COVERAGE OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR BY TELEVISION NEWS IN NINE COUNTRIES

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COMET

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Introduction

Kaarle Nordenstreng[1]

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia on 24 February 2022 was an historical milestone, bringing, for the first time since World War II, an all-out war to the very heart of Europe. News media, especially television, typically constitute the main window on the war scene and related topics, thus having a crucial role in the process of creating and maintaining the climate of public opinion for or against the war. Social media is important but secondary.

This content analysis study was initiated at Tampere University in March 2022 with the support of the Tampere-based C.V. Åkerlund Media Foundation. It initially focused on war coverage in television news in Russia, China, Finland and the UK from the invasion on for two months. Soon the selection of countries was expanded by the voluntary participation of Italy and the USA (the latter by two teams) as well as Brazil, India and South Africa (following up an earlier BRICS project).

Researchers

The study was supervised by Professor Emeritus Kaarle Nordenstreng at Tampere University and the initial team consisted of Docent Svetlana Pasti, doctoral researcher Tao Zhang, undergraduate students Milla Blomqvist and Hanne Vuorela at Tampere University and Reader Savyasaachi Jain at Cardiff University. The Italian team was led by Professor Giuliano Bobba at the University of Turin. The two US teams were headed by Professor Danilo Yanich at the University of Delaware and Professor Hilde Van den Bulck at Drexel University. The teams in the other BRICS countries were led by Professor Liziane Soares Guazina at the University of Brasilia, Professor Nagamallika Gudipaty at the English and Foreign Languages University in Hyderabad and Associate Professor Musawenkosi Ndlovu at the University of Cape Town.

News bulletins

In each country, except South Africa, the main daily TV news programme was identified, here referred to as "bulletin". These were typically evening news broadcasts lasting between a half and one hour on a prominent national channel.

In Russia it was the main evening news *Vremya* at 9:00 PM on TV Channel 1, which at the start of the "special military operation" doubled the length of its bulletin to a full hour. In China the choice was the 30 minutes long *CCTV News* at 7:00 PM on the leading Channel 1, available worldwide.

In Finland the main daily bulletin is *YLE TV News* at 8:30 PM on the public service Channel 1, with a duration of 25 minutes, not including a sports section. The corresponding British bulletin is *BBC News at Six,* aired at 6:00 PM on BBC1. It is normally 30 minutes in length, but it was extended to 60 minutes during the first three weeks of the war. The leading Italian TV news bulletin chosen for the study was the 40-minute *TG1* at 8:00 PM on RAI channel 1.

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The US media landscape is far too diverse to be covered by any one channel and it was agreed to include the main news bulletins of the three national broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) and two leading cable networks (CNN, Fox). For the US cable network programmes were selected that most closely follow the concept of a bulletin: the daily *CNN Newsroom,* which has a duration of 50 minutes not counting commercial breaks, and *Fox News Special Report* with a similar length.

Of the remaining BRICS countries, the Brazilian *Jornal Nacional*, produced by the leading free market media conglomerate Globo Group, has a duration of about 50 minutes. The Indian state channel *DD India* broadcasts its half-to-one-hour main news bulletin *The News* at 7:30 AM, while there is no formal news bulletin in the evenings; it is also available in over 190 countries via satellite. The South African 24h *SABC News Channel* is the most watched news channel in the country, with a reach of over 50 countries in Africa. It does not have a single main bulletin comparable to those of the other countries but several more specialized bulletins, which is why the South African data could not be compiled for the overview presented in Figure 1 below, while it is included in the subsequent analysis of war-related content.

Days sampled

Days selected for the content analysis are all Thursdays from the beginning of the invasion and also the Mondays of the first two weeks of the war: 24 and 28 February, 3, 7, 10, 17, 24 and 31 March, 7 and 14 April. The TV news bulletins on those days were screened and copied from the archives in these countries.

Method

The content analysis was conducted by first dividing the bulletins into *news items* defined as thematically consistent units of news flow with a direct or indirect focus on the war; here also referred to as "stories". They were typically 1 to 5-minute presentations containing material from the studio or from outside. Each news item was then attributed to one of the 13 *topics* listed with explanations in *Appendix 1*. Items were also classified according to the national perspectives or *angles* which they represented, as seen in the coding instructions, *Appendix 2*. A complementary codebook applied to the US broadcasts is reproduced as *Appendix 3*.

A quantitative analysis was complemented in most cases by a qualitative analysis, identifying specific *narratives* in the coverage. Although the coding left some room for interpretation, the overall outcome was quite satisfactory.

This report

The report begins with a brief overview of the bulletins included, followed by extensive reports from the nine countries involved, in the same order as in the following Figure 1. The final chapter provides a comparison of the national results with conclusions and recommendations.

Overview of the TV news bulletins

Tao Zhang[2]

The overall volume of the main news bulletins in the countries included in the study is shown graphically in Figure 1. *War-related news* refers to the total number of minutes of news items dealing with any topics relating to the war in the news bulletins across the ten sample days. *Other news* refers to the rest of the bulletins, excluding regular weather forecasts and sports. The US data are averages of bulletins on three broadcast networks and two cable networks. The order of countries/bulletins follows their entry to the project as noted above. South Africa is not shown here but included below in the analysis of war-related news.

Figure 1. Total minutes of war-related and other news, with respective percentages, in the bulletins on the 10 sample days in the countries included.
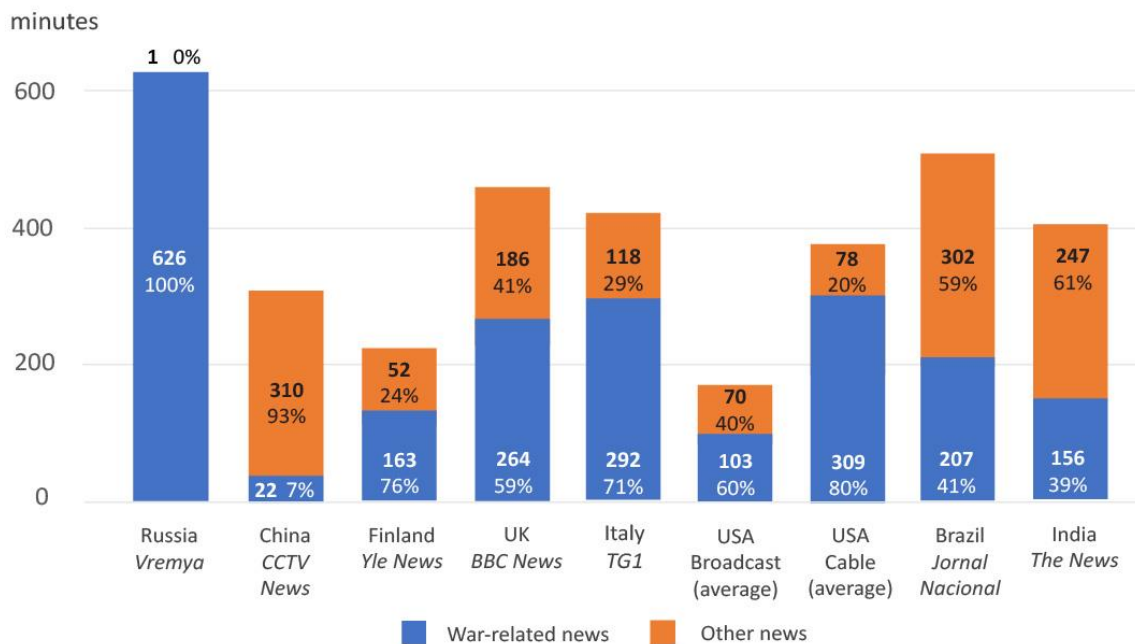
The cumulative volume of all news is greatest in Russia, followed by Brazil, UK, Italy and India, the average length of the ten daily news bulletins being over 40 minutes. In Finland and the USA broadcast networks the average length of the bulletin is less than half an hour and well over half of their time is devoted to war-related news, while the US cable networks dedicated 80 percent of their time to the war; in Italy the share was 71% and in the UK 59%. In China the bulletins are about half an hour long but the share of war-related news there is minimal – clearly least of the countries included. In Brazil and India the share of war-related news is over one third.

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The share of war-related news is highest in Russia: 99.7 per cent, leaving practically zero per cent for other news. Only one out of about 627 minutes was not related to the war – a story on 44 billion rubles being allocated by the government to construct new schools. This is probably the only case in history that TV news anywhere has been so heavily and for so long a period concentrated on a single theme. It demonstrates how all-pervasive has been the Russian attention on the "special operation" – not only military but also economic and not least cultural-informational.

Going from overall volumes to actual news content, Table 1 presents the percentages of the war-related news topics, based on their number of minutes on the ten days scrutinized for each country. The list of topics with definitions is presented in Appendix 1.

Table 1. Percentages of war-related topics based on their duration in each country bulletin (in South Africa several bulletins on the News Channel) throughout the sample days.

Topic	Russia One %	China CCTV %	Finland YLE %	UK BBC %	Italy RAI %	USA Broad-cast %	USA Cable %	Brazil Globo %	India DD India %	South Africa SABC %
Battlefield	12	21	17	16	27	32	28	15	7	2
Civilians	11	3	5	18	10	19	12	32	48	14
Disinformation	4	0	2	1	1	0.8	3	0	0	1
EU policies	>0	0	2	1	15	0	0	2	1	1
Justification	13	6	0	2	1	1.6	0	0	0	4
Nuclear hazard	1	0	0	0	0	3.3	3	0	1	3
Peace	7	23	2	6	8	0	0	6	9	12
Refugees	7	0	11	17	7	15	11	3	13	15
Sanctions	28	18	22	20	11	7	14	19	3	6
Security	1	3	29	7	3	>.01	2	4	1	18
United Nations	1	3	0	1	1	1.3	0	5	8	14
US policies	13	23	1	2	3	11	9	6	7	2
Other war-related	2	0	9	9	12	9	18	8	3	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Russian *Vremya*, with the greatest amount of time in the bulletins, also has more time devoted to various topics – over twice as much as the BBC in the UK and much more than in the other countries. With the exception of Russia, all countries include in their bulletins at least one topic with no war-related news during each of the ten sample days.

Closer scrutiny of the topics and their contents is provided in the following country reports. They follow a standard format of quantitative and qualitative analysis; in the reports on Italy and US Broadcast the qualitative side is only partial.

Country report: Russia

Svetlana Pasti[3]

TV channel and news program

Channel One (until 2002 Public Russian Television/ORT) began broadcasting in April 1995 as the successor to the state television and radio company Ostankino, which was the main broadcaster in the USSR and reached 99.8% of the Russian population. Channel One quickly took a leading position among domestic TV channels, which it retains to this day (https://www.1tv.ru/about/channel). Among the shareholders of Channel One are representatives of the state (34%), VTB Bank (33%), the National Media Group (19%) and the insurance company SOGAZ (13%). The average daily audience of Channel One had a share of 10.3% and coverage of 26.8% putting it in second place on the list of the main federal channels (https://mediascope.net/data/).

Vremya (Time) is the main evening newscast bulletin in Russia airing on Channel One – previously on Programme One of the Central Television of the USSR. The programme has been on the air since 1 January 1968 and is nowadays produced in three daily editions of half an hour, scheduled for transmission in Moscow at 13:00, 17:00 and 21:00, the last of these having been the bulletin's main broadcast ever since its inception. In the Soviet era and today, *Vremya* has a pro-government bias.

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Story types

During the sample period *Vremya* had altogether 204 news items with a total time of 626.4 minutes. Of these, only one story of about one minute's duration was not related to the war – it appeared in the news bulletin of 24 February. Thus, all the bulletins on the following nine sample days were devoted exclusively to war-related topics. Figure 1 shows how *Vremya* was practically a war bulletin – although never using the word "war".

Figure 1. Percentage of war-related and other news in *Vremya* based on coverage duration on the sample days*.*
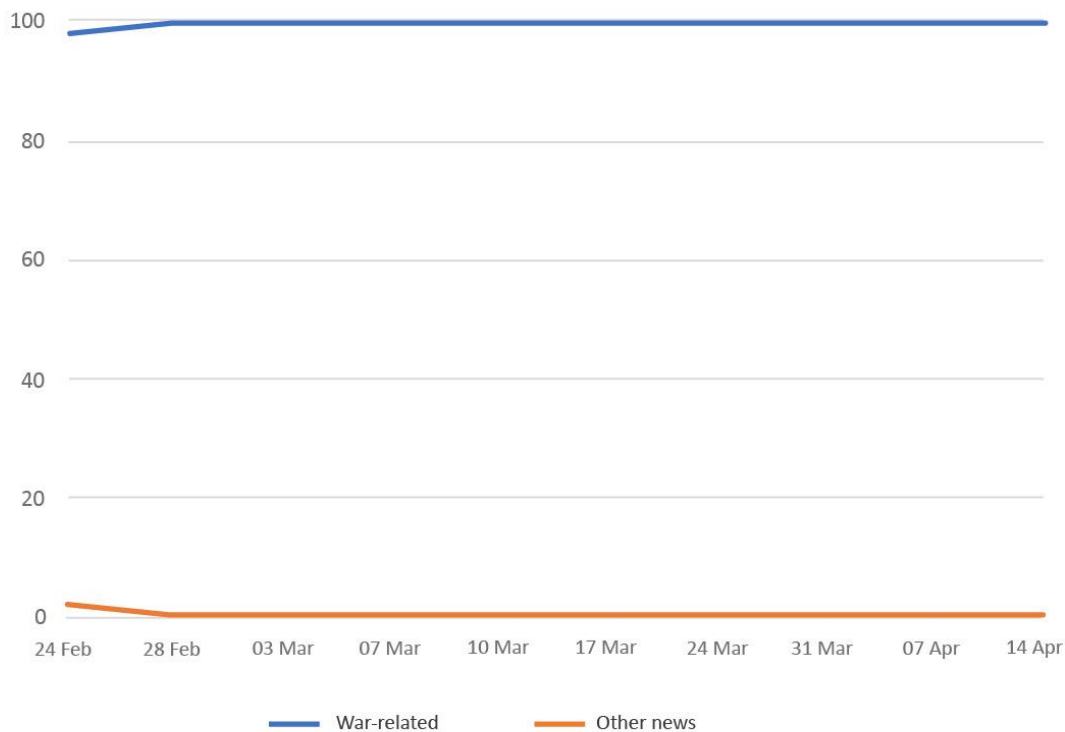
Admittedly, the borderline between war-related and other news was not in all cases very clear. For example, on 10 March *Vremya* had a story on insulin continuing to be delivered to Russia from global suppliers despite the Western sanctions (not mentioning them) could have been classified as normal news, but it was obvious that such a story was war-related in the category of Sanctions, suggesting that the global suppliers of insulin did not participate in the hostile isolation of Russia by the West and that the rest of the world continued to cooperate with Russia.

Topics

As seen in Table 1, *Vremya* covered all 13 war-related topics in our analysis (for a more detailed description of the topics, see Appendix 1). The top three topics, measured by number of news items, were Sanctions (21%), Battlefield (18%) and Peace (12%). Measured by coverage in minutes, the top three topics were Sanctions (28%), US policies (13%) and Justification (13%).

Table 1. Topics by number of war-related news items and their coverage time in *Vremya.*

Topic	Number of news items	Percentage	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Battlefield	36	18%	73.8	12%
Civilians	22	11%	67.2	11%
Disinformation	5	2%	26.1	4%
EU policies	2	1%	2.3	>0%
Justification	22	11%	78.7	13%
Nuclear hazard	3	1%	5.7	1%
Peace	24	12%	45.3	7%
Refugees	11	5%	44.7	7%
Sanctions	44	21%	177.4	28%
Security	7	3%	6.5	1%
United Nations	3	1%	7.1	1%
US policies	17	8%	80.5	13%
Other war-related	7	3%	11.1	2%
Total	203	100%	626.4	100%

Table 2 below lists the duration of news items in the 13 topics on the 10 sample days. On the first day of the conflict, 24 February, half of the airtime was devoted to the topic of justifying the invasion in order to protect the civilian population of Donbass in the eastern part of Ukraine occupied by Russia since 2014, and only 11% of the time was devoted to news from the front. However, after 7 March the topic Justification almost disappeared.

At this point the topics of Sanctions and US policies, took the lead, on 14 April accounting respectively for the third and fourth largest broadcast shares. The topic Battlefield was accorded less broadcasting time, ranging from 11 to 16% during the period sampled. Civilians was a growing trend in terms of length of coverage, with initially only a few percent and reaching nearly one-fifth by 14 April.

Table 2. Sample days by topics of war-related news in percentages of duration in *Vremya*.

Sample day	Battle-field	Civili-ans	Disin-form	EU policy	Justifi-cation	Nuc-lear	Peace	Refu-gees	Sanc-tions	Secu-rity	UN	US policy	Other war	Total
24 Feb	11%	6%	0%	0%	51%	0%	3%	6%	20%	3%	0%	1%	0%	100%
28 Feb	2%	14%	8%	0%	14%	2%	8%	7%	27%	1%	7%	9%	0%	100%
03 Mar	15%	6%	0%	2%	28%	0%	14%	10%	12%	0%	3%	9%	0%	100%
07 Mar	18%	11%	0%	0%	15%	0%	9%	15%	12%	1%	0%	18%	0%	100%
10 Mar	9%	22%	9%	1%	1%	1%	9%	0%	39%	0%	0%	9%	0%	100%
17 Mar	16%	3%	12%	0%	0%	0%	9%	11%	25%	6%	0%	16%	3%	100%
24 Mar	10%	1%	9%	0%	5%	0%	0%	6%	25%	0%	0%	36%	8%	100%
31 Mar	12%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	18%	1%	51%	1%	0%	9%	1%	100%
07 Apr	14%	12%	0%	0%	7%	7%	4%	8%	42%	0%	2%	3%	2%	100%
14 Apr	14%	12%	0%	0%	7%	7%	4%	8%	42%	0%	2%	3%	2%	100%

Angles

Table 3 shows that the war-related coverage in the sample of about 626 minutes was 88% dominated by the Russia angle, with marginal 2% left for the Ukraine angle. The Other country and Non-governmental angles had a small but notable representation.

Table 3. Angles by duration of all war-related news in *Vremya*.

Angle	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Russia	550.4	88%
Ukraine	9.9	2%
Other country	28.8	5%
Non-governmental	37.3	6%
Total	626.4	100%

The angles in *Vremya* remained more or less the same throughout the sample period, dominated by the Russia angle. The only notable change over time was the Ukraine angle with its marginal visibility only during the first three weeks of the period, after which it was totally absent.

The topics and angles represented in them are reviewed below, in order of frequency.

Sanctions

This topic was the leader in the news both in terms of the number of news items (44) which was 21% of the coverage, and in terms of duration (177.4 minutes) which was 28% of the coverage. The time devoted to sanctions was over twice greater than that devoted to the topic Battlefield (12%).

Sanctions was covered mainly from the Russia angle with 93% duration, but also from the angles of Other country (11%), Ukraine (1%) and Non-governmental (0.3%).

The topic was clearly identified as anti-Russian sanctions and was present every night on *Vremya*. Attention to it gradually increased from the first day of the "special operation" on 24 February. On that day, this topic occupied 20% of the broadcasting time of the bulletin, but by the end of March, the topic had become dominant: on 31 March it occupied 51% of the broadcasting time, on 7 April 42% and on 14 April 33%.

Battlefield

This topic was the second most dominant topic on the agenda and present in every issue of *Vremya*. In terms of the number of items (36), it accounted for 18% of the stories broadcast and in terms of duration it accounted for 73.8 minutes (12%).

The stories had a Russia angle with 92% duration, but also included the Ukraine angle (1%), the Other country (4%) and the Non-governmental angle (4%).

In some bulletins, it appeared in only one story, in others it had up to 5-6 stories. From the beginning of the invasion on 24 February until mid-April, this topic was covered regularly, occupying from 11% to 16% of the bulletins, but in terms of the number of news items, Battlefield had grown from 5% on the first day of the conflict to 24% by 14 April.

Peace

This topic was one of the top six news topics, ranking third in terms of the number of news items (24), which accounted for 12% of the coverage and sixth in terms of time (45.3 minutes) which accounted for 7% of the coverage. The topic was presented regularly, in almost every bulletin, but gradually lost relevance both in terms of the amount of news from 10% to 0% and in duration from 3% to 0%.

Peace was presented mainly from the Russian angle (90%), but also from the Ukraine angle (5%), Other country (3%) and Non-governmental (2%).

Justification

The topic was fourth in terms of the number of news items (22) that accounted for 11% of the coverage and was third in duration (78.7 minutes) that accounted for 13% of the news coverage of the sample. Justification gradually lost relevance in terms of the number of news items: from 45% to 0%, and in duration from 51% to 0%.

The topic of justification was actively introduced only in February and the first week of March, numbering three or four stories in each bulletin, then it declined and appeared as only one story and not even in every bulletin. That is, there was obviously no need for this topic.

It was presented mainly from the Russia angle (95%), but also in the angle of Ukraine (4%), and Other country (1%).

Civilians

This topic as well as the topic Justification had 22 news stories in the 10-day programme sample. Measured by the number of news stories it ranked fifth among the 13 topics with 11% of coverage. In terms of duration, it had 67.2 minutes, which accounted for 11% of the news agenda.

Coverage of civilians was presented from the Russian angle with 73% duration, but also from the Non-governmental angle (26%) and the Ukraine angle (1%).

US policies

The topic of US policies was sixth on the news agenda in terms of the number of news items in the period analysed (17 stories), and second in duration (80.5 minutes) after the topic of Sanctions, which accounted for 13% of the broadcasts. In terms of duration (from 1% on 24 February to 25% on 14 April) and in terms of the number of news respectively (5% to 14%), this topic showed a significant increase. Unlike EU policies, it occurred in every newscast, along with three other topics: Sanctions, Battlefield and Civilians.

Most of the news on US policies was presented from the perspective of Russia (86%), but also from the perspective of Other Country (9%) and the Non-governmental angle (4%).

Refugees

The topic Refugees appeared in 11 news stories (5% of the coverage) placing it in seventh position in the total number of news items among the ten selected bulletins. In terms of duration (44.7 minutes) it occupied 7% of the news programme's coverage. The topic was covered regularly, appearing in every bulletin except those aired on 10 March and 14 April.

The topic was presented mainly from the Russia angle (74%), but also from the Non-governmental angle (25%).

Security

The topic of Security appeared in seven news stories and only from the Russia angle. That accounted for only 3% of the news content of 10-day programme sample. In terms of news duration, the topic took just 6.5 minutes, accounting for 1% of the total news broadcast for the selected period. That is, this topic was quite marginal and comparable to such unimportant topics as the United Nations, Nuclear hazard and EU policies.

Disinformation

This topic appeared in five news stories, accounting for 2% of the total coverage of the ten news programmes and lasting 26.1 minutes, accounting for 4% of the broadcasting time. The topic was covered regularly, in almost every second programme during the period analysed (28 February, 10 March, 17 March, 24 March and 14 April). The topic was closely related to the

information war of the West and Ukraine against Russia and intended to expose disinformation coming from the opponent. Accordingly, news on this topic appeared in response to what was perceived as enemy disinformation about the Russian military.

