, external interference); suggests that other nations or organizations generate conflict to strengthen their international position; promote the Russian brotherhood calling the involvement as support and join; use the neighbourhood as more important in the geopolitics; support the customs and traditions against the globalization; all of which seems targeting human psychology for the support of planned military activities. Considering this narrative as a whole and taking into account the wide number of editorials published in the examined four months timeframe we can agree that it looks like an organized and collaborative effort, an effort that shares the view of Hypothesis 4 and tends to agree with the Question 4 of the study.

4.2.2 THE BBC NEWS AND HUFFINGTON POST NARRATIVE

The extended use of violent photos and videos, including reports from journalists and statements or interviews by politicians, western or Russian, give to the western websites a more balanced character but still tilts towards the West. But adding the comments and the thesis of western analysts, that had an extended part in BBC News website editorials, create confusion over the reality and fog to the real causes on the Ukraine crisis in these four months of this research. Predisposition of the writers (editors – analysts – journalists – etc) and own knowledge in international politics, influences by their Western orientation where evident in the articles, both tend to agree with the Question 4 of this study.

The plotline that has been scripted in the beginning of 2014 include the following points: The Ukraine desire is to embrace the West blocked by Ukraine

http://sputniknews.com/world/20140415/189237100/Ukraine-Charges-Pro-Federalization-Presidential-Candidate-With.html

375 “Lavrov dismissed the so-called “anti-terrorist” operation against pro-federalization protesters as the height of cynicism. “We should remember how violence on Maidan that led to dozens of victims was called democracy, while peaceful protests in the southeast are referred to as terrorism,” the minister said” http://sputniknews.com/russia/20140414/189216835/Use-of-Force-in-Ukraine-Threatens-Moscow-Kiev-Cooperation-.html
government and especially President Victor Yanukovych who triggered the mass demonstrations after the last-minute rejection of an EU deal under heavy pressure from Russia in November\textsuperscript{376,377}. Ukraine’s approach to Russia considered going back in time instead the integration with the EU that considered front\textsuperscript{378}. The protest movement portrayed also against corruption and for democracy while Russian aggression\textsuperscript{379,380} is dominant during these four months of the research. Radical elements referred in the editorials but not so emphasis has been given to their involvement for the deterioration of the situation in the clashes followed the peaceful demonstrations. Moscow’s claims of fascism and western conspiracies were often included in the discussions to bring a better balance but this increased the diversities between the two sides. Russia even not as a party to the Ukrainian armed conflict, "accused" as to be the culprit\textsuperscript{381} and disaster\textsuperscript{382}.

Furthermore, the western websites presented the thesis of President Yanukovych as that the revolution is a coup, while the oppositions use the same expression to characterize the anti-protests law that formulated by Mr Yanukovych’s Party of the Regions, together with the communists and a number of independents\textsuperscript{383}. NATO Eastern Europe built-up is another competitive area between the West and Russia. While Russia is asking for explanations on the movement NATO members justify this development as a measure to enhance collective defence for its members since Russia violating every international commitment. For the issue it is also portrayed that the alliance has also halted all civilian and military co-operation with

Russia. Some editorials are referred to a new “Cold War” that resembles the old bad days between the West and the East. Another number of editorials comparing the situation in Ukraine with Hitler and Nazism, saying among others that “new Hitler can be born in Ukraine now, that Nazism already is coming back to the world” and “likened Moscow’s moves in Crimea to Adolf Hitler’s 1938 annexation of German-speaking regions of Czechoslovakia”;

Moreover, Russia has been portrayed as invader in some editorials with different aspects supports this characterization. Ukraine's newly appointed Interior Minister Arsen Avakov called the block of Belbek international airport in Sevastopol by military units of the Russian navy as "military invasion and occupation"; Roger McDermott, Senior fellow in Eurasian military studies, Jamestown Foundation said that “Many indicators and warnings of preparation for a possible invasion are in place, including logistics, food supplies, medical services, and interior troops which would be used for control of occupied areas"; The Kremlin released a statement deeming President Viktor Yanukovych the legitimate leader of Ukraine, and asserting that an invasion would not be breaking international law because they have permission from the president; The later even using the same word “invasion” include the legitimacy Russia has given to acts inside Ukraine.

4.3 PEACE & WAR JOURNALISM IN THE UKRAINE CRISIS

With the increase in violence and unrest in the beginning of 2014, the searchlight has been turned on the media who are supposed to work for peace. Journalism, as has been

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introduced in the above paragraphs, has a big role to play in maintaining relative peace just as they have the power to fuel crisis. In as much as objectivity should be upheld, it has to go with responsibility.

The different coverage of Sputnik News online platform in comparison with the relevant Western oriented BBC News and Huffington Post websites reveals a different reality for their audiences. Limited references to solutions along with different approaches to the roots of the conflict by all these online platforms do not serve Peace Journalism for a more balanced and perspective coverage. In the other hand, the increased references to violence and the differences between the belligerents fuel the crisis and do not serve once again the way for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Headlines portrayed this different approach by Western and Eastern editorials is a strong evident that editors create an intentional reality to their audiences.