The topic was presented from the Russia angle (88%), the Ukraine angle (4%), the Other country angle (3%) and the Non-governmental angle (5%).

United Nations

The topic of the UN appeared in only three news stories, from the Russia angle (85%) and from the Other Country angle (15%). Both in terms of the number of news items (3) and in terms of duration (7.1 minutes), the topic took up only 1% of the news agenda.

Nuclear hazard

This topic was likewise minimal in the news, occupying 1% in terms of the number of news items (3) and duration (5.7 minutes), presenting only the Russian point of view.

EU policies

This topic included only two news stories from Russia's perspective and took up 1% of the number of news items and time (2.3 minutes).

Other war-related topics

This topic appeared in seven stories, accounting for 3% of the news and in duration it lasted 11.1 minutes that accounted for 2% of the coverage. The topic regularly appeared in the news programmes beginning from 17 March. In duration, it was presented from the Russian angle (61%), the Ukraine angle (9%), and the Other country angle (30%).

Key narratives

The next stage of our content analysis was to identify the more or less explicit ideas – narratives – under each topic, including their tones, in a positive, negative or neutral direction with their relation to the main parties of the conflict.

The narratives in each topic are listed in Table 4 below. The topics are in order of frequency; frequencies from Table 1 above. The number in brackets for each narrative shows how many times this particular narrative appeared in the topic.

Table 4. Key narratives and their tones in topics in *Vremya*.

Topics and number of related news items	Key narratives (and number of related stories) Tone: Positive – *Pos*; Negative – *Neg*; Neutral – *Neu*
Sanctions: 44	Reforming the economy (5) *Pos* State support for industry, agriculture, business and population (14) *Pos* Successes in the economy (7) *Pos* Anti-Russian sanctions (4) *Neg* Abnegation of all things Russian, "cancelling Russia" (5) *Neg* Boomerang on the West from its sanctions (5) *Neg* Russian countersanctions to the West (4) *Pos*
Battlefield: 36	Progress of special operation (13) *Pos* Stories about heroes of Russia (13) *Pos* Behaviour of Russian military (1) *Pos* Ukraine military shelling and destruction of cities (4) *Neg* Behaviour of Ukrainian military in cities and with Russian prisoners (4) *Neg* Western mercenaries (1) *Neg*
Peace: 24	Peace negotiations and political decisions (13) *Pos* International visits (3) *Pos* and *Neg* Restoration of peaceful life (8) *Pos*
Justification: 22	Reasons for the invasion (11) *Pos* Military actions of Ukraine (4) *Neg* Public support (7) *Pos*
Civilians: 22	Civilians on first day: panic and mass exodus from Kiev by any available means of transport (1) *Neg* Saving civilians, foreign citizens, Ukrainian captured military and Western mercenaries by Russian military (8) *Pos* for Russia, *Neg* for Ukraine Solidarity with Russia and volunteer doctors from Russia to Ukraine (3) *Pos* Humanitarian, financial aid from Russia, restoration of peaceful life (2) *Pos* Death of civilians and destruction of cities by Ukrainian military (3) *Neg* Brutality of nationalists / war crimes / retribution for nationalists (5) *Neg*
US policies: 17	Russia – Ukraine conflict, including policy of Zelensky and NATO (5) *Neg* Pentagon Biolabs (6) *Neg* Censorship and disinformation on social media, giants Google, YouTube relating to Russia (2) *Neg* Russia's image, including its president (2) *Neg* Mercenaries to Ukraine (1) *Neg* Abnegation of all things Russian, "cancelling Russia" (1) *Neg*
Refugees: 11	Evacuation of people from conflict zone (4) *Pos* for Russia, *Neg* for Ukraine Reception of refugees and their adaptation (4) *Pos* for Russia, *Neg* for Ukraine Testimony from refugees in conflict zone (2) *Pos* for Russia, *Neg* for Ukraine Humanitarian assistance to liberated territories of Donbass (1) *Pos*

Security: 7	Security from external threats (3) *Neu*
	Security inside Russia (4) *Neu*
Other war-related: 7	Abnegation of all things Russia, "cancelling Russia" (1) *Neg*
	Sham phone call with Ben Wallace, UK (1) *Pos*
	Incident with Slovenian flag (1) *Neu*
	Scandal in Greek Parliament (1) *Neu*
	Arrest of Viktor Matveichuk (2) *Neg*
	Incident with Russian symbols in Moldova (1) *Neu*
Disinformation: 5	Fake news on social networks (1) *Neg*
	Fake news in Western media (3) *Neg*
	Fake news of Ukrainian authorities (1) *Neg*
EU policies: 2	Western mercenaries against Russia (1) *Neg*
	Russia's response to EU institutions (1) *Pos*
United Nations: 3	UN actions to Russia (1) *Neu*
	UN's double standards (2) *Neg*
Nuclear hazard: 3	Safety of nuclear stations under Russian control (2) *Pos*
	Dangers of possible provocation by Ukraine (1) *Neg*

The following section reviews how these key narratives as well as the main angles were presented in each of the 13 topics (in the above order).

Sanctions

The topic consisted of seven key narratives favourably disposed towards the Russian activities and negatively disposed towards the Western activities: Reforming the Russian economy in the face of Western sanctions including import substitution (5 stories); State support for industry, agriculture, business and the population (14); Current successes in the economy (7 stories); New anti-Russian sanctions including personal sanctions (4 stories); The idea of abnegation of all things Russian or "cancelling Russia" (5 stories); The boomerang effect on the West from its anti-Russian sanctions (5 stories); and Russian counter-sanctions imposed on the West (4 stories).

The main sources of news were official meetings in the Kremlin and government and the main newsmakers were the President (7 stories), the Prime Minister and ministers (8 stories), the Head of the State Duma (1), the mayor of Moscow (1) and the governor of the Moscow region (1), as well as experts, Russian journalists working in Western countries and relevant stories from Western television programmes.

The topic Sanctions was already included in the first news issue on 24 February in two stories. The bulletin first gave a report on Putin's meeting with representatives of business circles of Russia to discuss work under anti-Russian sanctions and a little later the video news about Biden's speech on economic sanctions against Russia, adding a comment from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that this was already the 102nd package of sanctions against Russia over the past eight years. That is, from the first day of the "special operation", a clear message

was given to the audience that it was nothing new for it to live and work under sanctions. That is, there was no reason to panic.

In fact, the topic was mainly not about Western sanctions against Russia (4 stories) but about Russia's successful resistance in the economic struggle with the West. News about the reforming of the Russian economy, including its reorientation towards Eastern partners and Russian exports to the growing markets of the South and East, successful import substitution, growing state support for industry, agriculture, business and the population, including Ukrainian refugees as well as the continued implementation of current projects in cities and regions accounted for most of the news (20) on these narratives. The narrative of reforming the economy emphasized the need to strengthen Russia's economic sovereignty and focused on strategic and tactical tasks by President Putin and the government. According to Putin, Western sanctions created many problems, but also opened up new opportunities.

The narrative of the boomerang effect on the West from its own sanctions against Russia showed viewers what losses the West was suffering from its sanctions policy (5 stories). The narrative was based on footage of speeches by ministers and leaders of Western countries, who talked about rising prices for gas, electricity, petrol and food; videos about empty shelves in shops, people's protests; but also comments from experts and reports from correspondents. These stories also mentioned the falling ratings of politicians due to rising prices in their countries.

For example, on 14 April, *Vremya* showed a video from Fox News reporting on the fall in the trust rating of Biden having only 38% of the electorate's support. *Vremya* went on by reporting the fall in the trust rating of Boris Johnson, when 57% of Britons believed that he should resign, warning that sanctions against Russia would cause a fall in the standard of living in Western countries leading to the loss of confidence in the authorities.

The narrative "cancelling Russia" or "bouts of Russophobia" as it was in the headlines appeared in five stories describing how the West's sanctions policy worked against representatives of culture, athletes and ordinary Russians. For example, the news reported that students from Russia were forbidden to study at European universities. In Stuttgart, Germany, a restaurant announced that visitors with Russian passports were not welcome. Lithuania refused Russian citizens who wanted to come there for treatment and stated that it was also impossible to come to meet close relatives. The Czech hockey player Dominik Hasek proposed suspending contracts with all Russian NHL players. Western scientific journals were beginning to refuse to publish articles by Russian scientists. EU airspace was closed to Russian aircraft, likewise Canadian, British and Norwegian airspace and Russian tourists had to return home through third countries. Russian and Belarusian Paralympians were to be excluded from the Winter Games in Beijing.

The counter-sanctions narrative emerged in four news stories beginning from early March, when the Russian government presented a list of states unfriendly to Russia which had imposed or supported sanctions against Russia. Countersanctions were a necessary measure aimed at protecting Russian citizens and Russia's financial sovereignty. For example, Russian citizens, on Putin's orders, could repay their debts to these countries in rubles, and all transactions with these unfriendly countries now required the permission of the Cabinet of Ministers.

The introduction of payment for gas in rubles from 1 April by those countries that imposed sanctions against Russia was announced. Putin explained how this new scheme would work and the reasons for its introduction: countries buying gas were required to open ruble bank accounts in Russia with Gazprombank and as of 1 April use these accounts to pay for gas. Failure to make such payments would be deemed a failure on the part of the buyers: *No one sells anything to us for free and we are also not going to engage in charity. If we leave the payment in euros under the old scheme, there is no guarantee that the West might not again freeze Russia's foreign currency accounts in the West, which has already happened to part of Russia's gold and foreign exchange reserves. When the financial system of Western countries is used as a weapon, when the assets of Russia and its citizens and companies are frozen, it makes no sense to use the currencies of these countries. The transition to payment in rubles is an important step towards strengthening our financial sovereignty.* (*Vremya* 31 March).

Battlefield

The topic established six narratives and used positive and negative tones, clearly contrasting the Russian military and the militias of the People's Republic of Donbass as heroes of the liberators to the enemies, Ukrainian Nazis and Western mercenaries who arrived in Ukraine to fight on the side of Ukraine for money.

The positive frame of Battlefield consisted of three basic classic narratives. First, it described the progress of the Russian military and a chronicle of their victories including and the liberation of new territories and the civilian population, the reports of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation on how many units of equipment were destroyed and how many Ukrainian soldiers were taken prisoner (13 stories). Secondly, it was the glorification of heroes on the battlefield and their exploits, interviews with heroes, reports from the ceremonies for awarding medals and orders on the battlefield or in hospital. The second narrative also included 13 stories. The third narrative was about the behaviour of the Russian military, who helped and rescued civilians and the Ukrainian military (1 story).

The negative frame was given to the enemy. It was based on three narratives. The first was about the Ukrainian military shelling and destroying cities and towns (4 stories). The second was about the behaviour of the Ukrainian military, often represented as nationalists who did not let civilians out of the conflict zone, used them as human shields, put their heavy equipment in the yards of houses and on the upper floors of houses, destroyed houses, looted and tortured civilians and Russian prisoners (4 stories). The third narrative was about Western mercenaries who came to Ukraine to fight for money against Russia (1 story).

Battlefield was covered from various selected sources: a reporter in the field and interviews with the military and civilians, interviews with Ukrainian soldiers who were captured or who had surrendered voluntarily; official sources of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation; foreign military experts from Fox television and from India, an article from the *New York Times* about the abuse and murder of Russian prisoners of war by the Ukrainian military, an Al Jazeera TV report about how the Ukrainian military was using ambulances for transporting their own personnel rather than for transporting the wounded.

Peace

The topic developed along three key narratives in positive and negative tones: 1) peace negotiations and political decisions (13 stories); 2) international visits of senior officials (3 stories); and 3) reports from cities and towns on the restoration of peaceful life (8 stories).

Its main newsmakers were President Vladimir Putin (8 stories), Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (4 stories), head of the Russian delegation at the talks with Ukraine Vladimir Medynsky (3 stories), Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin (1 story), and Patriarch Kirill (1 story).

The President was the leading peacemaker, conducting all negotiations with the heads of foreign states and giving them first-hand information on Ukraine's situation and the conditions for ending the conflict. These conditions included the demilitarization of Ukraine and its neutral status, which would ensure Russia's legitimate security interests. Medynsky was the principal negotiator with Ukraine. Lavrov was responsible for negotiations with foreign ministers of other states and made official visits to Turkey, India, and China. He criticized the West, NATO and especially Washington on sanctions, but also the situation in Afghanistan and neighbouring states. Mishustin made efforts in the field of Eurasian co-operation and visited Kazakhstan and met with his colleague.

Other news on this topic reported on the restoration of the destroyed cities of Donbass, humanitarian aid from Russia and the beginning of a peaceful life there. For example, the news of 31 March: *Peaceful life is returning to Melitopol, the city of machine builders, which was liberated from the nationalists. And the point is not only that the city now lives according to Moscow time, but that it is now safe here. Humanitarian aid comes here regularly, but residents miss work. The city in the south of the Zaporozhye region Melitopol – the city of honey and the most delicious cherries is returning to peaceful life under the protection of the Russian military. You can speak Russian, no one is spreading Bandera's ideology any more. The civilians say: now it's not scary to walk the streets. There are food enterprises, the stores have everything. The new city administration announced a reduction in tariffs for gas, water, and electricity. Residents will receive a one-time allowance of 10 thousand rubles.*

Justification

The topic established three key narratives in tones positive to Russia and negative to Ukraine: 1) the reasons for justifying the invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops, considering the situation in the Donbass over the past eight years (11 stories); 2) military actions of Ukraine justifying the invasion of Russian troops (4 stories); 3) public support for a special military operation by various labour collectives, veterans and youth (7 stories).

On the first day of the special operation, 24 February, the bulletin devoted nine stories out of 20 to justification: 1) to explain the invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops (5 stories), 2) show the aggression of Ukraine (2 stories) and 3) to witness the public support in Russia for the decision of the authorities (2 stories). The bulletin began with video coverage of the invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops to protect the Donbass; continued videos and photos from social networks about destroyed houses in Pervomaisk and Donetsk by the Ukrainian military in 2014; then a report on the day of heavy artillery shelling of Donetsk by the Ukrainian military and the fifth news broadcast transmitted Putin's television address to the nation explaining that

the special operation was necessary but based on UN international law. This was done after the heads of the Donetsk and Luhansk republics asked Russia for help.

The first narrative about the reasons for the invasion was based on 11 stories. The main reasons for the invasion were: 1) to protect the civilians of Donbass from the aggression and violence of the Ukrainian military, which had continued for the last eight years, starting from 2014; 2) to demilitarize Ukraine after the West sent so many weapons there; 3) to de-Nazify Ukraine, that is, to accomplish the mission of liberating it from Nazism, which threatens not only Ukraine itself but also Europe; 4) to bring peace to Ukrainian territory; 5) to protect Russia so that no anti-Russian feeling would be created on the borders "of our homeland", including nuclear weapons; 6) to prevent Washington from making Ukraine a springboard for a permanent threat to Russia: Britain and the United States built military bases and laboratories for chemical and bacteriological weapons in Ukraine, and their advisers and special services prepared Ukraine for a real war against Russia. The goal was to demonize Russia, not to make a treaty on the balance of interests of Ukraine, the United States and Russia. The West was using Ukraine as a pretext in the sanctions war to prevent Russia from being an independent country. Sanctions against Russia are a Western tax on its independence (24 February).

The next narrative about Ukraine's military actions appeared in six stories. These news, for example, reported on the shelling of the Belgorod region by the Ukrainian military; the distribution by the Kiev authorities of weapons to anyone, as a result of which gangs of looters appeared in the city and posed a danger to civilians; the hostility of Kiev's rule towards the residents of Donbass as a result of which more than 14 thousand people had died there over the past eight years; about the upcoming provocation of the SBU and nationalists (Azov battalion) with possible radioactive contamination in the Kharkov region, in order to then accuse Russia of this.

The third narrative of this topic was about public support for the special operation in Ukraine. It appeared in seven stories, starting from the first day of the invasion, often intertwined with the narrative of the suffering of Donbass civilians over the past eight years. For example, the news of 28 February announced that the Association of Higher Educational Institutions of Culture and Art had proclaimed its support for Russia's actions in Ukraine. The universities signed an open letter in support of this President's decision. Teachers began to explain to students what happened in Lugansk and Donetsk during these eight years (genocide of residents): *Now we show solidarity with Donbass, as well as help Ukrainian students*.

In the bulletin of 3 March, the reporting showed that throughout Russia there were actions in support of 'our military' who were participating in a special operation in Ukraine. A video clip from Surgut was shown where the cars lined up in the letter Z. Russian military equipment had such a sign. This sign symbolized the slogan 'For Victory'. The same was done in the centre of St. Petersburg. In Novosibirsk, a rally was organized in support of the authorities. Many drivers stuck the letter Z on their cars. The city of Asbest in the Urals changed its name with the letter Z to Azbest.

There was similar news from 7 March: Mass actions in support of the military of the Russian Federation took place from Bryansk to Vladivostok. Car rallies with the same signs as on the military equipment of the Russian military who performed a historic mission. Video clips were shown from different regions and the voices of people supporting this special operation directed

against Nazism, fascism and for peace in Russia and Crimea, for the right of Donbass to speak Russian "We, together with Donbass", was their slogan.

Civilians

The topic consisted of six narratives having a positive frame towards Russian servicemen and volunteers and a negative frame towards the Ukrainian armed forces.

This positive frame included three narratives. The first one, "salvation", included eight different stories. Among them were stories about the rescue of civilians by the Russian military in the liberated territories and foreign citizens who found themselves in the conflict zone, for example, the story about the evacuation of Indian students from the city of Sumy thanks to the Russian military and the government. Another story was about the rescue by the Russian military of 134 Ukrainian prisoners of war as well as a British mercenary and the provision of medical care for them in hospital. Another story reported about a family reunion in Mariupol thanks to the Russian military and *Vremya*.

The narrative of salvation was closely related to the narrative of the solidarity of the Russian people with the civilians of Ukraine (3 stories), for example, the report about volunteer doctors coming from various regions of Russia to work in the hospital and maternity hospital in Mariupol during the military conflict.

The next narrative (2 stories) was about the restoration of cities and communications in the liberated territories of Ukraine, the arrival of humanitarian aid from Russia, the payment of pensions and social benefits, a one-time allowance of 10,000 rubles to public sector workers, a visit to Donbass by the leader of the United Russia party, Andrei Turchak.

The negative frame of the topic was based on three narratives. The first was about the panic of civilians in Kiev and their mass exodus from the city in the absence of information from President Zelensky. It was assumed that he had left the city and the civilians did not know what to do. Another narrative was about the deaths of civilians, the destruction of their homes and cities and settlements by the Ukrainian military in the territories of Donbass (3 stories). It used eyewitness accounts, reports of funerals and interviews with victims who had lost their loved ones. For example, two teachers at a school were killed by shelling by the Ukrainian military.

The narrative about the brutality of the Ukrainian nationalists (5 stories) – eyewitness accounts of rapes and murders, accounts of civilians about the excesses and torture of civilians in the concentration camp organized by the Ukrainian battalion Aidar. The narrative about the betrayal of the Ukrainian military in relation to their military (abandoned soldiers on the battlefield) and violence against the civilian population. For example, one story showed how the Ukrainian military forced a civilian in Zhytomyr under threat to the lives of his family to fulfill the role of suicide bomber. In particular, he had to make a phone call from a certain place, and when he did, that is, he drove up to this place and made the phone call, the Ukrainian side began shelling this place and he miraculously stayed alive and was captured by the Russians. Another news story was about the incarceration in the monastery of several hundred civilians in the Volnovakha district, who were left without medicines and water. One story reported that the Russian Investigative Committee opened criminal cases against nationalists for their torture of Russian prisoners of war. The news also showed a story about the public apology of the Ukrainian military to civilians at the graves of their loved ones who died in

2014. The suffering of civilians and Ukrainian prisoners of war was a pervasive theme in these narratives.

US policies

The topic established six key narratives, all represented in a negative tone: 1) the US and NATO policy regarding the present conflict between Russia and Ukraine, including the policy of Zelensky and his government, and the past conflict in Yugoslavia (5 stories); 2) Pentagon Biolabs (6 stories); 3) US policy of censorship and disinformation on social media and giants like Google relating to Russia (2 stories); 4) US policy on the image of Russia, including its president (2 stories); 5) US policy of providing military assistance to Ukraine, including mercenaries (1 story); and 6) "cancelling Russia" (1 story).

The first narrative about US and NATO policy appeared on the very first day of the special operation on 24 February, with the news that the Russian and Chinese foreign ministers, Sergey Lavrov and Wang Yi, had discussed the crisis in Ukraine by phone and expressed their common opinion that the crisis was caused the US's encouragement of Ukraine's non-compliance with the Minsk agreements.

In the following days, news broke that the US was debating how to help Zelensky's government in exile in the event of a Russian victory. In the Baltic States, the US planned to send more troops to reinforce NATO's eastern flank. NATO was using the Ukrainian crisis to strengthen its potential.

NATO was criticized by a representative of the Chinese mission to the European Union, who said that they would never forget who bombed the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia in March 1999 and that NATO needed to think about the role the alliance had played in securing world peace. *Vremya* aired a separate story in memory of the victims of the NATO bombings and interviews with Serbian experts, who said that what happened to Serbia in 1999 was now being repeated with their brothers, the Russian people.

The news of 24 March reported on an emergency NATO summit that approved the deployment of four additional military groups in Europe. Thousands of soldiers would be concentrated in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. A video clip was shown of President Zelensky, who said that Ukraine needs military assistance without restrictions. Jens Stoltenberg of NATO promised to provide this, but without NATO soldiers. The US military proposed to deploy NATO forces near Kaliningrad and Vladivostok. Biden and Stoltenberg announced the threat of a Russian chemical attack on Ukraine. The Prime Minister of Slovenia did not believe that the Russian military would use chemical or biological weapons.

On 14 April the story detailed how foreign instructors were training Ukrainian snipers to NATO standards. The Ukrainian military was using foreign weapons received in large quantities from the West. In the liberated villages of the Lugansk region, the people's militia found manuals according to which they were trained and information about who Ukrainian snipers aimed at. The report was from the house where snipers had been based since 2014, the reporter showed textbooks by American authors on the sniper business, as well as weapons: high-calibre rifles from abroad and expensive weapon optical sights.

The second narrative under the topic of US policies was about the work of Pentagon Biolabs in Ukraine and other states bordering on Russia. There were six stories on this at regular intervals starting from 7 March and ending on 14 April. Documentary evidence was presented each time by a representative of the Russian Ministry of Defence at their briefings, and comments on this topic were given by Putin and a Russian UN expert; the narrative was also to be seen on the American Fox News channel.

For example, the news of 10 March reported on a briefing by the Russian Ministry of Defence, where documents were shown confirming the manufacture of biological weapons in Ukraine by order of the Pentagon. Putin at a meeting of the Human Rights Council announced*: The collection of biological material from different ethnic groups from different regions of Russia. Why are they doing this is the question. American laboratories located not only in Ukraine, but also along the entire perimeter of Russian borders: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova, directly indicate against which nationalities the biological weapons were created.*

The third narrative about US policy against Russia was noted in the actions of global social networks and Internet giants such as Google, Twitter and YouTube. The news of 3 March reported that Facebook was transforming from a social network for friendship into a resource for information warfare. The number of fake videos there had grown 19 times in two months compared to the previous year. The platform for communication had turned into a place for inciting hatred and enmity. The director of the Safe Internet League, Ekaterina Mizulina, explained that the United States had invested huge amounts of money in this information war, which was being waged by more than 1,500 specialists in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and other countries. Commercial players from Ukraine were joining this war to destabilize the situation in Russia. The creation of fake accounts copying Russian media, the creation of specialized bots, and direct purchase of advertising with false information in relation to Russia, called for illegal action.

There was a story on 24 March about the censorship policy of Google and YouTube in relation to Russian channels. The Union of Journalists of Russia called for action against Google and YouTube, claiming that 24 channels with a total audience of about 20 million were blocked on YouTube.

The fourth narrative addressed US policy toward the image of Russia and its President in two news stories. For example, in the bulletin of 28 February, under the heading "Their methods. Empire of Lies", an American documentary producer stated that Biden and Johnson were demonizing the Russians and that Zelensky was creating a humanitarian crisis in the country, distributing weapons to everyone, and this was dangerous for civilians.

In the 17 March bulletin, the news reported that Joe Biden called the Russian President a war criminal, followed by detailed information about Biden with an archival video from 1999, when Biden was a senator and demanded a special operation in the former Yugoslavia to bomb Belgrade. The narrative included data on civilian deaths in Serbia and Iraq from bombing, as well as a detailed information on the US military operations in Libya, Syria, Afghanistan and Vietnam.

The fifth narrative focused on US military assistance to Ukraine, namely sending mercenaries to Ukraine to fight against Russia. For example, in the 7 March bulletin, a news story reported that about 3,000 mercenaries from the United States were to arrive in Ukraine. On special sites, step-by-step instructions were published on what to do to go to the front in Ukraine. In some countries, there was a voluntary collection of weapons. The Ukrainian embassies abroad were the organizers of such trips. Advertisements about such trips were posted on the pages of the Ukrainian embassies in different countries on Twitter and Facebook. According to the news story, this was a violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations because diplomatic embassies were forbidden to recruit mercenaries. The news reported that the foreign legion in Ukraine would number about 20 thousand mercenaries from 50 countries according to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

The sixth narrative was the spreading of xenophobic culture of cancelling everything Russian. The bulletin of 14 April included a report of the speech of Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov at a conference at MGIMO devoted to international relations. Lavrov explained to future diplomats why Washington supported the Kiev nationalist regime and declared total hybrid war against Russia, including the information space.

Refugees

The rescue of people in Donbass was the main justification in the words of the Russian leadership for launching a "special operation" in Ukraine. Therefore, the grand narrative of salvation was present in all four narratives forming the topic of refugees: 1) evacuation of people from the conflict zone (four stories), 2) reception of refugees and their adaptation (4 stories), 3) testimonies from the refugees from the conflict zone (2 stories) and 4) volunteers/humanitarian assistance for the liberated territories of Donbass (1 story).

The narrative of the evacuation appeared from the first day of the conflict, 24 February: *More than a hundred thousand residents of the Donetsk and Lugansk Republics have now been evacuated to Russia.* The narrative portrayed the Russian side in a positive light in facilitating the evacuation of civilians, and the Ukrainian side in a negative light. For example, the news reported how the Russian military was helping to evacuate people from the conflict zone and reunite families, how the Russian leadership opened up humanitarian corridors from Kiev to Belarus, from Kharkov to Belgorod, from Sumy to Belgorod and Poltava, as well as to Zaporozhye and Rostov-on-Don, but Kiev rejected these proposals and turned to the West for help. Iryna Vereshchuk, Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine, stated that it was not acceptable to open humanitarian corridors, 'our people will not go to Belarus to go from there to Russia' (7 March 2022). Six humanitarian corridors were organized by Russia. However, the Ukrainian military did not even let women and children out of Kharkov (7 March 2022). Another news story from 3 March reported that the Ukrainian military would not release people from the city of Sumy, although buses from the Russian side were waiting to take them out of the conflict zone. Among the refugees there were also prisoners of war of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, who said that they did not want to fight. The Russian servicemen, they said, treated them well, providing medical care, food and cigarettes.

The narrative about the reception of refugees from Donbass appeared in reports from Voronezh, Nizhny Novgorod, Moscow Region, Rostov Region and Taganrog. Children and parents gradually integrated into peaceful life, began to study at school, visited the circus for

the first time. The Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation arranged events "A Day at the Museum" for refugees and organized excursions to the historical museum.

News about refugees from Ukraine who went to Moldova was given in a negative light. For example, the news of 3 March reported that Moldovans complained about the scandalous and even boorish behaviour of refugees from Ukraine. About 100,000 refugees were living in the small country but not everyone appreciated the welcoming reception. The guests began to make their own rules: they painted the monument to the soldiers of the Second World War in the colours of the Ukrainian flag, caused uproar when the local people spoke to them in Russian, offended local residents by calling them beggars. A video was shown with the appeals of local residents to Ukrainian refugees in Moldova: *We do not have toilets as in Europe and we cannot feed you for free in a restaurant, we share with you what we have.*

The testimonies of refugees from Donbass appeared in the interviews with them, made either in the conflict zone, or at the time of their evacuation or when already on peaceful territory in Russia or Belarus or the liberated cities of Donbass. For example, a report of 17 March described an interview with two men who wept and claimed that fighters of the Azov battalion shot people trying to leave Mariupol. The news of 24 March included a report about refugees from Mariupol: two mothers with injured children, another mother with a child in her arms, an elderly woman and a witness describing how nationalists fired small arms and mortars at residences and people in the streets. They said that they were abandoned to their fate, information about humanitarian corridors was concealed from them, they sat in basements. Nationalists hid behind civilians, using them as human shields.

The narrative about the work of volunteers and humanitarian aid from Russia to Donbass was also regularly present in the news. For example, according to the news of 3 March, from Crimea, humanitarian aid came to the liberated villages and cities of Ukraine. A humanitarian convoy left Krasnodar for the Kherson region. Khabarovsk was ready to accept refugees. News from 28 February, 17 March and 31 March stated that volunteers in different regions of Russia were collecting humanitarian aid for civilians in Donbass, had opened refugee reception points in the liberated territories, arrived in Donbas and helped in the organization of peaceful life.

Security

In a neutral tone, the topic established two main narratives: Russia's security from external threats and security inside the country. An example of the first narrative was presented in the news of 28 February: *The personnel of the control points of the Strategic Missile Forces of the Northern and Pacific Fleets are on combat duty in a reinforced composition. This is a response to the aggressive words of those high-ranking officials of the NATO countries to Russia.* Moreover, the news of 17 March reported: *The Pantsir-S anti-aircraft missile and gun complex was protecting the airfield on which our helicopters are based.*

The second narrative about security inside Russia also came from official sources and called for public order and loyalty to the authorities. In the news of 24 February, the Ministry of Internal Affairs called on citizens to calm down and warned people against participating in unauthorized actions. The news of 7 March reported that on 4 March the President signed a new law "on responsibility for fake news about our army and calls for sanctions against Russia". Punishment for these actions would be fines or up to 15 years in prison.

Issues of espionage were also addressed. The news of 31 March reported that a high-ranking employee of the SBU (Security Service of Ukraine) had been detained in the Kiev region. In Crimea, when trying to leave the island, a Russian citizen was taken into custody on suspicion of collaborating with the Ukrainian special services.

Other war-related topics

Other war-related topics included six different narratives using positive, negative and neutral tones: 1) "cancelling Russia", 2) a prank with the UK senior officials, 3) an incident with the Slovenian flag, 4) a drama in the Greek parliament, 5) the arrest of Viktor Matveichuk and 6) an incident with Russian symbols in Moldova.

In the bulletin of 17 March, a news story reported on the behaviour of a Ukrainian commentator at a football match between English Chelsea and French Lille. In the first minutes of the match, he screamed that all lives matter except those of invaders. They must be burned and driven out.

The 24 March bulletin included a provocative story with the British Secretary of Defence which had appeared on the Internet. The video prankist Vovan called Ben Wallace and introduced himself as the Prime Minister of Ukraine. Wallace thought he was talking to the Prime Minister of Ukraine and informed him that the British Royal Navy would soon enter the Black Sea. Wallace promised to help Ukraine with an entire arsenal of weapons, the nuclear programme and joining NATO. Wallace talked to the joker for 16 minutes. The pranksters also called the British Home Secretary and asked her if the British were afraid to host neo-Nazis from Ukraine. The Home Secretary replied that they were not afraid and were ready to receive Ukrainians and they launched a special programme to receive Ukrainians.

The bulletin of 31 March featured a story about an embarrassing incident concerning the Slovenian flag in Ukraine. The Slovenian Embassy in Kiev was left without a national flag due to its resemblance to the Russian tricolor. The National Guard of Ukraine and the police asked the diplomats to remove the Slovenian flag because it looked like the Russian flag. By evening, the incident was settled, and the flag was returned to its place.

The bulletin of 7 April included a story about a scandal in the Greek Parliament. This erupted in Greece after a video message to the Greek parliament. The opposition demanded: *No place for the Nazis in the parliament*.

The bulletin of 14 April featured three stories on the topic Other. Two stories concerned the arrest of opposition politician Viktor Matveychuk in Ukraine. The political scientist Jean Bricmont commented on the detention of Viktor Matveychuk as a humiliating act by Kiev and how his property was confiscated and bank accounts frozen. Another report was from the State Duma, where Russian parliamentarians were anxiously following the fate of Viktor Matveychuk. The opposition politician was detained this week. In fact, as the report noted, he would be the main rival of Vladimir Zelensky in the elections, being the current deputy of the *Verkhovna Rada* (The Ukrainian Parliament).

The last news of the bulletin on 14 April on this topic was from Moldova, where the Parliament banned the use of St. George ribbons and the symbols Z and V, symbols that the Russian military used during its special operation in Ukraine. The communists opposed this decision and left the parliament hall in protest.

Disinformation

It established three narratives with a negative tone to expose disinformation or fake news relating to Russia coming from: 1) global social networks, 2) Western media and 3) the Ukrainian authorities.

For example, the news of 28 February reported that in the Federation Council, Andrei Klimov had claimed that the United States had created a "fake news centre" in Poland to spread disinformation about the Russian military on social networks around the world. Employees of this centre spread disinformation from Telegram channels with their simulation of explosions in different parts of the city in Ukraine using pyrotechnics.

More "fake news" was exposed in the bulletin of 10 March. The journalist was investigating Russia's accusations of an attack on a maternity hospital in Mariupol. Western newspapers came out with photos of a bombed-out maternity hospital, and Zelensky reported dozens of dead mothers and babies. The correspondent of *Vremya* investigated these photographs and found that in the photographs this was not a maternity hospital, but an ordinary residential building on Osipenko Street and that the shooting came from the children's clinic, which was the ambush site of the nationalist Azov battalion. The battalion destroyed this children's clinic and maternity hospital. In the last days of February, according to an eyewitness, the Ukrainian military came to the hospital, drove out the medical staff, and set up a military position there to protect Mariupol. In all the photos in the Western press, there was only one and the same pregnant girl, Mariupol beauty Marianna, arguing that they were staged photographs.

In the next bulletin on 17 March, the news exposed the disinformation of the Ukrainian authorities and the publication of the Italian newspaper *La Stampa*. The Ukrainian authorities claimed that the Russian military dropped a bomb on a theatre in Mariupol where there were many civilians. The Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation officially stated that on the day in question no air strikes had been carried out in the area and that the theatre was not included in the list of targets of the Russian military. A few days before the explosion, the Russian Defence Ministry warned of provocation by Ukraine which was being prepared at the theatre. Refugees from Mariupol also confirmed this: "Azov was hiding behind our back. They just drove us to the theatre and kept us there."

Another report described fake news about Chernihiv, where the Russians allegedly shot people queueing for bread. This disinformation was exposed by the Italian newspapers.

In the bulletin of 24 March, foreign journalists arriving in the conflict zone reported that the Western media were publishing fake news about the Russian military. As could be seen from the report, more than 20 foreign correspondents arrived in Donbass. Just two weeks previously the Russian army had liberated Volnovakha. Journalists were interviewing local residents, asking them if it was true that the Ukrainian military would not let them out of the city. Residents confirmed that there were no humanitarian corridors. The Canadian blogger and journalist Eva Barlet, who had worked as a reporter in military conflicts, said that the tactics of the Ukrainian military were the same as those of ISIS in Syria: "they hide behind civilians and place their equipment in residential areas". A senior doctor had witnessed how the Ukrainian military equipped their firing points in the hospital. The patients were moved into the basement and the doctors continued to work, during this time six babies were born in the hospital. An American from Texas was fighting in the Donetsk Republic. Here he started a

family and could already speak Russian. He was against Nazism; he saw how a cluster charge of the Tochka U missile system of the Ukrainian forces exploded here. This attack killed 20 people. The Venezuelan journalist Alejandro Kirk said that "only in the field do you understand the situation and see how the Western media are lying". A Chinese journalist was wounded in the hand and described how Azov militants fired at journalists from the 14th floor of the house, thus violating international law.

On 14 April the bulletin featured an interview with an Indian journalist, who talked about bias and fake news against the Russian military: The journalist, the host of ABP News India, said: "When the conflict with Ukraine started, our channel only covered events from the Ukrainian side. Now the channel wants to find out the truth." On the previous day the journalist was in Mariupol and spoke with local residents there. There was no chemical attack by the Russian military, it was fake news, the journalist talked about this in his news.

EU policies

This topic included two narratives: Western mercenaries against Russia and Russia's actions relating to EU institutions.

On 3 March the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation reported on the participation of Western mercenaries on the side of Kiev: the UK, Latvia, Denmark, Poland and Croatia officially allowed their citizens to participate in the battles on Ukrainian territory. The command of the French Foreign Legion planned to send legionnaires – ethnic Ukrainians – to help the Kiev regime. According to Zelensky, *about 16,000 mercenaries are expected to arrive in addition to those already there to compensate for the failures of the Ukrainian security forces. For Western mercenaries, Kiev officially introduces a visa-free regime. Last week, about 200 mercenaries from Croatia arrived in Ukraine via Poland.*

Another narrative about Russia's actions on the EU was in the news of 10 March including a statement by the Russian Foreign Ministry on Russia's withdrawal from the Council of Europe.

United Nations

Two narratives were established: UN actions against Russia (1 story) and the UN's double standards (2 stories). For example, the news of 28 February about the emergency session of the UN General Assembly in New York and its resolutions defended Russia's position and criticized the UN's double standards. Another example, in the news of 3 March, reported that in the resolution of the UN General Assembly on Ukraine there was no mention of the killing of civilians in Donbass.

Nuclear hazard

The topic rested on two key narratives about the situation with the Chernobyl and Zaporozhye nuclear power plants in Ukraine using positive tones for Russia in a safety narrative because the stations are under Russian control and negative tones for Ukraine in a chilling narrative about dangers due to possible provocation by Ukraine. For example, the news on 10 March included both these narratives: *The Chernobyl nuclear power plant was under threat of provocation by Ukrainian forces. The station was de-energized. Saboteurs attacked power lines, but Russian specialists powered the plant from backup generators and now the station is safe again.*

Summary

With the beginning of the "special operation" in Ukraine on 24 February, *Vremya* increased its airtime from half an hour to an hour, and almost all the news was devoted to this operation and its consequences for the country and the world. Out of 204 news stories over the course of the ten sample days, only one news item was not related to the military conflict and its consequences: 44 billion rubles allocated by the government to construct new schools. This is probably the only case in history that TV news anywhere had concentrated so intensely and for so long on a single theme. It demonstrated the totality of the Russian mobilization around the "special operation" – not only military but also economic and not least cultural-informational.

Moreover, the overall editorial policy of the First Channel was changed after 24 February, removing various programmes, including entertainment, and increasing the time for documentaries and political comment.

Our study of Russia's main daily TV news bulletin *Vremya* shows convincingly that the coverage of the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been a direct extension of the government line – not only biased in favour of the official politics but an integral part of it. Accordingly, *Vremya* played a decisive role in generating public support for the government to continue the special military operation in Ukraine and rallying society around its leader.

This conclusion is based on the following research findings:

The news was mainly presented from the Russian perspective (88%), and the share of other points of view was presented in the following proportions: Ukraine 2%, Other Country 5%, and Non-governmental 6%. Moreover, these other perspectives accounting for 12% of the coverage were included to reinforce or confirm the Russian perspective.

The news clearly adopted a specific tone in the presentation of information: positive for news about Russia and negative for news about its opponents. A positive tone was used in narratives about the successes of the Russian military, the defenders of the People's Republic of Donbass, its civilians and refugees, and the policies and actions of the Russian government and its allies, while opponents including the leadership of NATO and the United States, the Ukrainian government, its actions, as well as their military, labelled as nationalists and Nazis, were mostly presented in a negative light.

This division into the heroes-liberators of Russia and the nationalists of Ukraine, who for the past eight years had mocked the civilian population of Donbass and were now fighting against Russia with the support of the NATO countries, emotionally encouraged the viewer to justify the military operation in Ukraine. Moreover, the narrative about the captured Ukrainian military used a positive tone for them, showing them as victims of the decision of the Ukrainian authorities to fight against Russia. Putin in his speech spoke of two fraternal peoples, Russians and Ukrainians, clearly separating the Ukrainian people from the nationalists trained by NATO instructors for a real war with Russia.

Among the 13 topics on the news agenda of *Vremya* from 24 February to 14 April 2022, four topics showed positive dynamics in terms of the number of news items and their duration. Their share of broadcasting in terms of news items increased in the following proportions: Sanctions

from 15% to 24%, US policies from 5% to 14%, Civilians from 5% to 19% and Battlefield from 5% to 24%. In terms of duration, the development was as follows: Sanctions from 14% to 30%, US policies from 1% to 25%, Civilians from 6% to 21%, and Battlefield from 11% to 15%. This distribution of topics showed that the Russian authorities were most concerned about the West's reaction to the "special operation" and the successes at the front.

Since mid-April, Sanctions and US policy became the most important topics on the news agenda, indicating that Washington, not Kiev, was perceived as the real antagonist of Russia. Thus, the news agenda shifted its focus from the special operation to global issues, namely the confrontation between Russia and West, primarily the United States.

The sources of news on these most important topics were the Russian authorities represented by the President, the government and the army. Their regular participation in direct or indirect (meetings in the Kremlin and the government) transmission to the population of the latest news and comments about events in the country, the world, and at the front served as a guarantee of the reliability of the information received at first hand by the viewer. It also involved the population in the daily flow of government decisions and changes.

Two topics: Justification and Peace, which were among the six most important topics, gradually lost their relevance after mid-March both in terms of the number of news items and their duration. There was no longer any need to justify the invasion of Ukraine as public support for the authorities was beyond question.

Context

The historical period of the first part of 2022 is important for understanding the public mood and individual thinking in Russia about the invasion of Ukraine. Sociological studies regularly monitored public sentiment in Russia on such important topics as the invasion of Ukraine, US policies and NATO, sanctions and other topical issues establishing the news agenda of *Vremya*.

The sociological research reported wide public support for the special operation in Ukraine. Levada Center recorded the population support for the special operation in Ukraine, approval of the actions of the authorities and an upsurge in mobilization. In February 2023 the approval rating of President Putin had even increased during the war from 77% to 83% (Levada Center 2023). An obvious reason for this is the lack of alternative sources of information with extremely aggressive state propaganda that denies the violence of the Russian military against Ukrainian civilians and attributes the atrocities to the Ukrainian Nazis (Levada Center, 17 April 2022).

Indeed, in March 2022, the Russian parliament passed a law introducing punishments of up to 15 years in prison for disseminating "false information" about the Russian armed forces' activities in Ukraine. The law requires that the Russian invasion of Ukraine be described as a "special military operation" and applies to news media, journalists, bloggers and ordinary people alike. Although not technically a law regulating the media, it has already radically changed the country's media landscape, essentially introducing military censorship in Russia.

As the independent online media outlet *Projekt* notes in its study of Russian media in the first six months of 2022, many journalists from state-owned media left of their own free will and "independent journalism has gone offshore" (*Projekt*, 2022).

After the new law was passed, Roskomnadzor, the Russian federal communications regulator, began blocking independent media outlets *en masse* for violating it, including *Mediazona, The Insider*, *Meduza*, *Republic*, *the Silver Rain* radio station and dozens of others. Several Western media outlets such as *Voice of America*, *BBC* and *Deutsche Welle*, have also been blocked. Some independent Russian media outlets that were not blocked informed their readers that they would no longer provide coverage of events in Ukraine. These included *Novaya Gazeta* and *The Bell*. Others, like *TV Rain* and *Radio Ekho Moskvy*, opted to shut down completely. On 5 September 2022, the Basmanny Court of Moscow invalidated the registration certificate for the print version of *Novaya Gazeta*.

Roskomnadzor also blocked the popular social networks Twitter, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram, with the latter two labelled "extremist organizations". Users of these platforms were encouraged to switch to domestic social networks such as Odnoklassniki and Vkontakte. Altogether 5,300 websites have been blocked in Russia since 24 February (Roskomsvoboda, 11 July 2022). The main reason was alleged dissemination of deliberately false information about the actions of the Russian army.

Putin signed a package of laws with some impact on the Russian Internet. The legislation on "foreign agents" has been tightened, fines have been introduced for telecom operators for violating the requirements for passing traffic, as well as for violating the rules for installing these devices and penalties for statements have been toughened (Roskomsvoboda, 14 July 2022).

These laws strengthened the grip of military censorship throughout society. Lawyer Pavel Chikov, founder of Russian human rights group Agora, in his telegram channel from abroad (22 July 2022), cited the following data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia: The police in Russia have drawn up 3,303 police reports on discrediting the army. This number of cases has been initiated since the introduction of Article 20.3.3 of the Code of Administrative Offences on 4 March, 2022. On average, the police draw up 35 police reports on discrediting the armed forces of the Russian Federation every working day.

The main public opinion research institution, state-owned VCIOM (2022) conducted in May-June 2022 a survey about the attitudes of Russians to the special military operation. The result was that 57% of the population were in favour of continuing the special operation. According to the Levada Center, the number of people supporting the special operation even exceeded 75% (*Meduza*, 18 July 2022). According to the publication of *The RBC* (18 May 2022), 77% of supporters of the special operation wanted to restore the borders of the former USSR.

The survey of Levada Center (30 June 2022) recorded a decrease in public interest in the special operation. Whereas in March 75% of respondents mentioned events related to a special military operation, in April their share was 63% and in May 43%.