Headline in Sputnik News include examples as the following: “Russia Mulls Jailing ‘Nazism Whitewashers’ for 5 Years”; “Russians Unconcerned About Western Sanctions Over Crimea – Poll”; “Russia Accuses the West of Escalating Tensions Around Transdnestr”; “Russia Has No Intentions to Invade Ukraine – Lavrov”; “West Steps Up Disruptive Actions Inside Russia Over Crimea – FSB”; “Moscow Calls for International Assessment of Rights Violations in Ukraine”; and more.

Headlines in BBC News and Huffington Post include examples as the following: “Russia 'demands surrender' of Ukraine's Crimea forces “; “Solving Ukraine's 'political Chernobyl’”; “Russia and Ukraine in cyber 'stand-off’”; “Russian soldiers' seize Crimea hospital”; “Russian TV ratchets up rhetoric on Ukraine “; “Critical moment for US power”; “Russia begins new military exercises”; “EU and US impose sanctions over Crimea”; “Merkel warns Russia faces escalating sanctions”; “East-West Struggle Over Kiev Turns Nasty”; “After Ukraine, NATO Must Give Georgia Its MAP”; “Hungary Has No Business in That Russian Orbit and Neither Does the Ukraine”; and more.

Covering a war is always challenging for journalists, not only for the difficulty to report from a war zone, but from the risk to be manipulated by the military or politicians, intentionally or unintentionally. Organizations with reports on the Ukraine crisis have raised questions of the erosion of journalists’ integrity both in Russia and the West. The choice to oversimplify, to manipulate the facts, to fuel fear, hatred and violence, journalists must be aware these choices, by they anti-Western or Anti-Russian, might lead to grave consequences.
There is a clear distinction between journalists, serving their readers’ interests, as a watchdog of democracy, truthful and accurate reporting, and those in power, who have no interest in sharing the whole truth, especially in a war context, and as such do not take risks. Moreover, talking about corresponding the modern information environment include governmental and military spokespersons that share their information to the public through the media representatives. Sometimes they have their own media and there are cases where websites articles used copy and relay the articles of these entities. Even there is no such evidence in this study; this is still a possibility to be true in all this reporting material. The point here is that journalists have simply to report the facts and not to translate the facts in their perspective.

Ideally, media coverage should reflect different perspectives, included in Ukraine crisis what Russia government is saying through media as well as which is the western governments’ thesis on the issue. Readers and listeners in the Ukraine crisis of these three online news media platforms were merely parroting by information warfare and cold war narratives. In this cold-war flashback, the media in Russia, the US and UK seem to offering competing narratives about the uprising in Ukraine. Blames, belligerents, diverting interests, intervention allegations by all sides, and more created a plotline that did not served an objective, balanced and multi-aspect approach on the Ukraine crisis, but did exactly the opposite.

This cold war rhetoric does diversity to both the Western and Russian audiences, leaving them with a one dimensional view of the crisis that lacks depth and hue. Peace journalists shun the rhetoric in these antiquated narratives and stereotypes, eschewing “popular wisdom” while seeking balance and perspective. A peace journalist recognizes propaganda from any source, and seeks cleanse it with facts. Journalists covering the Ukrainian conflict would do well to apply the principles of peace journalism to their reporting and commentary.

4.4 THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS – THE UKRAINE CASE STUDY

Covering a conflict is very challenging and demanding for journalists. There is always the risk to be manipulated by the military or the politicians and the risk of violating ethical rules. Journalists’ integrity have been an issue for discussion from the
beginning of the Ukraine crisis in the European Federation of Journalists who initiated a dialogue between the Ukrainian and the Russian relevant unions, a process that is still ongoing under the auspices of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Two significant issues are part of this debate between the two unions, Propaganda and Freedom of the Media, a debate that raises the question of the erosion of journalists’ integrity both in Russia and the West. The question is whether propaganda is a free choice for journalists to oversimplify, to manipulate the facts, to fuel fear, hatred and violence. Reporting in the Ukraine crisis include more dimensions about the ongoing events, the security of the forces, the intensity of the violence from the one or the other side, the balance in covering both sides or trying to publish half true in what may characterized as unbalanced coverage.

Sputnik News, BBC News and HP include references that contain all these dimensions in these four months of the study, with the authors of the articles or reports clearly demonstrate the media war between Russia and the West. I am using the term “media war” due to the fact that according the reports Journalists became a target in several cases while in other cases they have been deported or prevented covering the events in Ukraine. Kidnaps and violence against journalists was also one of the dangers that journalists faced during the coverage of the Ukrainian conflict.