According to another survey on Western sanctions by Levada Center, less than half of Muscovites were worried about Western sanctions. Less than a third faced difficulties in acquiring familiar goods. Muscovites first of all regretted the departure of IKEA, McDonald's,

clothing brands and smartphone manufacturers. However, in general, the exit of foreign companies did not worry the respondents too much. The prevailing view was that sanctions would benefit the country and stimulate development. In Moscow, the sanctions imposed by Western countries worried 42% of respondents. In Russia as a whole, this figure was slightly lower – 38% (Levada Center, 1 July 2022).

The research group Russian Field (2022) in the eighth wave of monitoring the attitudes of Russians to the military operation in Ukraine (28-31 July 2022) noted that 48% of respondents did not feel the impact of sanctions on their lives and the lives of their loved ones.

The term "cancelling of cultural Russia", shortened to "cancelling Russia", appeared in official and public discourse as well as in the media because of Western boycotting of all things Russia. This included the mass exclusion of Russian culture from the international environment: works by Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich were to be removed from the programmes of orchestras, Russian artists were dismissed from theatres, their concerts and exhibitions were to be cancelled. Later this extended to cancellation of Russians' trips to Europe: the reduction in tourist visas granted and the problems of Russians living in some Western countries (cancellation of work and study visas, as well as temporary residence permits). The main Russian centre of public opinion research VCIOM even conducted a survey about peoples' attitudes to the trend of "cancelling Russia". It showed that 37% of all Russians and 49% of young people thought that the trend was damaging to Russian culture; on the other hand, 73% did not believe that it was necessary to introduce reprisals of the same kind against Western culture in Russia (VCIOM, May-June 2022).

A survey of Russians about their attitude towards NATO recorded that the majority had a negative attitude towards NATO. The prevailing opinion was that the accession of new countries to NATO posed a threat to Russia. About half of the respondents were of the opinion that the conflict in Ukraine could escalate into a clash between Russia and NATO. A third of respondents reported that in the event of a conflict with the West, Vladimir Putin might order the first use of nuclear weapons. Only 7% of respondents were positive about NATO, 82% were negative. Compared to March, the attitude towards NATO had slightly deteriorated (Levada Center, 6 June 2022).

A study by the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences showed a marked radicalization of Russian society in the summer of 2021. Probably, society by this moment was simply conditioned by the coronavirus crisis. In less than a year (from November 2020 to June 2021), the proportion of those completely satisfied with the political system of Russian society had decreased from 33% to 9%, a number of Russians considering it necessary to change the political system in a radical way. The study noted that similar numbers were found in 2011, which then led to the Bolotnaya protests in Moscow. This time, the top authorities were probably supplied with data from sociologists about the sudden radicalization of Russian society. The decision on the special military operation was, to some extent, likely made on the basis of these figures – in order to lead society away from the internal protest (from the collection "Third December Socio-Political Readings How are you, Russia?", see Grozovsky, 2022).

It is not difficult to see the connection between the changing public mood in Russia and the political news broadcast by *Vremya*. However, not only *Vremya* and other media were part of the state propaganda; there were various cultural and educational organizations and events organized by local authorities. For example, the independent telegram channel *Rotonda* in St. Petersburg reported on the opening of an exhibition with documents about the crimes of Ukrainians. The exhibition was opened as part of the Victory Train, which arrived at the Vitebsky railway station in St. Petersburg. Usually, the theme of the museum has been devoted to the Great Patriotic War, but this year it was supplemented by evidence of the crimes of neo-Nazi organizations in the territory of the DPR and LPR (*Rotonda*, 18 July 2022).

The "Valdai Club", a Moscow-based pro-Russia international discussion club assessed in August 2022 that after 24 February, the world had entered a "new reality" characterized by the polarization of forces in world politics, primarily between Russia and the West, as well as between the West and non-Western countries, the majority of which refused to support Western sanctions against Russia (Valdai Club, 25 August 2022). Typical of the new reality was that multipolarity has been revived: discussions about the expansion of the BRICS countries including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa and Shanghai Cooperation Organization have become more active. Thus there was seen to be an urgent need for new international institutions in a multipolar world involving also the "healthy part" of the West.

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Country report: China

Tao Zhang[4]

TV channel and news programme

China Central Television is a Chinese state-owned broadcaster controlled by the Chinese Communist Party. According to its online profile, it currently has 18 terrestrial channels and 44 digital channels with 631 hours of broadcasting every day, covering almost every aspect of Chinese social life. According to the CCTV advertisement department's disclosure, in 2018 it covered 1.26 billion of the population in China, out of the 1.29 billion of the population who have access to TV.

Channel 1 is the flagship channel of CCTV, broadcasting all kinds of TV programmes. It has a couple of news programmes but the 7 PM News, also called *CCTV News*（新闻联播）, is one of the most viewed news bulletins every day. Its telecast rating, according to the CCTV advertisement department, was 11% and the telecast share was 36% for the first half of 2020, holding the top position among all news programmes in China.

Lasting around 30 minutes, the bulletin has included both domestic and international coverage. It is the most markedly pro-government of any news programme in China and is usually regarded as the "barometer" or "weathervane of the Chinese political climate" (Cody, 2007; Chang, 2016). *CCTV News* can proxy for the central government's speech in China (Hong & Jiang, 2022).

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Story types

During the sample period *CCTV News* had altogether 118 news items with a total duration of 334 minutes. Of this time, 7% was war-related.

During the sample days, *CCTV News* maintained its coverage of Ukraine war on a stable level. This is not surprising as the bulletin generally allocates a minority part of the total coverage, around 5-10 minutes of its 29 minutes overall length, to international news. Within that five-to-ten-minute period, part of it has been allocated to Ukraine war news.

Figure 1. Percentage of war-related and other news in *CCTV News* based on coverage duration on the sample days.
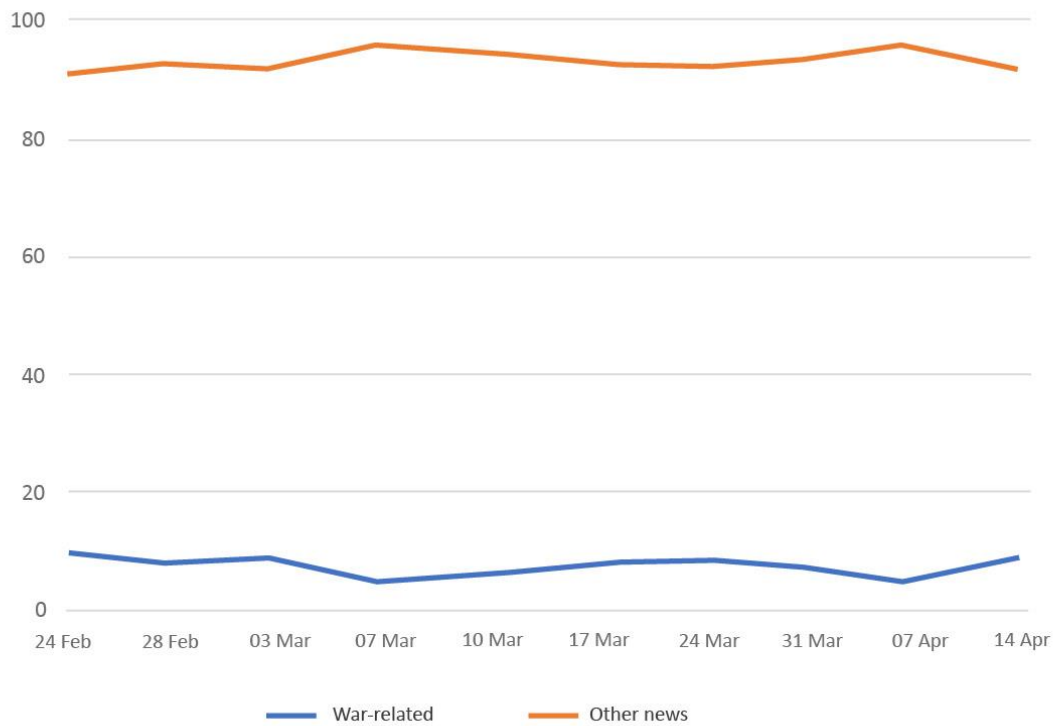
Topics

As seen in Table 1, *CCTV News* covered eight topics (Battlefield, Civilians, Justification, Peace, Sanctions, Security, UN, US policies). The top three topics measured by number of news items were Peace (24%), Battlefield (21%) and Sanctions (18%). The top three topics measured by coverage in minutes were US Policies (26%), Battlefield (24%) and Peace (21%).

Table 1: Topics by number of war-related news items and their coverage time in *CCTV News.*

Topic	Number of news items	Percentage	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Battlefield	7	21%	5.4	24%
Civilians	1	3%	0.5	2%
Disinformation	0	0%	0.0	0%
EU policies	0	0%	0.0	0%
Justification	2	6%	1.4	6%
Nuclear hazard	0	0%	0.0	0%
Peace	8	23%	4.6	21%
Refugees	0	0%	0.0	0%
Sanctions	6	18%	3.9	17%
Security	1	3%	0.4	2%
United Nations	1	3%	0.4	2%
US policies	8	23%	5.8	26%
Other war-related	0	0%	0	0%
Total	34	100%	22.3	100%

Table 2 below lists the accumulated duration of news items on the ten sample days from 24 February to 14 April. The percentages of each row add up to 100% of the total airtime of the day.

Battlefield took up the majority of coverage on 24 February, which is understandable as it was the beginning of the war. Thereafter, Peace was covered on most of the days as it is the major political message China emphasizes publicly. US policies were covered on seven out of ten days as it is the butt of CCTV criticism given the current tension between the USA and China.

Table 2. Sample days by topic of war-related news in percentages of duration in *CCTV News.*

Sample day	Battle-field	Civili-ans	Disin-form	EU policy	Justifi-cation	Nuc-lear	Peace	Refu-gees	Sanc-tions	Secu-rity	UN	US policy	Other war	Total
24 Feb	86%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%	100%
28 Feb	22%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	34%	0%	0%	0%	0%	35%	0%	100%
03 Mar	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	24%	0%	57%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
07 Mar	18%	23%	0%	0%	0%	0%	22%	0%	0%	17%	0%	20%	0%	100%
10 Mar	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	51%	0%	49%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
17 Mar	0%	0%	0%	0%	56%	0%	32%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%	0%	100%
24 Mar	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	38%	0%	0%	43%	0%	100%
31 Mar	27%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	21%	0%	26%	0%	0%	26%	0%	100%
07 Apr	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	38%	0%	0%	0%	0%	63%	0%	100%
14 Apr	30%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	64%	0%	100%

Angles

The angles represented by the coverage on *CCTV News* were measured by the time devoted to each angle, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Angles by duration of all war-related news in *CCTV News.*

Angle	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Russia	8.7	39%
Ukraine	3	14%
China	8.8	40%
Other country	1.4	6%
Non-governmental	0.3	1%
Total	22.2	100%

The total coverage in the sample was 22.2 minutes, occupied by both the home country China angle (40%) and the Russia angle (39%). The Ukraine angle took up only 14% of coverage time even though the Chinese government never publicly claimed that it supported Russia.

The topics and angles represented in them are reviewed below in order of frequency.

US policies

The topic of US policies received most coverage in terms of number of news items, eight out of a total 34 news items, amounting to 23%. Its total of 5.8 minutes' coverage also accounted for the largest percentage of total duration, 26%. Only one story was reported from the Ukraine angle while all others were either reported from the Russia (4 stories) or the China angle (6 stories). The following narrative section will explain this difference in detail.

Peace

The topic itself is a key focus of the Chinese government's proclaimed policy to "persuade for peace and encourage conversation". Therefore, CCTV had eight stories (23%) focusing on this topic. Similar to the coverage of Battlefield, the coverage of this topic overall maintained a balance in most of the stories sharing perspectives from both the Russia and the Ukraine angle (5 stories from the Russia angle and 4 from the Ukraine angle while some stories might have both angles at the same time). Although the amount of time devoted to each side clearly differed, the tone of reporting remained neutral without blaming either side.

Battlefield

It is understood that the topic of Battlefield is always one of the main foci when news media cover wars. In the case of *CCTV News* coverage this is no exception; CCTV had seven stories on Battlefield (21%) out of a total of 34 stories. All seven had the Russia angle while six of seven took the Ukraine angle. Unlike the overall pattern of CCTV coverage of the war, coverage of Battlefield by CCTV was balanced, although leaning slightly towards Russia only in terms of duration of coverage. CCTV devoted 3.5 minutes to reporting on the battlefield from the Russian government's perspective and only 1.7 minutes to reporting from the Ukrainian government's perspective.

Sanctions

CCTV News aired six stories on the topic of Sanctions, out of a total of 34 news items, around 18%. Five out of six stories were reported from the Russia angle. Stories were also reported from the China angle and the Other Countries angle as they all focused on criticizing the US policies, which will be discussed in the narrative section below.

Justification

CCTV News had two stories focusing on the justification of the war throughout the ten sample days, accounting for 6% of total news items. One was reported from the perspective of Russia and the other from the perspectives of both Russia and China.

Civilians

CCTV News had only one story (3% of topic items) focusing on civilians and it was reported from the Russia angle by first talking about Russia's effort to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Kiev without explaining why it had occurred.

Security

CCTV News had one story (3%) on this topic from the Ukraine angle about Ukraine's attitude towards becoming a member of NATO.

United Nations

Throughout the ten days sampled, *CCTV News* had only one story (3%) from the China and the Other country angles focusing on updates from the UN. This may be due to the limited number of samples, or because of there being no major progress from the UN on the war.

Refugees, EU policies, Nuclear hazard and Disinformation

These topics were not included in the news coverage during sample days.

Key narratives

The narratives in each topic are listed in Table 4 (in order of frequency). Given the relatively small number of news relating to war, each narrative identified appeared only once. The tones indicate a positive, negative or neutral approach to the main parties of the conflict.

Table 4. Key narratives and their tones in *CCTV News.*

Topics and number of related news items	Key narratives Tone: Positive – *Pos*; Negative – *Neg*; Neutral – *Neu*
Peace: 8	Ukraine and Russia start negotiations *Neu* Delay of negotiations due to Ukraine's complaints *Neu* 3rd round of negotiations about to start *Neu* Putin calls on other leaders to ask Ukraine to be realistic to end the war *Neu* Russian and Ukrainian foreign ministers meet for peace negotiation *Neu* Both Russia and Ukrainian share progress of negotiation *Neu* Russian, Turkish and Ukrainian officials share their positions and progress of the negotiation *Neu* Russian and Ukraine both claim Ukraine is not interested in continuing negotiations *Neu*
US policies: 8	War is the result of US and NATO policies *Neu* Western countries, especially US, are sending weapons and damaging the negotiation *Neg* US and NATO are supplying more weapons to Ukraine *Neu* US and its companies are benefitting from the war *Neg* Russia claims they found evidence of bio labs controlled by US *Neu* Russia claims US built biolabs contrary to the Biological Weapons Convention *Neu* NATO are discussing providing additional weapons to Ukraine *Neg* NATO and US weapons are exacerbating the situation *Neg*

Battlefield: 7	Russia launches special operation *Neu*
	Russia and Ukraine share conflicting war progress *Neu*
	War progress shared by both sides *Neu*
	Russia shares war progress and warns neighbouring countries not to support Ukraine *Neu*
	Russia and Ukraine each claim to have made military progress *Neu*
	Russia shares next-phase war plan and Ukraine claims they are ready for defence *Neu*
	Contradictory claims about Ukraine's attack on a Russia ship *Neu*
Sanctions: 6	US and EU's new sanctions against Russia and Belarus, damaging the supply chain and pushing up oil prices *Neg*
	Sanctions causing inflation and oil price *Neu*
	President Putin announces gas exports must be paid for in by rubles *Neu*
	Russia notifies the US that it will expel some US diplomats in retaliation as US expelled Russian diplomats at UN *Neu*
	Putin calls German and Italian leaders to discuss gas supply. News also criticizes sanctions *Neg*
	Russia announces sanctions against US congressmen *Neu*
Justification: 2	Putin steps up Russia's military readiness level in the face of NATO's statements *Neu*
	Putin calls Russia's military operation a mere excuse for the West to sanction Russia *Neg*
Civilians: 1	Russian's humanitarian command centre announced given the humanitarian crisis *Neu*
Security: 1	Ukraine's chief negotiator claims that since NATO is not active in responding to Ukraine's request to join the organization, now Ukraine is considering the option of a non-NATO model *Neu*
United Nations: 1	UN Security Council meeting discusses the attack and called for peace *Neu*

The key narratives and their tones are reviewed below in the above order.

Peace

CCTV kept a neutral tone in its reporting without blaming any side. More importantly, CCTV used a constructive tone to report most of the news about this topic by highlighting the progress and not blaming either side.

However, the story on 7 April is one exception. Although the story used a neutral narrative, it quoted the Russian Defence Ministry claiming that Russia's request to exchange prisoners of war (POW) was declined by Ukraine and Russia was worried that something might go wrong with them. The news also quoted the Press Secretary to the Russian President that Russia wanted to end the war through negotiation but Ukraine was not very interested in this. And then the news quoted the Ukrainian president stating that Ukraine would continue negotiations but with little interest. The selection of content and the way it was framed gave the impression that Russia was committed to peace negotiations to end the war while Ukraine was not fully committed to peace efforts. This again indicated a bias toward Russia in the CCTV coverage.

US policies

The topic of US policies received most coverage in terms of numbers of news items. The key messages on this topic includes: US and NATO policies are the cause of this war, the US and Western countries are sending weapons and launching sanctions which will not help resolve the conflict but only benefit US interest groups such as the oil and defence industries. CCTV also included the discovery of US biolabs in its coverage.

Considering the current intense relationship between China and US, it is not surprising that CCTV used the coverage of the war against Ukraine as a chance to criticize the US government and its policies. To do this, CCTV coverage used two major channels. One reported the news from the Russia angle while the other used interviews with researchers or politicians critical of US policies. It is worth noting that half of the eight stories used negative narratives. This category had the highest number of negative narratives. However, all the negative narratives followed the same pattern; CCTV did not criticize from its own perspective but used interviews or quotes to criticize the USA.

The Russia angle was dominated by Russia's claim that the USA had been secretly developing dangerous bioweapons in labs based in Ukraine. Without reporting any explanation from the Western countries, CCTV followed Russia's narrative to report the findings.

Regarding to interviews criticizing US policies, CCTV journalists interviewed people including an analyst from Germany, a professor from the USA, an expert from Syria, an analyst from Iran and a scholar from Brazil to criticize the US's provocative actions which led to the war, weapon supplies which could exacerbate the situation and sanctions damaging to people worldwide but beneficial to the defence and oil industries. The news also quoted a former US Congresswoman as criticizing US policy. By using interviews and quotes from people from Western countries and researchers from other parts of the world, the news was trying to use voices from the USA and third parties to support the CCTV argument.

Battlefield

The coverage, for most of the cases, adhered to balanced reporting and offering perspectives from both sides to describe the war progress. It retained a neutral tone for all seven stories included in the analysis, without taking any sides when describing events on the battlefield. The news was first reported from Russia's perspective regarding military advances or achievements on the battlefield. Then the reports turned to Ukraine sharing how the Ukraine government was getting ready for the attack or the progress made to defend the country. One news story also started by reporting the claim made by the Ukraine government that they had successfully attacked the flagship of the Russian Black Sea fleet with missiles and then shared Russia's argument regarding what caused the ship to sink. The news indicated no preference for a certain side of the war.

Sanctions

CCTV carried six stories on the topic of Sanctions. These stories focused on three things: what sanctions are, the negative impact resulting from sanctions and the views against sanctions. According to news reports on China's policy, the spokeswoman of the Chinese Foreign Ministry stated in March that China was opposed to any unilateral sanctions against Russia and

the ongoing sanctions were damaging the economy and people's lives in the countries involved. CCTV's coverage was in line with this policy, highlighting the negative impact while not reporting any justification for such sanctions.

In addition, five out of six were reported at least partially from the Russia angle by quoting either Putin or Russian government agencies. Two stories criticizing the impact of sanctions used negative narratives to emphasize that the sanctions were damaging the global economy and could not stop the war. Similar to other negative narratives, CCTV did not criticize sanctions directly but by quoting third parties. They used quotes from other countries such as Germany, which is a US ally and a NATO member country, to argue against some of the sanctions, and quotes from international organizations like OPEC to state that the impact on the global oil supply could not be mitigated. To further enhance China's position against sanctions, CCTV used an interview with a Columbian scholar in Asia studies to emphasize that sanctions could damage the peace negotiations. However, the scholar's background and research focus were hardly relevant to the story itself.

Justification

CCTV had two stories focusing on this topic. The first story reported that Putin had decided to escalate its military readiness level because of aggressive statements made by senior NATO officials. The second story quoted Putin as saying that the military operation was used as an excuse by the West to sanction Russia and then used two interviews with a British writer and a former German MP to claim that the war was caused by the expansion of NATO, not Russia.

The research considered what Putin said as reports from the Russia angle while the interviews were reported from the China (Home country) angle. This is because the assumption of the research was that the ultimate purpose of the news reporting was to comply with the agenda set by the news programme to meet the news programming agenda-setting goal. As CCTV is considered the main voice or central organ to serve the country's interests, all news stories on CCTV are organized and reported from the China perspective. However, for the purposes of the research, if the news quoted foreign governments or leaders, then that specific part was considered to be stated/articulated from that country's angle, with the rest from the Home country angle.

CCTV did not report anything related to criticism by Ukraine or other countries of Russia's argument regarding the justification of the military operation and the war itself. This is a clear sign of which side CCTV's reporting favoured. In addition, in the second story CCTV used negative narrative towards NATO led by the US. It should be noted that CCTV did not criticize NATO or US directly but did so by using quotations from the interviewees to blame NATO expansion.

Civilians

The entire story was reported from the Russian perspective by first talking about Russia's effort to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Kiev without explaining why the crisis happened. It then reported from the Russian perspective that Ukraine had to comply with Russia's requirements to make sure the humanitarian corridors could be opened. By telling the story in this way, the narrative gave an impression to audiences that if the corridors could be opened,

Ukraine would be responsible for the failure. However, the narrative retained a neutral tone without blaming Ukraine even though the source it quoted was Russian.

Civilians were also mentioned in other topics of stories. One story of Battlefield featured a CCTV reporter standing on the street in Kiev claiming that civilians were fleeing the capital. However, in those stories, civilians were not the central topic but rather the ways to show the impact of war or sanctions.

Security

While providing no context or background to the Ukrainian president's words, CCTV quoted his criticism saying that the Western countries were doing nothing to help the situation. Although the research could not confirm which speech by Zelensky CCTV was referring to, it was able by checking the speech given by Zelensky on 5 March to show that he criticized NATO for not being willing to set up a no-fly zone and said "Western reservations indicated that not everyone considers the struggle for freedom to be Europe's number one goal". CCTV did not explain what Zelensky was referring to when saying that the Western countries were doing nothing to help the situation. It is noted that although the story used Zelensky's criticism, its key focus was to highlight the potential result of the war, namely Ukraine may keep herself away from NATO. Therefore, the tone in this narrative was not marked negative.

United Nations

For the news item itself, CCTV used a neutral tone to state China's attitude towards the war. The news reported that China's UN representative said the causes of the war were complicated and the conflict should be resolved in a peaceful way.