References to violence include the following: Targeted attacks against journalists\footnote{Sputnik. “US Condemns Deadly Violence in Ukraine.” 22 Jan. 2014. Web. 28 Sept. 2016.}; According to a list on the website of Ukrainian media non-governmental organisation Imi, 42 journalists were also hurt this week alone\footnote{BBC News, BBC. “Ukraine Protests: Crisis Talks after Day of Bloodshed.” BBC News. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Sept. 2016.}; An OSCE representative said Wednesday that journalists in Ukraine face violence and intimidation, alerting the international community that unless measures are taken, the deterioration of the security situation in the country might reach a dangerous state\footnote{Sputnik. “Missing Russian Journalist Found in Police Custody in Ukraine's Mariupol.” 17 Apr. 2014. Web. 28 Sept. 2016.}; There have been several incidents of protesters and journalists claiming to have been kidnapped and beaten by security forces. On Sunday, a Russian blogger who had been covering the protests said he and his cameraman had been snatched, beaten and told to go back to Russia\footnote{BBC News, BBC. “Ukraine Rally in Maidan Targets Yanukovych.” BBC News. Web. 28 Sept. 2016.}; Targeted attacks against journalists and peaceful protesters\footnote{News, BBC. “Ukraine Protests: Crisis Talks after Day of Bloodshed.” BBC News. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Sept. 2016.}.
An official for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe expressed concerns Tuesday about reported violence journalists in eastern Ukraine\textsuperscript{396}; and more.

Other references in propaganda and freedom of media include: Media chiefs of Russia and Ukraine on Monday exchanged calls for “unbiased coverage” of the crisis in the former Soviet republic. Western and Ukrainian media have repeatedly accused Russian colleagues of deliberate misinterpretation of facts while covering events in the country. A group of journalists has even set up a website to refute with facts various types of fake news and misinformation\textsuperscript{397}; Russian state TV presenter Dmitry Kiselyov has a reputation for extravagant tirades demonising the West, stigmatising homosexuals and portraying Ukraine as a country overrun by violent fascists\textsuperscript{398}; Ukraine has banned an alarming number of Russian journalists from covering events in the country, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told reporters Monday\textsuperscript{399}; Mr Kiselyov is a key part of Mr Putin’s media operation. Apart from his role as TV anchor, he was recently appointed to head the new Russia Today news agency, whose mission is to further beef up the Kremlin’s media presence around the world\textsuperscript{400}; On February 10th, a video of an anonymous Ukrainian woman hit YouTube and it’s gone viral. In the video, the woman tells the story of the protests and corrupt government in Ukraine. She begins her straightforward appeal by saying, “I am the Ukrainian.” She asks for support for the people of her country and tells of her fear that the Internet and phones will be cut off and the citizens of Ukraine will be left alone. / The Kyiv Post ran a brief article about the video commenting on the connection between political action and social media\textsuperscript{401}; and more.

Violence, kidnapping, blockade, death, propaganda, misinformation, manipulation, citizen journalism, technology and more are part of the challenges media representatives have faced and continue to face in the Ukraine crisis. Truth,
objectivity, freedom of press are the victims in one of the most volatile conflict ever, a conflict that brought Diplomatic, Informational, Economical and Military aspects of the modern information environment, an information environment that a modern journalist have to study, explore and confront in current and future conflicts.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Nowadays the world witness the power of internet as a tools of defining reality, politics, cultures and societies, as well as a global tool for communication. Moreover, media are used to mediate crises and conflicts and became part of diplomatic, informational, economical and military campaigns. Media news platforms’ audiences utilize these opportunities to share, to exchange but also to debate on information or others even exploit this environment for influence trying to persuade target groups and to shape opinions.

This analysis of frames, quantitative and qualitative, pointed out the scale and diversity of the internet, according the websites examined in this research, that have being exploited for political-military propaganda purposes in both the West and the East (Russia). Intentionally or unintentionally the authors succeeded to shape a reality, including a degree of influence to their audiences according their location, cultural characteristics, social norms and political beliefs.

The outcomes draw a strong relationship between the content of the articles and journalist’ or authors’ background, education, origin, nationality and beliefs. From one side Russia portrayed as a superpower, a country ready to defend its interests and from the other side as an aggressive country that would like to expand its borders to the neighbourhood Ukraine. West in this debate portrayed as a sum of political intentions supported militarily by NATO and its member states, but not ready to cope with the situation in Ukraine. Ukraine in the other site was between the elected unsuccessful government and the new radical one with Western expectations for success. Confusion and fog may characterize both aspects in the Ukraine crisis debate.

The dramatic plots overwhelmed the news, originated by Aristotle’s Poetics. For Aristotle, a good plot has several defining qualities. It must have a beginning, middle and end made up of a series of events. These events must follow each other on a causal basis; it must make logical sense that one thing comes after another. It must
establish events that are either probable or possible. They may or may not have actually happened, but they plausibly could in the world that has been established by the author.\footnote{Carroll, Noël. The Poetics, Aesthetics, and Philosophy of Narrative. Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.}

The “weaponization” of the internet seems to have been used by all sides to manipulate, distract, mislead or even confuse their audiences in order to create the conditions to promote their aims and objectives. Russia well organized website with the huge number of articles is most likely touches closer this aspect while the Western websites look more lawless in their positions. Audiences facing this hostile and unpredictable space have limited choices to follow. One is sure in this competition; West has to increase its resources and to be more consistent on its own communication potential.
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