Summary

From the start of the war, CCTV devoted a small portion of its prime time to news coverage, namely CCTV News at 7 PM, to cover the Russia-Ukraine war. More specifically, on the ten days sampled, CCTV spent 7% of its coverage on war-related news and 93% on other news. This is not surprising as CCTV has its agenda format as the majority of news (more than 20 minutes) is about domestic topics and the minority (fewer than 10 minutes) is for international news. This general time allocation applies to most of the days unless there is significantly important international news such as the 9/11 terrorist attack.

For all news coverage related to the war, CCTV overall kept a neutral tone in its reporting. It quoted both sides of the war although devoting more time to stories from the Russian perspective than from the Ukrainian perspective. To stay in line with the government's proclaimed neutral foreign policy towards Russia's war against Ukraine, CCTV refrained from criticizing either side of the war, or other major stakeholders such as the USA or NATO directly. In the limited number of stories with negative narratives, CCTV used quotes or interviews to criticize the USA, NATO or other parties.

On the ten days sampled, the research found that CCTV endeavoured to convey a number of messages:

- USA and NATO are the causes of the current situation in Ukraine.
- Sanctions against Russia and the weapon support to Ukraine from Western countries are damaging the world and will not help to achieve peace.
- Russia's military operation is a response to US and NATO policies. Currently, Russia is working with Ukraine to restore relations through negotiation.

CCTV used the following approach to project the messages above:

- Make the USA as a clear central target and use any potential angle within the war to criticize US policies and NATO led by the USA.
- Keep a balanced tone for the war coverage but select and organize contexts favourable to Russia.
- Highlight the negative consequences of actions of the countries CCTV aims to criticize, while highlighting the constructive visions of the countries CCTV seems to favour.
- Use interviews with experts/researchers from third-party countries to support the message of CCTV in an "objective" way.

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Country report: Finland

Milla Blomqvist[5] & Hanne Vuorela[6]

TV channel and news programme

Yle TV1 is the main TV channel owned by Yle, the Finnish Broadcasting Company (in Finnish, Yleisradio). Yle is a mostly state-owned public service institution operating under Parliament and financed by a tax of its own. Yle TV1 also offers news in Swedish, the second official language in Finland, as well as minority languages Sámi, Russian and sign language. YLE reaches practically the whole of the Finnish population. Yle TV1 does not air outside Finland, but the Yle streaming service, Yle Areena, is available within the EU area.

Yle TV1 airs news broadcasts several times a day, starting at 6:30 in the morning. The flagship news bulletin is at 20:30, presenting main news from Finland and abroad. Total duration is approximately 25 minutes, including a headnote and news items. In addition, the news bulletin includes a weather forecast and a sports report, which were excluded from this studied sample. In the week 18–24 April 2022, *Yle News* at 20:30 was the most watched programme by a TV audience measuring of the Weekly Top 50 Programmes. During the week 24 February – 3 March 2022, Yle TV1 News at 20:30 gathered on average one million viewers each day. On 24 February, the day Russia attacked Ukraine, coverage by Yle TV1 broadcasts increased 44% compared to the day before.

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Story types

During the sample period *Yle News* had altogether 118 news items with a total time of 215 minutes. Of the whole duration, 76% was war-related news.

As seen in Figure 1, in the first weeks of the war a minimum of 85% of the broadcast time was dedicated to war-related news. After mid-March, the share of other topics began to increase. On 31 March domestic news items, mainly concerning a strike by care workers and nurses in Finland, exceeded the war-related news in duration. After that the coverage was about fifty-fifty.

Figure 1. Percentage of war-related and other news in *Yle News* based on coverage duration on the sample days.
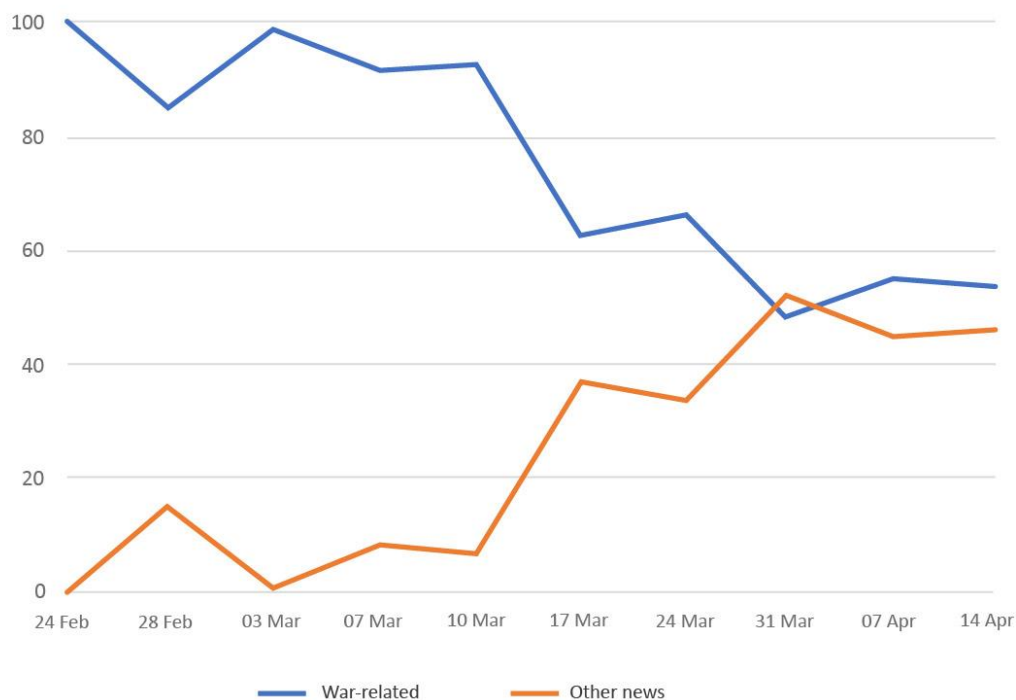
Although war-related news initially dominated *Yle News* by over 80 percent, the bulletin was not extended as in Russia and the UK. This is explained by other programmes, especially the daily current affairs *A-studio* of 30–40 minutes, which regularly follows the news and sports bulletins. There were also other special programmes on the war, including live broadcasts of political events, which added to the war-oriented profile of YLE. The total duration of these other war-related programmes throughout the study period was at least the same as the war-related stories in the news.

Topics

Table 1 shows that from the list of 13 topics (see Appendix 1), *Yle News* covered 11: Battlefield, Civilians, EU policies, Justification, Other war-related, Peace, Refugees, Sanctions, Security, UN and US policies. Only two topics, Disinformation and Nuclear hazard, were not covered in any of the news items in the sample.

Table 1. Topics by number of war-related news items and their coverage time in *Yle News*.

Topic	Number of news items	Percentage	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Battlefield	14	15%	27.7	17%
Civilians	6	6%	9.0	5%
Disinformation	0	0%	0	0%
EU policies	2	2%	2.6	2%
Justification	1	1%	2.6	2%
Nuclear hazard	0	0%	0	0%
Peace	4	4%	4.1	2%
Refugees	10	11%	16.8	10%
Sanctions	21	22%	36.4	22%
Security	26	28%	46.8	29%
United Nations	1	1%	0.4	0%
US policies	1	1%	2.3	1%
Other war-related	8	9%	14.6	9%
Total	94	100%	163.3	100%

Measured by the number of items, most of the news concentrated on Security (28%), Sanctions (22%), Battlefield (15%) and Refugees (11%). Measured by duration, Security had the widest coverage (29%), followed by Sanctions (22%), Battlefield (17%) and Other war-related (9%).

The least of the items focused on US policies, UN and Justification, with each topic having only 1% coverage of the total number of items.

Table 2 below shows that the war dominated the bulletin during its first weeks, the coverage being 85–100% of the total duration. After 17 March, the coverage settled down to 48–66% of the duration of the programme.

Measured by number of items, Security and Sanctions were covered most regularly throughout the ten-day sample, while Justification, US policies and UN were each only covered in one individual programme.

Table 2. Sample days by topics of war-related news in percentages of duration in *Yle News.*

Sample day	Battle-field	Civili-ans	Disin-form	EU policy	Justifi-cation	Nuc-lear	Peace	Refu-gees	Sanc-tions	Secu-rity	UN	US policy	Other war	Total
24 Feb	24%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	21%	30%	0%	0%	14%	100%
28 Feb	15%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	35%	37%	0%	0%	0%	100%
03 Mar	14%	0%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%	27%	12%	26%	0%	0%	10%	100%
07 Mar	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	32%	11%	31%	0%	0%	15%	100%
10 Mar	11%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	28%	42%	0%	0%	0%	100%
17 Mar	32%	9%	0%	20%	20%	0%	0%	3%	17%	16%	0%	0%	3%	100%
24 Mar	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%	32%	9%	0%	16%	0%	100%
31 Mar	0%	27%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	8%	0%	0%	54%	100%
07 Apr	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	31%	60%	0%	0%	0%	100%
14 Apr	44%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	31%	19%	0%	0%	3%	100%

Angles

According to Table 3, from a total of 163 minutes of war-related news in our ten-day sample, 77 percent were reported from the Home Country Finland angle. The Non-governmental angle covered 14 minutes of the total duration. Fewest news items were reported from the Ukraine and Russia angles, each having only a 2% share of the total duration. Measured in terms of duration, slightly more news was reported from the Russia angle than from the Ukraine angle.

Regarding percentages of the angles on the sample dates, each day of the sample included news items reported from the Finland angle and the Non-governmental angle. Measured by duration, the share of the Finland angle fell after the midpoint of the ten-day sample.

During the ten sample days, *Yle News* included many items reporting from several angles. In the sample of 94 news items, 145 mentions of angles could be found.

Table 3. Angles by duration of all war-related news in *Yle News*.

Angle	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Russia	3.3	2%
Ukraine	2.6	2%
Finland	126.5	77%
Other country	7.8	5%
Non-governmental	23.0	14%
Total	163.0	100%

Although most of the news items were reported from the Finland angle (77%), many items were also reported from other angles on the same item. For example, the first war-related story on 24 February was reported from four angles: Finland, Ukraine, Russia and Non-governmental. This news item concentrated on the topic Battlefield, disclosing the progress of the war and the situation on the first day of the attack. In addition to reporting from the Finland angle, the item quoted the speeches by both Russian and Ukrainian Presidents as well as interviews with two Ukrainian civilians.

The topics and angles represented in them are reviewed more closely below in order of frequency.

Security

This topic was the most frequently covered news item in *Yle News*. The ten-day sample featured 26 news items on the Security angle, which is 28% of the news topics. News items coded as Security were present in every bulletin of the sample. Their duration covered 8–60% of the airtime in the broadcasts, making 29% (46.8 minutes) of all.

In the 26 stories coded under Security, there were 33 observations of different angles. Most of the news items were covered from the Home country Finland angle (91%), with only a few from the Other country (7%), Non-governmental (1%) and Russia angles (1%).

Sanctions

Sanctions was the second most frequent topic with 21 news items (22%). The studied sample of ten broadcasts had Sanctions-coded news items in every broadcast, covering from 11% to 31% of news items. Their duration in minutes (36.4 minutes) was 22% of the total duration of the entire sample.

The 21 news items included 24 angles. In terms of duration, the Sanctions news items were most frequently covered from the Finland angle (95%), with only a few mentions from the Non-governmental (3%), Other country (2%) and Russia angles (0.5%).

Battlefield

Battlefield was the third most covered news topic in *Yle News*. Fourteen news items were included in this category, covering 15% of the topics. Duration-wise, in the two first studied bulletins Battlefield news took up the majority of the broadcast, making it most often the second or third most covered topic in terms of duration.

The 14 news items included 29 observations from various angles, which is the widest range of angles in the entire sample. Regarding the duration of the items, Battlefield news items were most often covered from the Finland angle (75%). The three other most often recurring angles were Non-governmental (12%), Russia (7%) and Ukraine (6%).

Refugees

The topic was featured in ten stories, which is 11% of the items in the sample. The duration of these was 10% of the whole sample. In three bulletins, refugees featured as the main topic.

These ten items included 15 angles, mostly addressed from the Finland angle (63%), the Non-governmental (33%) and Other country (5%) angles.

Other war-related topics

The category Other war-related topics included eight news items, representing 9% of the topics. The duration of the topic was 14.6 minutes. The news items categorized under Other occurred in just over the half of the broadcasts in the sample, covering 10–33% of the news items in the broadcasts.

In duration, the news items in the category Other war-related topics were most often covered from the Finland (51%) or Non-governmental angle (45%), and Other country (4%).

Civilians

The category Civilians had six stories, representing 6% of all the topics. Their duration was nine minutes, which is 5% of the sample. The news items in the Civilians category had 4–27% of the airtime when featured in the broadcast.

In terms of duration, the Civilians category was mostly covered from the Non-governmental angle (53%), then the Finland angle (39%), and a few observations of the Other country and Ukraine angles.

Peace

This category had four items, which is 4% of the total of news items. Their duration was 4.1 minutes, representing 2% of the duration in the category. The news items coded as Peace were featured in three bulletins, where they accounted for 10–15% of all the items.

In terms of duration, the Peace category was covered most from the Finland (63%), then the Ukraine (20%), the Russia (12%) and the Non-governmental (5%) angles.

EU policies

This category had two items, amounting to 2% of the whole sample. The duration of these two items was 2.6 minutes in total in two bulletins.

In terms of duration, EU policies were covered from the Finland (81%) and the Other country (19%) angles.

Justification, United Nations, US policies

These three topics had one item in the sample of broadcasts, each representing 1%. Justification had the longest duration, 2.6 minutes. US policies 2.3 minutes and UN 0.4 minutes.

Three different angles were found in the category of Justification: Finland, Russian and Non-governmental. The US policies item was reported from the Finland and Other country angles, and the UN news item from the Home country angle.

Nuclear hazard, Disinformation

The sample of ten *Yle News* bulletins did not include any items in these two topic categories.

Key narratives

The key narratives were identified under each topic and are listed in Table 4; topics listed in order of frequency. The number of times each narrative appeared in the topic is shown in brackets and the tone of the narrative towards the main parties – Russia, Ukraine, and the West – is indicated by simple positive, negative, or neutral orientation. More detailed description of the narratives follows in the text section after the table.

Table 4: Key narratives and their tones in topics in *Yle News.*

Topics and number of related news items	Key narratives (and number of related stories) Tone: Positive – *Pos*; Negative – *Neg*; Neutral – *Neu*
Security: 26	NATO mentioned in polls or other references (12) *Pos / Neu* National security in Finland (6) *Neg* National security of supply (2) *Neg* Support for Ukraine (2) *Pos*
Sanctions: 21	Impact of sanctions on Finnish economy and energy and fuel prices (12) *Neg* Stock markets (3) *Neu* Alleged sanction violations (2) *Neg* Russian civilians interviewed about impacts of sanctions (1) *Neg*
Battlefield: 14	Battlefield coverage (14) *Neg / Pos* Situation analysis (14) *Neg / Pos*

Refugees: 10	Refugees arriving in Europe (5) *Neg*
	Personal stories of refugees (4) *Neg / Pos*
	Refugees in Finland (3) *Neg / Pos*
	Refugees as objects of decisions or policies (3) *Pos*
Other war-related: 8	War news affecting children (1) *Neg*
	Building in Helsinki defaced with anti-Russian graffiti (1) *Neu*
	War affecting citizens, incl. artists in other countries (2) *Neg*
Civilians: 6	Difficult situation of civilians (6) *Neg*
	Evacuation process in Ukraine (6) *Neg*
	Resilience of civilians (3) *Neg / Pos*
Peace: 4	Peace or ceasefire negotiations between Ukraine and Russia (2) *Neg / Pos*
	President Niinistö of Finland appeals for peace (1) *Pos / Neg*
	Demonstrations or other statements for peace (1) *Neg*
EU policies: 2	EU grants temporary asylum to Ukrainian refugees (1) *Neg / Pos*
	EU-China summit meeting (1) *Neg*
US policies: 1	G7-meeting in Brussels, President Biden's statement (1) *Neg*
UN: 1	UN vote on suspension of Russia from UN Human Rights Council (1) *Neg*
Justification: 1	Russian Embassy in Finland launches campaign in social media (1) *Neg*

The topics and the angles represented in them are reviewed below in the order of their frequency.

Security

In this category the focus was on national and regional security issues, their reflection on public opinion and government decisions regarding citizen safety. This is the most frequently recurring topic in the *Yle News* broadcasts studied. The category contained 26 news items, which is 28% of all items.

As well as being the most recurring topic, Security was the most predominant topic to be viewed from the Home country Finland angle. Security was not considered as constituting the Non-governmental angle; only 4% of the items could be recognised as such.

At the beginning of the war, items coded as Security were most often reported among the first news topics along with battlefield updates, covering 30–37% of the topics in the first two bulletins. The importance of the subject was also emphasized by using live commentators in the first three bulletins. The commentators were mostly military specialists from the National Defence University and foreign affairs specialists from the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) operating under the Parliament.

One of the most frequent experts in *Yle News* was FIIA's Director Dr Mika Aaltola, who quickly became a most popular commentator of war throughout Finnish media. He was quite outspoken about Finland's new geopolitical position regarding Russia, which actually led to a popular appeal for him to stand as a candidate in the next presidential elections.

Just before the war Yle commissioned a public opinion poll about whether or not Finland should apply for NATO membership. The results were dramatic: over half of respondents having previously opposed to membership now turned in favour of it – suggesting a historically unique shift in public opinion, characterized as [Finland's NATO tsunami](). The results were featured as the leading news item in the broadcast of 28 February, introduced by Aaltola's comments and followed by a studio discussion as well as comments from people on the streets of Helsinki.

Otherwise, the topic of Security as a domestic issue was addressed via government statements and press conference footage of President Sauli Niinistö and/or Prime Minister Sanna Marin. The statements featured news on various security topics; first the change in Fenno-Russian relations, decisions on providing military support to Ukraine, assuring the public that there was no immediate threat to Finland and President Niinistö giving a short report to the Finnish media about his visit to the USA.

The voice of the government, the bulletins from national and international press conferences and the choice of specialists commenting the issue in live broadcasts, emphasized the importance of the subject. Therefore, the large number of security news items in *Yle News* underlined the importance and significance of the issue also in public discussion.

The Security news items featured positive, negative, and neutral tones towards both participants of the war, as most items had all perspectives presented. News items that mentioned NATO were presented with a slightly positive but more neutral perspective towards the West. The items dealing with national security in Finland, had negative tones for both participants of the war, because their actions affected the national security situation directly and had an impact on national security of supply. Clearly positive tones for Ukraine were visible in news items that considered either domestic or international support for Ukraine.

Sanctions

The topic included news items focusing on sanctions against Russia – both private businesses and private individuals – the consequences in both Russia and in the sanctioning countries and for the global economy. There were 21 news items in the category, which was 22% of the topics, and it was the second most frequently recurring topic overall.

Most news items were reported from the Finland angle. The sanctions were presented through the lens of the Finnish economy, the impact of the war on Finnish exports and the rising prices of energy and fuel. Many of the specialists interviewed were representatives of Finnish economic organizations such as the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK), CEOs of companies, or financial analysts.

In addition to news reporting during the early weeks of the war, Yle also gathered and published an updated list of Finnish companies that had announced their withdrawal from the Russian markets because of the sanctions. The list published in *Yle News* website is an example of public service information that is potentially useful for the public in personal decision-making.

Some of the news items about sanctions were introduced through European Union decisions, albeit from the Finland angle. In several bulletins the Yle EU correspondent in Brussels commented regularly live on sanction decisions, thereby underlining the importance of the subject.

Besides the economy, sanctions were also shown to have an impact on cultural activities. A consignment of Russian art treasures returning from an exhibition abroad was stopped by Finnish customs in early April suspected of violating sanction regulations. The angle of the news item was Finland although it also presented the Russia angle and the Non-governmental side of the sanctions. Art treasures are rarely presented in the news as subjects involved in diplomatic disputes, or war.

Sanctions-coded news items that featured stories about the impact of sanctions on the Finnish economy – especially on energy and fuel prices, had a negative tone on both parties of to war, because of their effect on the Finnish economy. Stock market reports on sanctions remained neutral, the reports were short bulletins stating the daily situation and the reaction of the markets. News items about alleged sanction violations and items with interviews with Russian civilians featured clearly negative tones towards Russia.

In *Yle News* Sanctions were presented as a necessary procedure and inevitable consequence of the war, yet an unavoidable *force majeure* afflicting the Finnish economy. Both these views are apparent in the sanctions reporting.

Battlefield

This topic covers subjects such as the military battles, ground reports, updates, and situation analyses. Battlefield was the third most frequently occurring topic in the *Yle News* and included 14 news items altogether, covering 15%. The majority of the news items were covered from the Finland angle.

At the early days of war Battlefield coverage and updates were the primary topics in *Yle news* bulletins. In subsequent weeks the focus shifted to Refugees, Sanctions and Security.

The first two stories on *Yle News* on 24 February prioritized the Battlefield news items, the situation was reported live by the Yle correspondent from Kiev and Lviv. The correspondent described the prevailing situation on the battlefield and among the civilians in the city. The bulletins also included footage from international news agencies with short clips of President Putin and President Zelenskyi addressing the media.

In further weeks battlefield coverage faded into the background; it was covered mostly on brief updates about the current situation among the other war-related news, illustrated with maps and graphics. The stories described the war by showing the bomb damage and the impact of the war on civilians. The correspondents regularly reported on the situation from various parts of Ukraine, and the battlefield news and military tactics were frequently analysed in the studio by commentators, notably authorities from the National Defence University.

The stories were mostly presented from the Finland angle. The news reporting ideal attempts to present the perspective of both parties involved in the war, yet the battlefield reporting emphasized the difficult situation from the Ukrainian civilians' viewpoint and the dramatic implications of the war for international relations, and the effects on Finland of the tense

situation in international politics. The available news footage was mainly from the Ukraine front, thereby emphasizing the Ukraine angle.

On Battlefield news items were found with both negative and positive tones on both participants. Russia as the main aggressor in the war was mostly presented in negative tones, the Ukrainian army defending its territory overwhelmingly in positive tones. In situation analyses by military experts the negative and positive tones on both were more balanced as the situation and possible strategics were considered from the perspectives of both participants in the situation updates.

Refugees

This category included stories on refugees both inside and outside Ukraine. The category had ten news items covering 11% of the topics. Most news was from the Finland angle: the news featured Ukrainian refugees arriving in Finland and being interviewed about their decision to leave their country, or Finnish authorities commenting or making statements on the situation.

Refugees were also shown in international news footage being evacuated or waiting at the railway station and talking about their experiences. In these stories the Non-governmental or Other Country angles were to be found as well as the Ukraine angle.

After the early days of the war refugees became the news topic of most intense interest. Many of the news items quoted government officials on the issue and in many of the news items an individual refugee was portrayed as an object of governmental decisions.

In addition to situation reporting, the officials from the Finnish Ministry of the Interior also used *Yle News* as a medium to give instructions to Finnish people, when the officials were interviewed. For example, calling on people to help refugees preferably via official institutions and organizations rather than offering refugees accommodation individually.

In the news items about refugees arriving in Europe mainly negative tones towards Russia were identified. Personal stories of the refugees in Finland also presented positive tones for Ukraine, Finland, and the West. Refugees as objects of decisions or policies reflected positive tones for the receiving countries and refugees as survivors of the war.

Although the reporters in the news items remained neutral in their professional role, the interviewees showed their emotions and reactions openly when talking about their situation. The reporting, both when the subject was Ukrainian refugees in Finland or elsewhere in Europe, was compassionate, taking the side of the refugees.

Other war-related topics

This category contains all news topics that do not fit into specific categories. It had eight news items (9%); the subjects covered a wide range of war-related topics.

Stories in this category occurred in every other broadcast but they were not considered main news items or urgent information in importance. Additionally, however, they shed interesting light on other news subjects considered "softer" or less significant in comparison to "harder" topics such as the economy or politics.

The first broadcast on 24 February included a report from the an elementary school in the city of Jyväskylä on how intensive media coverage of war affects children and young people in Finland. The focus was on maintaining mental health and how to discuss difficult issues with children and young people. The item also reflected the children's understanding of the situation by allowing young interviewees to express their own thoughts about the war.

In the following weeks, correspondents reported on how the war affected elections in France and Hungary. An Yle correspondent also reported from China how certain professional groups, such as artists, experienced the impact of the war in their professional lives.

The category also included an item about the Finnish presidential residence being defaced with Russia-related texts with no political motive. The news itself can be seen as an important piece of information to stop the spread of false information. The tone of the report is neutral, the bulletin describes what has happened, but points out that the expression of support for Russia had no political motive.

Most items in this category had both the Non-governmental and the Finland angle and the interviewees were mostly ordinary citizens, children and artists portrayed via the impact of the war. The stories in the Other war-related category had clearly negative tones towards Russia, as the actions of the offending country were the cause of the interviewees' anxiety.

Civilians

This category included stories covering civilian deaths and the conditions civilians faced, the impact of shortages and sanctions, people's view and perspectives that both Russian and Ukrainian civilians presented in interviews and reports.

Civilians were mentioned in almost all news items, also those covering Battlefield, but as a main item accounted for only 6% of the news items studied. In many other news items, civilians and their conditions were described by refugees who had already left Ukraine.

In the battlefield coverage civilians were mentioned almost every time, when reporting deaths and casualties from air strikes and bombings. The six news items in this category were mostly covered from the Finland or the Non-governmental angle.

The tones in the Civilians-category were negative towards Russia and positive towards Ukrainian civilians. Ukrainian civilians were presented as the main targets in the war, many of those interviewed appeared shocked and emotional in the reports and news footage. Interview locations included streets, in front of wrecked buildings, bomb shelters and basements.

Although the vulnerability of the civilians was obvious, there was also another perspective showing civilians as active, persevering and resilient citizens, bent on helping the Ukrainian military, for example by gathering clothes and other supplies, donating blood and preparing Molotov cocktails in town squares.

Peace

This category included four news items accounting for 4% of all items. The category covered news about peace negotiation attempts between Russia and Ukraine, other efforts by all countries and reports from cities and towns about the restoration of peaceful life and the delivery of humanitarian aid.

The news items were addressed from the Home country Finland, Russia, Ukraine, and Non-governmental angles: President Niinistö of Finland calling Russian President Putin after an appeal from European leaders, Ukraine and Russia to negotiate a ceasefire in two items, and a Russian artist exhibiting a "No war" text in the ARS22 exhibition of contemporary art in Helsinki.

In the news items featuring attempts to negotiate a ceasefire, the subject was presented as a diplomatic procedure. The footage was from international news agencies. President Niinistö's announcement about making a phone call was presented as personal, or Finland's own approach to appealing for peace, although the initiative to maintain some connection with Russia was said to have come from European leaders.

The Non-governmental news item about the ARS22 exhibition was mentioned at the end of a story about the opening of the exhibition itself. The artwork by Russian artists (or its absence) was presented as a courageous public statement for peace.

The tones in Peace-coded items varied from positive to negative. In cease fire stories reporting was positive for both participants, although Russia's violation of the cease-fire during the negotiations was criticized. President Niinistö's appeal for peace was also positive for both Russia and Ukraine but had negative tone regarding both participants because of the dire situation. Demonstrations and other statements for peace had a negative tone towards Russia.

EU policies

This category covered stories related to the war, military support for Ukraine and mercenaries. Two items were recognized as European Union-related topics and represented 2% of the items in total.

A news item from 3 March reported the EU granting Ukrainian refugees temporary protection. The decision was called "historical" by the Yle correspondent in Brussels. The news was reported through the Finland angle. The tone of the reporting was positive towards Ukrainian refugees as they achieved protection, and negative towards Russia because of the situation.

Another item in the EU category reported the upcoming China and EU summit meeting in a short story, the theme of the item continued in the following item: a Chinese artist portraying the war in Ukraine in his art. The tone of the item about the summit was negative towards Russia, with neutral mention that China had not formally agreed to give Russia any military assistance.

US policies

The US policies category consisted of stories about the United States and NATO relating to the war and events leading to it. One news item was identified in this category, covering the meeting in Brussels of NATO and the G7 countries attended by US President Biden.

The item featured international news agency footage from the speeches by President Biden and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. Both the Finland and the Other Country angles could be found in this item.

The tone of the item was negative towards Russia, and positive towards Ukraine, as G7 countries agreed on continuing to support Ukraine.

United Nations

The sample included one story that could be categorized as a United Nations topic. This accounted for 1% of all news items. The item was a short report featuring international news agency footage from UN headquarters, members of the UN Human Rights Council voting to discontinue Russian membership.

The story reported the result of the vote read out by the news presenter. The news mentioned how many UN members had participated, voted for or against, or abstained from voting. The report focused on the result of the vote from the Finland angle, as an additional subject linking it to an earlier news item reported from the Ukrainian town of Odessa preparing for Russian army bombings.

The tone of the report was negative towards Russia as it stated that the result of the vote called for the expulsion of Russia from the UN Human Rights Council.

Justification

This category contained one story with both the Finland and the Russia angles. The subject was the campaign on the part of the Russian Embassy in Finland to collect evidence of discrimination and hatred expressed towards Russian and Russian-speaking people in Finland.

The item included an interview with a project coordinator from the Finnish-Russian Cultural Foundation, whose spokesperson stated that the campaign was a part of a wider propaganda campaign to justify Russia's war in Ukraine. The item also quoted the deputy head of the Finnish Security Intelligence Service (SUPO) as saying that the campaign was not surprising as Russia had already been using used its citizens in national propaganda for some time. The Russian embassy in Finland justified the campaign claiming that hostile attitudes towards Russians were increasingly frequent in many European countries, including Finland.

The report itself remained impartial, leaving comments on the campaign to the spokespersons for the Foundation and SUPO. They were the trusted specialists in the news item commenting the campaign and its anticipated impacts. The tone of the specialists interviewed was clearly negative towards Russia.

Nuclear hazard, Disinformation

These categories were not represented in the *Yle News* bulletins.

Summary

The research included 94 war-related news items from ten *Yle News* bulletins. The most frequently recurring topics in the sample were Security (28%) and Sanctions (22%). All the bulletins studied featured news items on Security and Sanctions. Both these categories included several frequently recurring narratives.

The large numbers of news items in the Security and Sanctions categories underline their significance as news topics. They had an impact on public discussion and at the same time their presence in public discussion made the subjects important as news topics.

Sanctions against Russia were presented as a necessary procedure involving Finland as an EU country. The counter-sanctions from Russia were seen from this perspective, and not as separate actions against Finland.

Besides battlefield coverage and situation analysis, the two most frequent narratives in *Yle News* were NATO and the impact of sanctions on the Finnish economy. In the Security-coded news items studied NATO was frequently mentioned either as a reference, or as the main element of the narrative. In the Sanctions category, the majority of news items focused on the impact of sanctions to national economy, energy supply and fuel prices. The other narratives were on the national security of Finland and security of supply, refugees and civilians.

United Nations, EU, and US topics were in the minority as main news items in broadcasts. The topics and their perspectives were often mentioned as background to the news, but they were rarely focused on as individual news items.

In the sample studied, 145 references to angles could be found in 94 items. All the news items on the 13 topic categories could be found to represent several angles. The most common perspective in *Yle News* was the Finland angle, both in terms of number of news items (63%) and in terms of duration (77%). This is clearly because Yle reports to a Finnish audience from a distinctly Finnish perspective.

Secondly, a major part (14%) of the news duration was reported from a Non-governmental angle. These news items were mostly covered through interviews with suffering civilians and refugees inside and outside of Ukraine. *Yle News* items also featured interviews with representatives of culture and art and with ordinary Finns, such as school children, voicing their opinion. The perspective of ordinary citizens in Finland was also presented through market research studies, especially in security related topics.

Only two items included interviews with Russians: the first of these consisted of interviews with people leaving Russia because of the war and the second a Finnish-Russian person criticizing the Russian government. The angle of these both examples was counted as Non-governmental because the interviewees in both news items were civilians.

Even though slightly more news items were reported from the Russia angle than from the Ukraine angle, the results indicate that *Yle News* favours Ukraine and the West. In general, however, news items were reported from various perspectives in line with professional ethics – also a ritual to maintain objectivity and and to afford a wider perspective on the context.

Yle as a news media has a tradition of neutral reporting style and objectivity, which is also apparent in the general tone of the samples studied. When identifying the tones of the key narratives either for or against the main participants of the war, most news items were presented from different viewpoints and perspectives whenever possible. This means that various tones can be found in the same news item. Also, the common understanding about Russia as the main aggressor in the war explains the majority of negative tones towards Russia.

In brief, *Yle News* covered the war in Ukraine first and foremost from the perspective of Security and Sanctions. Yle reported specifically to a Finnish audience on how world politics affected the lives of ordinary Finnish citizens. The geopolitical status of Finland adjacent to Russia, with a common border of over 1,300 kilometres, emphasized the importance of national security issues. The sudden change in bilateral relations between Finland and Russia also affected the Finnish economy and national security of supply, which necessitated adjustment to the changing political atmosphere and preparation for unstable future scenarios.

Context

In news footage, images of war, suffering civilians, dead people and war atrocities influence public opinion about war and its consequences. During the first weeks of the war the use in television broadcasts of graphic images of dead civilians, dismembered bodies and casualties caused disapproval among some viewers. Public discussion vacillated between two polarized opinions as to the correct and truthful procedure to illustrate war and whether the media should self-regulate the news content to protect viewers from harrowing images.

Yle, among other Finnish media, was criticized for using allegedly unnecessarily disturbing and raw images and videos in the news. Yle explained the use of images as an essential part of war reporting and appealed to the right of the public to access the facts about warfare. The decision to show graphic content in the news derives from Yle's public service obligation and the journalistic values of representing reality as it is. This was the first time in recent years that the media had to explain and justify its decisions to show the public authentic images.

The ten news bulletins selected are a small sample of the entire war coverage by Finnish television. Nevertheless, the results convincingly show firstly, that the perspective in *Yle News* was clearly domestic and secondly, that the storytelling and reporting in the *Yle News* bulletins also covered the Ukrainian and Western perspectives on the war extensively.

For many Finns the threat of war remains deeply rooted in collective memory and family histories because of World War II. The geopolitical status of Ukraine and its tense but close relationship with neighbouring Russia are in many ways reminiscent of the history of Finland.

Clearly, the events covered and the characteristics of that coverage served to create a popular mindset, which accounted for the prominence of national security and international relations in the public debate in Finland in spring 2022. Related to the debate was a phenomenal change of public opinion about NATO, characterized as [tsunami](). (For a review of the Finnish debate, see [FinnFest USA webinar]().)

Country report: UK

Savyasaachi Jain[7]

TV channel and news programme

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is the UK's public service broadcaster. Formed in 1922, it is now 100 years old, "an institution that almost every Briton uses in one way or another" (Hendy, 2022). Funded directly by its users through a licence fee, it is one of the most influential media in the world. BBC news content reaches almost half a billion people every week (Turvill, 2022; BBC, 2021), that is, one in every 16 people worldwide.

Within the UK, the BBC reaches 90% of the population and is a predominant source of news. BBC One is its main domestic channel, which produced 1,697 hours of news in 2021, more than four-and-a-half hours every day. It carries the main news bulletins of the day for the domestic audience. In addition, BBC One and BBC Two together produced 514 hours – almost one-and-a-half hours daily – of current affairs in 2021 (BBC, 2022: 139).

The coverage of the Ukraine war analysed here is from the most watched news bulletin in the country, BBC One's evening news bulletin called *News at Six*. This news bulletin figures regularly in the top 50 watched television programmes each week (BARB, 2022). On the day the war began, 24 Feb 2022, *News at Six* got an audience of 5.49 million. It was the tenth most watched programme of the week in a crowded field that included game shows, sports programming, long-running soaps and films across all channels in the UK. It remained in the top 20 most watched programmes of the week for most of the days included in this study.

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Story types

At the start of the war, *News at Six* doubled its output to accommodate its coverage. On the first two sample dates – 24 February and 28 February – the news programme, which is normally 30 minutes in length, was extended to 60 minutes. On each of these two days, there was approximately 50 minutes of coverage of the war, well over the length of a regular bulletin, with the other 10 minutes being accounted for by opening and closing sequences, headlines, recaps of the main news, weather reports, etc. The bulletin on these dates focused heavily on Ukraine and news not related to the Ukraine warn was edged out.

This is depicted in Figure 1, which shows the relative share of Ukraine-related coverage and other coverage in the *News at Six* during the sample period. As can be seen in the figure, Ukraine-related news dominated the bulletins and commanded a share of more than 50% in the first five sample dates, representing the first month of the war.

Figure 1: Percentage of war-related and other news in *News at Six* based on coverage duration on the sample days.
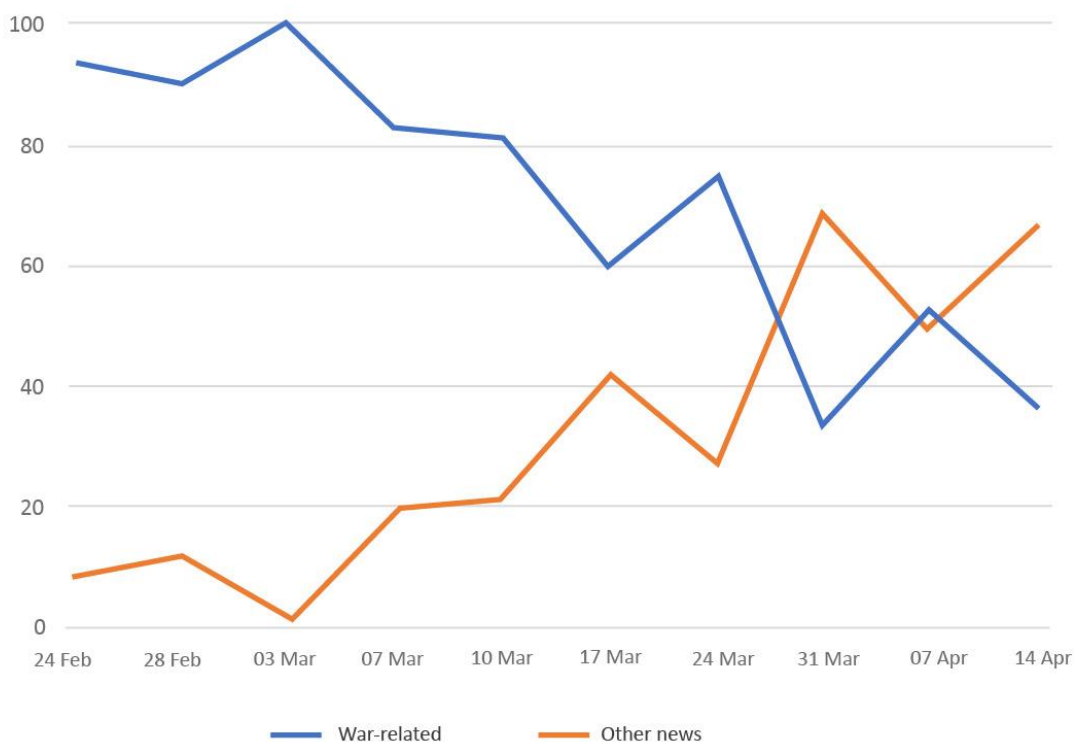
On all the days, Ukraine was the most heavily covered topic in the bulletin. In all of them except the very last sampled date, Ukraine led the news agenda for the day and occupied a substantial first section in the running order.

Over the ten sampled days, Ukraine received about 263 minutes of coverage, excluding news headlines and recaps, that is, a daily average of slightly more news than can be contained in one standard 30-minute bulletin.

Topics

Table 1 shows how *News at* Six covered the 13 war-related topics chosen for analysis. The most frequently covered topics (measured by the number of news items) were Sanctions (19%), Refugees and Civilians (jointly in second place with 17% each) and Battlefield (16% of the stories). When measured in terms of duration, the topic that received the most time was Sanctions (53.2 minutes, one-fifth of all coverage) followed by Civilians (48.3 min, 18% of time) and Refugees (45.8 min, 17% of time). Battlefield coverage extended to 41.4 minutes, or 16%. These four topics received a 71% share of the airtime of the overall coverage of the war. The emphasis given to these topics in terms of number of items is in alignment with the amount of time they received on air.

Table 1. Topics by number of war-related news items and their coverage time in *News at Six.*

Topic	Number of news items	Percentage	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Battlefield	15	16%	41.4	16%
Civilians	16	17%	48.3	18%
Disinformation	1	1%	3.0	1%
EU policies	1	1%	1.6	1%
Justification	2	2%	4.6	2%
Nuclear hazard	0	0%	0	0%
Peace	5	5%	15.3	6%
Refugees	16	17%	45.8	17%
Sanctions	18	19%	53.2	20%
Security	9	9%	19.7	7%
United Nations	1	1%	2.8	1%
US policies	2	2%	5.6	2%
Other war-related	9	9%	22.7	9%
Total	95	100%	263.9	100%

Table 2 below sets out the duration of the coverage of the 13 topics across the 10 sample days. On the first day of the war, the topic of Security (as defined in the appendix) received the most coverage, followed by Sanctions and Civilians. As shown in Table 2, Security was prominent only for a short while, and was far less visible in the output as time progressed. Sanctions and Civilians both remained prominent in the coverage for the rest of the sample period.

Table 2. Sample days by topic of war-related news in percentages of duration in *News at Six.*

Sample day	Battle-field	Civili-ans	Disin-form	EU policy	Justifi-cation	Nuc-lear	Peace	Refu-gees	Sanc-tions	Secu-rity	UN	US policy	Other war	Total
24 Feb	6%	22%	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	22%	28%	0%	0%	17%	100%
28 Feb	10%	10%	0%	0%	5%	0%	10%	20%	20%	10%	0%	0%	15%	100%
03 Mar	25%	17%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	17%	8%	8%	0%	0%	100%
07 Mar	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%	67%	22%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
10 Mar	0%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	31%	31%	8%	0%	0%	0%	100%
17 Mar	20%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	100%
24 Mar	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	100%
31 Mar	0%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%	0%	0%	0%	33%	100%
07 Apr	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	25%	0%	100%
14 Apr	60%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	100%

The topics that received relatively lower amounts of coverage in the *News at Six* included Peace, Justification for the war, US policies, EU policies, UN and Disinformation – Justification was only covered in the first two sample days; Peace efforts were covered on four of the ten days; US policies were covered twice, both times in the second half of the sample, while EU policies, UN and Disinformation were covered on only one occasion each.

Some topics were covered in great detail on some days, creating, in effect, 'special issues' that focused heavily on one topic on some days. These included Battlefield reports, which twice covered more than 60% of the war-related coverage. Similarly, Civilians and Refugees accounted for more than 60% of the coverage on one occasion each. The coverage of Civilians was prominent on several other days as well, but Refugees were not covered at all in the second half of the sample period.

Angles

Table 3 below shows how the war-related coverage represented different perspectives and points of view. The Non-governmental angle was the most prominent, representing the voices of ordinary citizens, civilians caught up in the conflict and refugees. At 34%, more than one-third of all coverage was from this angle. The next most prominent angle was that of the Home Country, UK, amounting to 25% or one-fourth of all coverage. The Ukraine angle was represented in 20% of the coverage, and this was almost three times as much as the Russia angle, reflecting British foreign policy, which also favoured the Ukraine angle over the Russia angle.

Table 3: Angles by duration of all war-related news items in *News as Six.*

Angle	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Russia	19.5	7%
Ukraine	53.5	20%
UK	66.6	25%
Other country	34.7	13%
Non-governmental	89.6	34%
Total	263.9	100%

The topics and angles represented in them are reviewed below, in the order of the prominence of the topics.

Sanctions

This topic led the coverage, both in terms of the number of news items over the sample period (18 items, which amounted to 19% of all items) and the amount of time devoted to it (53.2 minutes, which was 20% or one-fifth of the total time). Sanctions were covered on seven of the ten sample days, often with prominence – on five of those seven days, the topic received a share of the time between 25% and 40% .

An overwhelming amount of the time devoted to Sanctions (61.6%) was from the Home Country angle. This included the British government's position, or discussing, for instance, the impact of the sanctions on the supply and cost of energy in the UK. The Russia angle accounted for 13% of the coverage of this topic, and other countries for slightly less than 10%.

Civilians

Civilians were an important focus of the coverage throughout the sample period, accounting for the second-highest amount of time – 48.3 minutes, that is, 18% of the overall coverage. The 16 stories on the impact of war on civilians were spread over eight days, missing on only two of the days. On 17 March, civilian-related stories dominated all other topics and received 72% of the coverage.

The focus on Ukrainian civilians (18.6%) was nearly three times as much as on Russian civilians (6.4%). However, 69% of all coverage of civilians was from a Non-governmental angle.

Refugees

Refugees were also covered extensively, to the level of 17% of the number of stories and 17% of the duration of coverage. The 16 stories on refugees were not spread evenly across the sample – they appeared on only four days. On 7 March, the topic of Refugees accounted for 58% of the Ukraine coverage. On 10 March, it was 37%, and on 28 February and 3 March, it took up 22% and 25% of the coverage respectively. This could indicate that the topic was the

subject of an editorial decision to focus on it on those days. Refugees were not covered in the last five sample days.

Refugees were covered mainly from the Non-governmental angle (61%). They were also covered from the Ukrainian angle (19.3%) and the UK angle (16.7%).

Refugees and Civilians taken together

Refugees and Civilians are distinct topics in the coding, but they are nevertheless related. Taken together, these two topics represent more than one-third of all Ukraine-related coverage on *News at Six* (34% of the total number of stories and 35% of the total duration of the coverage). Both these were overwhelmingly covered from the Non-governmental angle (almost two-thirds of the coverage of these topics was from this angle).

Battlefield

Battlefield reports, updates and analyses were a regular feature – but not as regular as one might expect in the coverage of a war. There were three days in the sample – 7, 10 and 31 March – on which there were no Battlefield stories (these days instead saw a focus on topics such as Refugees and Civilians). At the same time, some days saw very heavy Battlefield coverage – 24 March saw 70% of the coverage devoted to the Battlefield, and on 14 April, this figure was even higher at 83%.

On the whole, Battlefield stories took up 16% of the coverage, or 41.4 minutes' duration.

Battlefield coverage in the sample period was heavily skewed towards the Ukraine angle, which, at 56.1% of the total duration of coverage, was more than six times that of the Russia angle (9.1%). In fact, a large proportion of all coverage from the Ukraine angle (43%) was on the Battlefield topic, so this aspect was significant in the representation of the Ukrainian viewpoint.

Security

The topic of Security was prominent in nine news stories, accounting for a 9% share of the total time devoted to the Ukraine war.

This topic appeared sporadically, being covered for 28% of the time on the first day, 24 February, for 10% of the coverage on the next sample day, 28 Feb, 8% in the next sample after that and then not appearing for a while.

Security issues were covered heavily from the Home country (UK) and Other country angles (36.5% and 35.3% respectively). The former represented the British view and the latter the other international perspectives, including international bodies. Close to one-fifth of Security issues (18.9%) were from the Ukraine angle, and 9.3% represented the Russian view.

Other war-related topics

'Other' stories were coded as having taken up 22.7 minutes over nine stories. Stories that were classified as 'Other' included composite stories that covered a lot of different topics. For instance, on the first day of the war, the first overview item in *News at Six* was classified as Other. It contained a number of different elements, including Battlefield information,

statements from Presidents Putin and Zelenskiy, Civilian fears and situation, and the overall Security situation in Europe.

On 24 February, 'Other' accounted for 15% of the coverage of the day; on 28 February, the figure was 17%; and on 17 March and 31 March the corresponding figures were 18% and 29%. This topic did not figure prominently on other sample days.

Peace

Five stories were classified under the topic Peace. They covered 15.3 minutes in all, that is, 6% of the total duration of Ukraine-related coverage. This coverage of peace efforts and negotiations occurred on four days – 28 February, 7 March, 10 March and 24 March.

Peace stories were mainly covered from angles other than Russia (6.9%) or Ukraine (8.4%) – the Other country angle dominated at 42.2%, followed by Non-governmental (21.6%) and Home country (21%).

US Policies

US policies were the main topic of only two stories, adding up to 5.6 minutes in duration. These stories appeared in the latter half of the sampled period, on 24 March and 7 April. They were mainly from the Other Country angle, but the Home country angle (9.3% of the coverage devoted to this topic) and the Ukraine angle (8.1%) were also represented.

Justification

Justification of the war by any of the parties involved in the conflict was given little space on the coverage by *News at Six*. There were only two news items coded under this category because they were primarily about justifying the war. They accounted for a total of 4.6 minutes, that is 2% of the total coverage of the war.

There was no Ukraine angle in Justification. The Russian perspective was represented nearly one-fourth of the time (23.6%), while the other 76.4% of the coverage of Justification was from a Non-governmental angle.

United Nations

The UN was identified as the main topic of only one story, which was 2.8 minutes in length. It appeared on 3 March and was classified as from the Other Country angle.

EU Policies

EU policies were also classified as representing the Other Country angle. They were the main topic of one 2.8-minute-long news item on 10 March, or 1% of the total time devoted to the war on *News at Six* across the sample period.

Disinformation

Disinformation was rarely covered. There was only one story on this topic. It was 3.0 minutes in length and appeared on 3 March. It was coded as 73% from the Non-government angle and 27% from the Russia angle.

Key narratives

Multiple explicit ideas or narratives were identified under each topic over the course of the sample period. These narratives had variously a neutral, negative or positive tone. Analysing them provided a more comprehensive picture of the coverage on *News at Six.* The results are summarized in Table 4, listing the topics in order of their frequency. For each topic the key narratives with their tones are listed.

Table 4: Key narratives in various topics and their tone – BBC *News at Six.*

Topics and number of related news items	Key narratives Tone: Positive – *Pos*; Negative – *Neg*; Neutral – *Neu*
Sanctions: 18	Diplomatic activity and discussions to impose and enforce sanctions *Pos*
	Details of sanctions imposed or proposed, including the speed or lack of speed with they were imposed *Pos*
	Economic impact of the war and sanctions on the UK economy and the world economy *Neg*
	New energy policy for the UK *Neg*
	The impact of sanctions on Russia at the institutional as well as the community and individual levels *Pos*
	Reactions to sanctions from Russia, both from the government as well as from activists and civilians *Pos*
Civilians: 16	Civilian population of Ukraine and their plans and prospects *Neg*
	Civilian casualties and personal stories of civilians under threat *Neg*
	The situation in various cities/ areas, including the targeting of civilian areas *Neg*
	Atrocities and killings of civilians (by Russian forces) *Neg*
	Civilians preparing to migrate *Neg*
	Humanitarian efforts and relief works *Pos*
	Reactions from Ukrainian civilians in the UK *Neu*
	The resilience and pride of Ukrainian civilians *Pos*
Refugees: 16	Ground reports and overviews of the exodus of refugees and the problems faced by them *Neg*
	Situations at borders and routes taken by refugees *Neg*
	Shelling of refugee convoys and humanitarian corridors *Neg*
	Focus on specific groups of refugees – foreign students, workers, etc. *Neu*
	Arrangements for Ukrainian refugees, including visas, travel and diplomatic and high-level discussions on this aspect *Neu*
	Criticism of the UK government for slow processing of refugees/ their visas *Neg*
	The trauma of exile, including references to the holocaust and the suffering of Ukrainian and Russian people during WWII *Neg*

Battlefield: 15	Analysis of respective military strengths of Russia and Ukraine *Neu*
	Battlefield reports and analyses, including areas where active combat was taking place and the ebb and flow of battle *Neu / Pos*
	Russia's progress in achieving objectives, or the lack of it *Neg*
	Ukraine asking for weapons *Pos*
Security: 9	The security situation as seen from the Russian perspective *Neu*
	Ukraine's historical relationship with Russia *Neu*
	Global diplomatic activity, including statements by leaders of various countries *Neu*
	The horror of war in Europe *Neg*
	Fears over the possible use of chemical weapons *Neg*
	Threat of nuclear weapons being used *Neg*
	Did Russia miscalculate? *Neg*
	Russia as a pariah state *Neg*
	Talk of no-fly zones *Neu*
Other war-related: 9	Composite reports covering multiple aspects *Neu / Neg*
	Analysis of geopolitics *Neu*
	Analysis of President Putin's motives and state of mind *Neg*
	Volunteers from the UK heading to Ukraine to fight against Russia *Pos*
Peace: 5	Diplomatic talks and negotiations, bilateral, multilateral as well as at international forums *Neu*
	The rounds of negotiations between Russia and Ukraine *Neu*
	Pressure from within Russia to stop the war; arrest of anti-war protestors in Russia *Neg*
US Policies: 2	US government announcements and initiatives in the war *Neu*
	NATO forces and their deployment *Pos*
	Supplies of weapons by NATO to Ukraine *Pos*
Justification: 2	Russian justification *Neg*
	Anti-war sentiment in Russia and resistance/ protests from Russians students, civilians and prominent people *Pos*
United Nations: 1	Deliberations and discussions at the UN *Neu*
EU policies: 1	Weapons from EU being sent to Ukraine *Pos*
Disinformation: 1	Censorship and media restrictions within Russia; free speech *Neg*

Below is a review of how these narratives were presented in each of the topics, in the order of their prominence in the coverage. These narratives were largely explicit, in that they were stated in words and did not have to be inferred. They are representative of the overall coverage of the situation on *News at Six* but are not quantified here because they were not restricted to one narrative in one story; several narratives were often identifiable in stories. Most of these narratives were repeated over the sample period and contribute to recurring themes.

Sanctions

Sanctions were the single most covered topic in the coverage, accounting for approximately one-fifth of all coverage. When the war began, the focus was on diplomatic activity and the discussions in various forums, international as well as within the UK government, to impose sanctions on Russia and the mechanisms through which they might be enforced. This continued for several days as measures were rolled out, including several high-profile sporting bans by various bodies on Russian teams and restrictions on the activities of Russian oligarchs. Russian oligarchs are known to have a substantial presence in the UK, in property and investment as well as in the ownership of sports teams, and they came into focus during this period as they were proscribed or their yachts seized. The narrative underlying these stories was that of necessity and proportional response to an unjustified aggression. The coverage conveyed sanctions as necessary and justified and included discussions of why they were not happening speedily enough.

In subsequent days, there was substantial focus on the impact of the sanctions by international bodies and various countries on the Russian economy. The Moscow correspondent reported on this on several days and here the tone was that the sanctions would cause hardships to Russian people and fuel discontent against the Russian government. These reports included reactions from within Russia, and interviews with ordinary citizens, journalists and activists as well as representatives of the government.

Still later, as the impact of sanctions began to manifest itself in the form of rising energy prices and threats to the supply of wheat and other commodities, there was a strong focus on the pain being felt within the UK and in the global economy. These reports and analyses did not generally specifically ascribe blame to Russia but focused on the difficulties of domestic consumers and discussed the policy changes needed to counter its effects, including a renewed acceptance of nuclear power stations as a source of reliable energy.

Sanctions were discussed overwhelmingly from the UK angle. There was some coverage from the Russia angle, focused on the impact of sanctions, but very little from the angle of Ukraine, perhaps indicating that though the sanctions were intended to punish Russia, Ukraine was not a player in the decisions and their implementation.

Civilians

Civilians were another major focus of the coverage. In fact, combined with refugees, which was coded separately in this study, the two topics accounted for more than one-third of all the coverage, both in terms of the number of news items and the duration of the coverage.

The focus on civilian populations was consistent with the BBC's broad style of coverage, which tends to examine developments, events and policies through the lens of their impact on ordinary people. In this case, however, there was an additional factor – the impact on civilian populations was the vehicle to demonstrate the moral indefensibility of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The coverage on *News at Six* focused very heavily on the civilian population of Ukraine, including the impact on them, their plans and movement, and their prospects. There were a number of stories about civilian casualties and strong personal stories about the threat to civilians in general, including one about children suffering from cancer having to be evacuated from their hospital to a safer location.

Throughout the sample period, coverage of the situation in various cities in Ukraine contributed to a recurring narrative about the targeting of civilian areas by Russian forces, often framed as 'indiscriminate targeting'. Killings of civilians by Russian forces and allegations of atrocities were another recurring strand of the coverage.

Other stories about civilians included the threat perceptions of civilians and their preparations to migrate to other countries because their cities were under attack or civilian infrastructure had been damaged or destroyed. International efforts to provide humanitarian relief were also covered, including the funding for such efforts. The voices of Ukrainian civilians living in the UK featured in some stories.

Overall, the narratives about civilians praised the resilience and pride of Ukrainian civilians and portrayed them as the victims of an unjustified invasion. These stories were overwhelmingly sympathetic to Ukrainian civilians, but they were presented from a neutral angle and did not explicitly present a Ukrainian governmental angle. Instead, they portrayed sympathy for Ukrainian civilians and their condition in human terms.

Refugees

The third-largest topic of coverage, Refugees, contained a number of different narratives, many of them somewhat overlapping with those under the topic Civilians. There were numerous stories and ground reports about the exodus of refugees and the problems faced by them at borders, during their journey and at their destinations. Some of them focused on specific groups of refugees, such as foreign students and non-Ukrainians, and covered their specific situations, the logistical and transportation problems they faced, the problems they had at the borders, or international negotiations to facilitate their exit from Ukraine and their entry into neighbouring countries. Still other stories focused in detail on reports of the shelling of refugee convoys by Russian forces and the uncertainty of ceasefires to enable them to leave. Underlying many of these was a discernible narrative that these civilians were the innocent victims of aggression by Russia. The trauma of refugees, not only in this conflict but also the suffering of Ukrainian people during World War II was also covered.

As the war progressed and refugees travelled to other countries, the failure of the UK government to deliver on its promise to accept Ukrainian refugees and facilitate the issuance of visas to them in a timely manner was covered extensively. These stories were sympathetic toward the refugees and critical of the arrangements made by the British government. Approximately one-sixth of the coverage (16.7% in terms of duration) was from the UK angle, and slightly under one-fifth (19.3%) was from the Ukrainian angle, but most of it (61%) was from a neutral, non-governmental angle.

Battlefield

Battlefield coverage and analyses of developments on the military front were a regular element of the news bulletins. They included ground reports as well as lengthier, more detailed stories that analysed the progress of the invasion and the respective military strengths of the two sides. The ebb and flow of battle was reported by reporters in different areas of Ukraine, sometimes incorporating footage from social media. Maps of the frontlines were also used regularly. The weaponry used by both sides and Ukraine's need and demands for weaponry were also included.

The narrative in these reports tended to be in favour of Ukraine, emphasising the bravery and tenacity of the Ukrainian armed forces and depicting Russian forces as being bogged down and not able to achieve military objectives with the ease that analysts and strategists had at first expected.

More than half the coverage (56% in terms of duration) was from the Ukraine angle, compared to only 9.1% from the Russia angle. This probably represents the reality of the access that the BBC's correspondents had on either side of the war, but also indicates that the coverage concerned itself with the Ukrainian view far more than the Russian view.

Security

About 9% of the stories in the sample were focused primarily on the security situation, amounting to about 7% of the coverage in terms of duration. These stories contained a number of different narratives and angles. At the beginning of the conflict, there were stories about Ukraine's historical relationship with Russia and the security situation as seen from the Russian perspective. Other broad examinations of the situation included the horror of war in Europe and how it affected the security situation in Europe as a whole.

There were several stories that reported on global diplomatic activity, and these included the deliberations of leaders in international forums and their statements. As the war progressed, there were considerations of the whether and how no-fly zones over Ukraine might be enforced, as well as how the conflict might escalate and fears over the use of chemical and nuclear weapons by Russia. More than one-third (35.3%) of the coverage of security issues was presented from a third-country/ international angle.

A prominent narrative was about whether Russia miscalculated the ease with which it expected to achieve military objectives. Overall, the stories on security clearly adopted the tone of Russia as an aggressor, that this aggression was unjustified, and that as a result of it, there was a threat to Ukraine and to Europe as a whole. A number of these stories (36.5% in terms of duration) presented the UK point of view, which was clearly in favour of Ukraine and anti-Russian. Some of the stories under the next category also considered issues of security.

Other war-related topics

The stories that were categorised as Other were often composite reports that covered multiple aspects, including considerations of global security and geopolitics. There were also stories that sought to analyse President Putin's state of mind. One set of stories covered volunteers heading from the UK to Ukraine to enter the conflict on the Ukrainian side and, in keeping with the overall tenor of the coverage, they considered these volunteers as heroes entering a war on the side of the righteous against an unjustified aggressor.

Peace

The stories that covered negotiations and attempts to broker peace focused on diplomatic talks in various bilateral, multilateral and international forums including the UN. Most of these stories were presented from the Western perspective, usually implicitly encapsulating the viewpoint of Ukraine as the aggrieved party and Russia as the aggressor. The direct negotiations between Russia and Ukraine were covered in detail. There were also stories on anti-war protestors in Russia. The tone of the coverage was mixed – the desirability of peace was of course acknowledged, but implicit in the coverage was the proposition that the responsibility for creating the conditions for peace lay with Russia. Very few of these stories were from the Russia or Ukraine angles (6.9% and 8.4% respectively); they were largely presented from an international, non-governmental or British perspective.

US Policies

There were only two stories that focused primarily on US policies. They were in the latter half of the sample and covered US government announcements about their position, initiatives, the supply of NATO weapons to Ukraine. These stories did not carry explicit narratives, though they were framed as appropriate responses to the conflict.

Justification

Only two stories dealt primarily with justification for the war, one each on the first two sample dates. The first one presented the Russian official angle and its case for the war, but also included anti-war sentiment from a Nobel prize winning journalist and from ordinary Russian citizens within that segment. The second story about justification for the war focused heavily on anti-war sentiment among Russian students and civilians. Across these two stories, the narrative was that the Russian government was making a case for war but that many civilians held an opposing point of view. In all, less than one quarter of these stories (23.6% by duration) presented the Russian official viewpoint, and the rest of it was from a non-governmental angle.

United Nations

Though activities and deliberations in the United Nations and its Security Council figured more often in the sample, they were not necessarily presented as the primary focus of stories. Only one story, on the third sample date, was coded under this topic and its tone was neutral.

EU policies

Only one story had EU policy at its centre, and that story was about weapons to be sent to Ukraine from the EU.

Disinformation

There was only one story that focused on issues of information and disinformation, and it was aired on the third date sampled. It was about free speech, censorship and media restrictions within Russia. It was coded as presenting the official Russian viewpoint for 26.8% of its duration, devoting nearly three-fourths of the time (73.2%) to non-governmental perspectives.

Summary

The BBC's most watched news programme, *News at Six*, covered Russia's invasion of Ukraine extensively. In the early days of the war, it extended the programme to double its normal length to accommodate its programming. The BBC devoted substantial resources and personnel to the coverage. For the first seven of the ten sample days, the main anchoring of the news bulletin was done from locations in Ukraine – three days from Kiev and four days from Lviv. For the last three sample days, the main anchoring shifted to BBC studios within the UK but senior correspondents remained on location to continue anchoring the programme segments related to Ukraine from there.

The coverage focused heavily on the impact of the war on people as a way of demonstrating its impact as well as an expression of sympathy and support to the Ukrainian people – taken together, the stories that have been coded under the topics Civilians and Refugees accounted for 35% of the total duration of the coverage. Sanctions accounted for another 20% and Battlefield reports and analysis for 16%. The other eight topics were all in single figures.

The angles and perspectives that were represented in the coverage also reflected this. The non-governmental angle, which includes civilian perspectives, accounted for more than one-third of the overall duration of the coverage (33.9%). The home country, that is the UK, angle was represented 25.2% of the time. The Ukrainian angle received substantially more time than the Russian perspective – 20.3% versus 7.4%.

Overall, the coverage of the Ukraine conflict on the BBC broadly followed the national political sentiment in the UK, that of supporting Ukraine. The dominant narratives embedded either explicitly or implicitly in the coverage were that Russia's invasion was unjustified; Russia as the aggressor was responsible for immoral attacks on civilians and infrastructure and should be subject to punishment in the form of sanctions; the war was a threat not only to Ukraine but to the rest of Europe; Ukraine was a victim of aggression worthy of British and international support; the Ukrainian war effort was heroic and effective while the Russian effort was unjustifiable; Ukrainian civilians were heroic and determined in the face of atrocity; and there was significant anti-war sentiment among Russian civilians and journalists. Together, these narratives and frames made it clear that the BBC's sympathies lay with Ukraine and against Russia.

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Country report: Italy

Giuliano Bobba[8] & Antonella Seddone[9]

TV channel and news programme

Italian citizens get information mainly through traditional media (Newman et al., 2019). The number of newspaper readers continues to decline, while the number of television viewers has remained virtually stable in the few last years. The latest data (Censis, 2020) confirm (a) that printed media are in crisis – read by 50% of the total population, (b) a high stability in the use of television – 94% of the total population and (c) a significant spread of Internet use – 79% of the population, especially in the 14-29 and 30-44 age groups.

The television sector, analysed here, is characterized by the historical duopoly between the public service broadcaster *Radiotelevisione Italiana* (RAI) and the main private group *Fininvest/Mediaset* founded and owned by Silvio Berlusconi: since 1984, the two players have earned more than 95 per cent of advertising revenues and more than 85 per cent of the national audience (Padovani, 2004: 42). In recent years, RAI and Mediaset still have a 65% share of the audience while these operators, together with *Sky Italia*, also harvest 95% of the Italian television market revenues.

In this information system, the most relevant newscast in terms of share and influence is that broadcast by the public service channel RAI1 in prime time, called *TG1*. Historically, *TG1* has a pro-government and tendentially conservative editorial line.

TG1 is broadcast daily in prime time 8:00 PM and usually lasts 41 minutes. The most recent editions are also freely available on the RAI website. Within the coverage, politics is generally over-represented (more than half the time), with domestic politics being both the preferred topic and the frame used to address the main issues. International politics is only covered when exceptional events occur (international summits, wars, elections, etc.).

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Story types

The impact of the war on *TG1*'s coverage was extensive. Over the ten days analysed, there were 157 war-related news items in a total time of about 293 minutes. This means that on average each edition had more than 15 news items lasting approximately 29 minutes.

As Figure 1 shows, until 10 March, the percentage of war-related news items fluctuated between 92% and 80%: virtually the entire evening edition of the news was dedicated to the Ukrainian war and its various aspects. Although attention to this topic started to decrease from mid-March, it still accounted for more than half of the entire coverage, while only in April did the level drop to 40%.

As we know, the issue-attention cycle is structured around different phases (Downs, 1972), in this case the empirical research captured exactly the Alarmed Discovery stage, i.e., the moment of greatest attention and mobilization around an issue. Starting in April and then in the following months, the Italian and international political system, as well as the news media and general public, became aware of the costs and sacrifices involved in solving the problem and the relative attention to the topic began a gradual decline. War-related news entered the routine of Italian political coverage.

Figure 1. Percentage of war-related and other news in *TG1* based on coverage duration on the sample days.
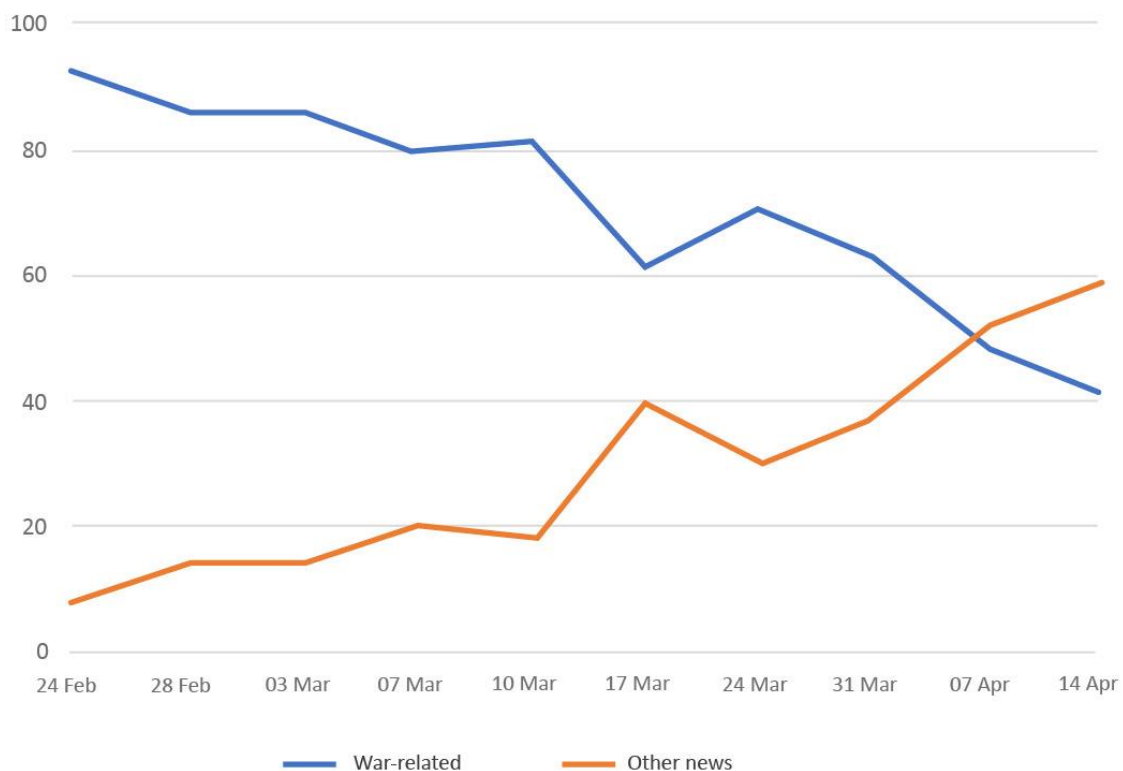
Topics

In Italy, the coverage of the war focused on four topics, which alone accounted for 59% of the total news items and 64% of the total time as shown in Table 1. Among them, Battlefield was the most relevant category accounting for nearly one third of the entire coverage. At a lower level we find EU policies (15%), Sanctions (11%) and Civilians (10%). At least at this early phase of the conflict, there was little journalistic interest in disinformation, the role of the United Nations, the justification of the invasion or the danger of a nuclear conflict: all these topics were simply not relevant (between 0% and 1%). A slightly higher level was reached by the US policies (3%) and Security (3%), while news about Peace (8%) and the Refugee exodus (7%) gained slightly more visibility.

The category Other war-related is relevant (14%) because it includes all those fund-raising activities for the Ukrainian population (concerts, shows, television programmes) but all the political activity in Parliament was devoted to discussing Italy's role in sending (military) aid to Ukraine.

Table 1. Topics by number of war-related news items and their coverage time in *TG1*.

Topic	Number of news items	Percentage	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Battlefield	38	24%	80.3	27%
Civilians	15	10%	30.6	10%
Disinformation	2	1%	3.3	1%
EU policies	21	13%	44.5	15%
Justification	2	1%	2.9	1%
Nuclear hazard	0	0%	0	0%
Peace	14	9%	23,0	8%
Refugees	11	7%	19.9	7%
Sanctions	19	12%	33.2	11%
Security	5	3%	8.9	3%
UN	2	1%	2.6	1%
US policies	6	4%	7.5	3%
Other war-related	22	14%	35.7	12%
Total	157	100%	292.4	100%

Looking at the coverage of these topics over time in Table 2, the Battlefield category was the only one to receive consistent coverage over the ten days included in the sample with a minimum of 9% and a maximum of 46%. The other relevant topics, however, followed an irregular course, depending mainly on developments in the war. This was the case, for example, with the Civilians category, which was clearly affected by events involving Ukrainian citizens in the conflict.

Table 2. Sample days by topics of duration of war-related news in percentages in *TG1*.

Sample day	Battle-field	Civili-ans	Disin-form	EU policy	Justifi-cation	Nuc-lear	Peace	Refu-gees	Sanc-tions	Secu-rity	UN	US policy	Other war	Total
24 Feb	25%	4%	0%	5%	8%	0%	6%	4%	28%	4%	0%	6%	9%	100%
28 Feb	25%	4%	0%	12%	0%	0%	15%	10%	21%	0%	4%	0%	8%	100%
03 Mar	46%	11%	5%	4%	0%	0%	17%	0%	4%	7%	0%	0%	8%	100%
07 Mar	9%	11%	0%	18%	0%	0%	6%	16%	4%	4%	0%	2%	29%	100%
10 Mar	38%	0%	0%	21%	0%	0%	8%	14%	0%	0%	0%	4%	15%	100%
17 Mar	34%	11%	0%	5%	0%	0%	15%	6%	20%	5%	0%	0%	5%	100%
24 Mar	20%	6%	0%	39%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	7%	0%	0%	22%	100%
31 Mar	26%	21%	0%	41%	0%	0%	0%	0%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
07 Apr	10%	26%	8%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	5%	8%	21%	100%
14 Apr	42%	31%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	8%	7%	0%	0%	8%	0%	100%

Angles

After calculating how much each topic occupied of the war-related news coverage, we took a more qualitative approach by determining the perspectives or viewpoints through which the different topics were represented in the news coverage. Table 3 below shows how the war-related news represented one or more viewpoints – angles – concerning Russia, Ukraine, Italy, other countries and non-governmental institutions.

Not surprisingly, for the vast majority of coverage (75% of the time) the Italian angle is prevalent. The Non-governmental (10%), Other countries (7%) and Ukraine (6%) angles ranked far behind. The Russian angle was the most marginal one, occupying only 2% of the total time.

Table 3. Angles by duration of all war-related news in *TG1*.

Angle	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Russia	6.8	2%
Ukraine	17.5	6%
Italy	219.7	75%
Other country	19.9	7%
Non-governmental	28.6	10%
Total	292.4	100%

Overall, *TG1* coverage of the war shows that news items may contain multiple angles. In particular, since three news items out of four contained the Italian angle, what usually occurred was that news items also included a second angle. This characteristic explains why there were 184 angle mentions against 157 news items. The most relevant topics and prevailing angles are reviewed below.

Battlefield

The main part of the coverage consisted of reports and images from the battlefield (27%), namely a mean of eight minutes per day. The war was covered through a framework combining the drama of destruction with the spectacularization of the conflict: rockets, intelligence and drones above all. Almost all news stories in this category contained an Italian angle (94%), meaning that these stories always referred to the role of Italy or the Italian government in the conflict or emphasize the consequences for the Italian people, economy, borders, etc. or covered events or images commented on by Italian politicians. The Russian angle was not covered with respect to this topic, while the Non-governmental (4%) and Ukraine (2%) angles were marginal but present.

EU policies

As the conflict is on Europe's doorstep, the EU perspective and in particular its ability to provide a unified response was at stake. This topic – whether at the level of initiatives of the European institutions or discussions of heads of state/government of Member States – afforded an insight into the political dimension of the conflict. This was the second most covered topic with 15% and an average of almost five minutes per day.

Again, the Italian perspective dominated (83%). However, it was very often supplemented or replaced by the perspective of another country (17%) that is usually a European country (in particular Germany and France) or a NATO member (in particular Turkey).

Sanctions

Sanctions were covered as the political response to Russian military initiatives. While the EU policies category focused more on the economic/social resilience of the EU in the face of the conflict, this topic focused more specifically on the nature of the sanctions and their likely

consequences for both Russia and the EU. It was the third most covered topic with 11% and an average of 3.5 minutes per day.

This particular type of topic was treated from virtually two angles: the Italy angle (85%) – as a country favouring sanctions but also paying an economic price for this decision, and the Russia angle (11%) – as a country subjected to sanctions and seeking alternative solutions to avoid economic collapse.

Civilians

A constant dimension in the coverage of the first months of the war concerned the living conditions of the civilian population and in particular the impact of the war on daily life. Particular emphasis was used to describe the brutality of the Russian attacks on unarmed populations, with reference to war crimes. On average, coverage lasted three minutes per day.

The most relevant angles in this topic were the Non-governmental angle (20%) and the Other country angle (15%) ones, often combined with the Own country angle (60%).

Peace

The stories in this category mainly concerned the rounds of negotiations that took place in the first month of the conflict. Also included in this topic were calls by the international community and the Vatican for a ceasefire, likewise demonstrations against the war worldwide.

News items falling into this category were among those most covered from different angles. Although the national Italian angle remained the most frequent (62%), the Ukraine (14%), Russia (8%), Non-governmental (9%) and Other country (7%) angles were also covered.

Refugees

Reports on refugees focused particularly on stories of family reunification. In particular, the flow of arrivals of Ukrainian refugees in Italy was the subject of very dramatic coverage leaving no room for the typical controversy over the arrival of migrants.

Beside the national angle (78%), the Ukraine angle (10%) was the most employed in such stories together with the Other country (8%) and Non-governmental (4%) angles.

Other war-related topics

The coverage of the war in Italy was also characterized by two other aspects not included in the previous categories and summarized in the Other country category (12%). On the one hand, the newscasts promoted initiatives for fundraising and hospitality, including concerts, TV shows for Ukraine and the launch of a telephone number to call and donate to Ukraine. On the other hand, *Tg1* – as is tradition – devoted attention to the internal discussion within the Italian political/parliamentary field, covering in particular the statements of the various Italian political leaders.

The other issues – Security, US policies, Disinformation, Justification, United Nations, and Nuclear hazard – received little visibility at this early stage of the conflict.

Summary

The analysis of the news coverage in Italy of the war in Ukraine was carried out on a sample of ten days between 24 February and 14 April. The news source selected was *TG1* – evening edition – as it is the most viewed and mainstream news bulletin broadcast on the public channel RAI 1.

In total, we found 157 news items related to the war, more than 29 minutes in each edition. The most covered topics were Battlefield (27%), EU policies (15%), Sanctions (11%) and Civilians (10%).

These initial data confirm the exceptional nature of the event. The return of war to the borders of the European continent and the risk of possible NATO involvement completely disrupted the coverage of TG1. Proof of this is the high volume of stories dealing with this topic as well as the national angle adopted in 75% of the cases for this kind of news.

In particular, news items classified as Battlefield referred almost invariably to Italy's role and positioning within the conflict. They also discussed the current and future consequences for the Italian people. In contrast, the Russian point of view was never considered in the sample analysed.

Compared to Battlefield, the EU Policy and Sanctions categories represented the political dimension of the conflict. In this flow of news, national and international political leaders were portrayed as engaged in finding solutions. The prominence of the EU in the coverage confirms that now – in the post-Covid era – the EU is given a rescuer's role – at least in the Italian public debate.

A final significant point of view emerging from the analysis concerned the relevance of the civilian population, seen both as an exodus of refugees and as a result of Russian attacks on Ukrainian citizens. These reports that emphasized the emotional dimension, reporting on war crimes against unarmed populations or focusing more positively on family reunification.

All in all, the coverage of the war in this first phase was from the outset very unambiguous in defining the Russian intervention as a "war of aggression" and there was never any doubt or vacillation in the frame to be used. The simplification Ukraine = Good and Russia = Bad was adopted immediately and without hesitation within the TG1's coverage.

Context

Italy is a Southern European country, a peninsula extending into the central Mediterranean Sea, northeast of Tunisia, with a population of 60 million. The State is organized in a centralized manner, with significant regional decentralization resulting in greater autonomy and powers of intervention in specific policy areas. Politically, Italy is considered a representative democracy in the form of a parliamentary republic. The period analysed here falls within the 18th Italian legislative term, which began in 2018 and ended in 2022. During the legislature, a governing coalition consisting of the Five Star Movement and the League (centre-right) first emerged. The League in 2019 was then replaced by the Democratic Party and other centre-left parties.

In 2021, Mario Draghi, former president of the European Central Bank, was appointed prime minister of a government supported by a large majority in the Italian Parliament, which included parties from the right, centre-right and centre-left.

As far as the media system is concerned, Italy is a country that belongs to the Mediterranean or pluralist-polarized model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), thus characterized by a high level of politicization or political parallelism, a strong state influence on the media and a low level of professional autonomy. In Italy in particular, the links between politics (and powerful social and interest groups) and journalism have always been close.

The war broke out at a time when Mario Draghi was leading Italy as an established and internationally appreciated leader. Draghi played a key role from the outset, positioning Italy alongside NATO and in support of Ukraine and promoting sanctions as a deterrent against Vladimir Putin.

This feature is also particularly important in relation to TG1's coverage. This is an historically pro-government public news programme that may have emphasized Draghi's pro-Ukraine positions more than other news outlets. However, it is worth noting that in the Italian public debate dissenting voices were few and immediately stifled and isolated, especially during the first phase of the war analysed here.

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Country report: USA
Broadcast Networks ABC, CBS and NBC

Henry Wolgast[10] & Danilo Yanich[11]

The Russian invasion of Ukraine shocked the world. But Vladimir Putin had signaled his intentions for weeks before Russian troops crossed the border on February 24, 2022. The condemnations of Putin's actions were immediate, forceful and widespread. The international community galvanized to promise, organize and deliver aid—humanitarian and military. The United States was (and remains) the leader in that effort. As of October 3, 2022, the US has committed over $54 billion in aid to Ukraine, including over $28 billion in direct military support (Statista Research 2022). President Biden proposed another $37.7 billion aid package in late November 2022. That is more than double the total aid from all European Union institutions (second on the list). By any measure, that is a lot of money. Yet, even in the country's polarized political environment, that approach to the war has enjoyed overwhelming support. How might we explain that phenomenon? One way is to examine how the war was mediated to American audiences.

In this section we report on our examination of the content of the evening newscasts of the major broadcast networks, ABC, CBS and NBC, on newscasts that were presented during the first ten weeks of the war. What did American audiences see? What was the frame? The angle? What might that mean for US policy?

TV channels and news programs

Content analysis of broadcast, non-cable television national nightly news programs in the U.S. was conducted on ABC, NBC, and CBS nightly news broadcasts. The thirty-minute broadcasts of *ABC World News Tonight*, *NBC Nightly News*, and *CBS Evening News* represent the three dominant broadcast non-cable national nightly news programs in the U.S. by ratings.

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Across the NBC, CBS, and ABC's respective news broadcasts, a total of 30 news broadcasts were coded for news story topic and angle. Days selected for the content analysis were the following: February 24, the first day of the Russian invasion; February 28; March 3rd, 7th, 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st; April 7th and 14th. NBC and ABC TV news broadcasts were accessed through public archives and CBS broadcasts were accessed through a special arrangement with Internet Archive's Television News Archive. The broadcasts were streamed in their entirety as an audience would view the program. These results are based on the combined data for the networks.

The results of the content analysis are separated by news item topic and angle in accordance with the coding schema utilized by other researchers in this work. Topic refers to the content and focus of each war-related story presented within a newscast. The twelve topics analyzed are described later in this report. Angle refers to the perspective of a news item and was determined by the sourcing of a story. All of these analyses were conducted separately from the other researchers in this report. While the same coding scheme was used across each group's work, coding instructions were interpreted and utilized based on differences within distinct countries' national news systems.

Story Types

Over the study period, the three networks presented altogether 290 stories: 152 (52%) were not war-related; 138 (48%) addressed the war in Ukraine. Even though the majority of stories were not related to the invasion, the war stories accounted for over 60 percent of the broadcast time (310 minutes) and their average duration was almost a minute longer than non-war-related stories, 2.2 and 1.4 minutes, respectively.

We followed the broadcasts over a ten-week period as shown in Figure 1. There was a clear variation and pattern in the distribution of the stories as a proportion of the broadcast time they occupied. In short, as the war continued, the prominence of its coverage on the evening newscasts of the U.S. broadcast networks decreased. On the first day of the invasion, February 24, the networks devoted over 90 percent of their broadcast time to the war. The war occupied the majority of time through the fifth week (March 24). However, by the end of the study period (April 14), only about one-fifth of broadcast time addressed the war.

Figure 1. Percentage of war-related and other news in *ABC, CBS and NBC News* based on coverage duration on the sample days.
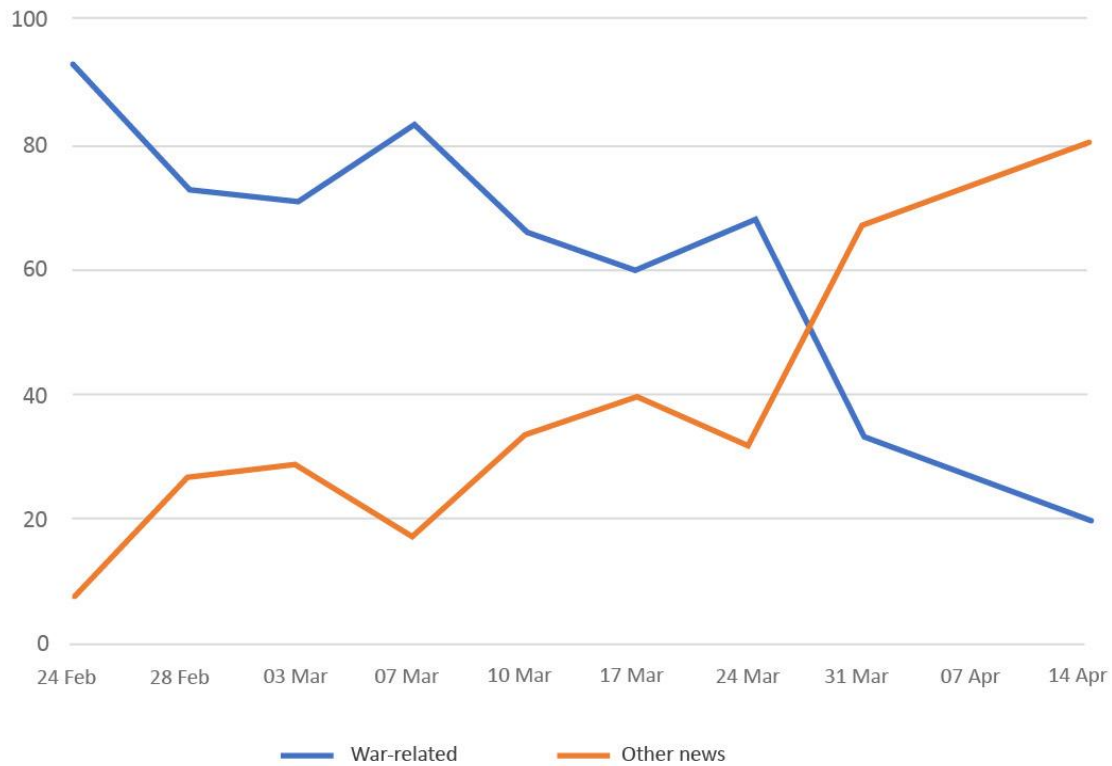
Topics

The majority of stories did not address the war and accounted for 211 minutes of broadcast time. The following analysis focuses on the 138 stories that reported on the war. *CBS, ABC, and NBC*'s war coverage concentrated primarily on three topics, the battlefield, civilians and refugees (Table 1). That said, the coverage of the war accounted for a significant portion of all broadcasts.

In addition to percentages of stories, it is important to look at the time that the networks devoted to stories about the war. Time is the finite resource that the newscasts face and its allocation across topics is a clear indication of how they will frame the war. Battlefield stories accounted for almost 100 minutes of news coverage (Table 1). That represented almost one-third of the time (32%) devoted to the war. News items covering civilians accounted for about 59 minutes of total coverage and about one-fifth (19%). Coverage related to refugees accounted for 15 percent (45.8 minutes across all three networks). U.S. policies accounted for 10.6 percent of war coverage. Sanctions accounted for 11 stories but only 7.1 percent of time. There were seven stories that addressed NATO (5.6% of time). All of the remaining topics accounted for less than five percent each of the broadcast time.

Table 1: Topics by number of war-related items and their coverage time in *ABC, CBS and NBC News*.

Topic	Number of news items	Percentage	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Battlefield	37	26.8%	99.8	32.2%
Civilians	26	18.8%	59.0	19.0%
Disinformation	1	0.7%	2.5	0.8%
EU policies	0	0%	0	0%
Justification	3	2.2%	5.1	1.6%
NATO	7	5.1%	17.2	5.6%
Nuclear hazard	5	3.6%	10.0	3.2%
Peace	0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Refugees	19	13.8%	45.8	14.8%
Sanctions	11	8.0%	22.0	7.1%
Security	1	0.7%	1.4	0.4%
United Nations	1	0.7%	4.0	1.3%
US policies	19	13.8%	32.9	10.6%
Other war-related	8	5.8%	10.6	3.4%
Total	138	100%	310.2	100%

Topics by duration on sample days

Over the course of the study period, the networks emphasized different topics. However, the most prominent topic on six of the ten study dates was the battlefield (Table 2). On the first day of the war, February 24, coverage of the battlefield accounted for one-third of program time. That was followed very closely by the coverage of U.S. policies (27%). There was no reference to refugees on that first day. That is understandable given that the war had just begun. However, there was substantial time (14%) directed to the plight of civilians. By March 3rd, refugees had entered the coverage (24%), second only to the battlefield (27%). The emphasis on topics among the network newscasts did change over the study period as events warranted. However, they did not range far beyond the categories that the analysis revealed.

Table 2. Sample days by topics of war-related news in percentages of duration in *ABC, CBS and NBC News*.

Sample day	Battle-field	Civili-ans	Disinfor-mation	Justifi-cation	Nuclear hazard	NATO	Refu-gees	Sanc-tions	Secu-rity	US policies	Other war	Total
24 Feb	33%	14%	0%	2%	3%	0%	0%	8%	3%	27%	3%	100%
28 Feb	18%	16%	4%	0%	0%	0%	14%	13%	0%	7%	1%	100%
03 Mar	29%	3%	0%	3%	1%	0%	24%	6%	0%	5%	0%	100%
07 Mar	26%	24%	0%	0%	0%	3%	14%	9%	0%	4%	3%	100%
10 Mar	28%	18%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	6%	0%	6%	3%	100%
14 Mar	18%	21%	0%	0%	3%	0%	4%	0%	0%	8%	7%	100%
17 Mar	18%	22%	0%	0%	3%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	7%	100%
24 Mar	4%	4%	0%	0%	12%	0%	7%	0%	0%	1%	4%	100%
07 Apr	9%	4%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	1%	100%
14 Apr	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	100%

Angles

The most frequently aired war-related story angles across ABC, CBS, and NBC's national nightly broadcast news shows are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Angles by duration of all war-related news in *ABC, CBS and NBC News*.

Angle	N	Total time	Percentage
Non-governmental	57	122	40%
U.S.	30	52	17%
Ukraine	20	51	16%
Russia	15	30	10%
No angle	14	51	16%
Other country	2	3	1%
Total	138	309	100%

Fifty-seven stories used a non-governmental angle and accounted for 122 minutes (40%) of broadcast time. Thirty stories were from a United States angle but accounted for 52 minutes (17%) of airtime. The Ukrainian angle accounted for fewer stories (n=20) but virtually the same amount of time (51 minutes, 16% of air time). Fifteen of the war-related stories aired were from a Russia angle (10% of airtime). Although stories with no angle had the second lowest number (n=14), they occupied a substantial amount of coverage (51 minutes, 16% of airtime). About one percent of airtime related to an angle from another country.

Angle & Networks

Analysis of the angles presented in news stories shows that stories from a non-governmental perspective were most common across all three broadcast programs studied (see Figure 2). A non-governmental angle was most prominent on all three networks with NBC devoting almost one full hour (52minutes) of its coverage to that approach. ABC and CBS followed with 39 minutes and 31 minutes, respectively. NBC Nightly News devoted the most time to the U.S. angle (20 minutes). Stories from the Ukraine angle were longest on ABC World News Tonight, where a total of 31 minutes were spent covering the war from a Ukrainian perspective. The Russia angle was not a focus of the broadcasts with ABC at 14 minutes, and NBC and CBS at eight minutes each.

Figure 2: Time devoted to angles by network (minutes)
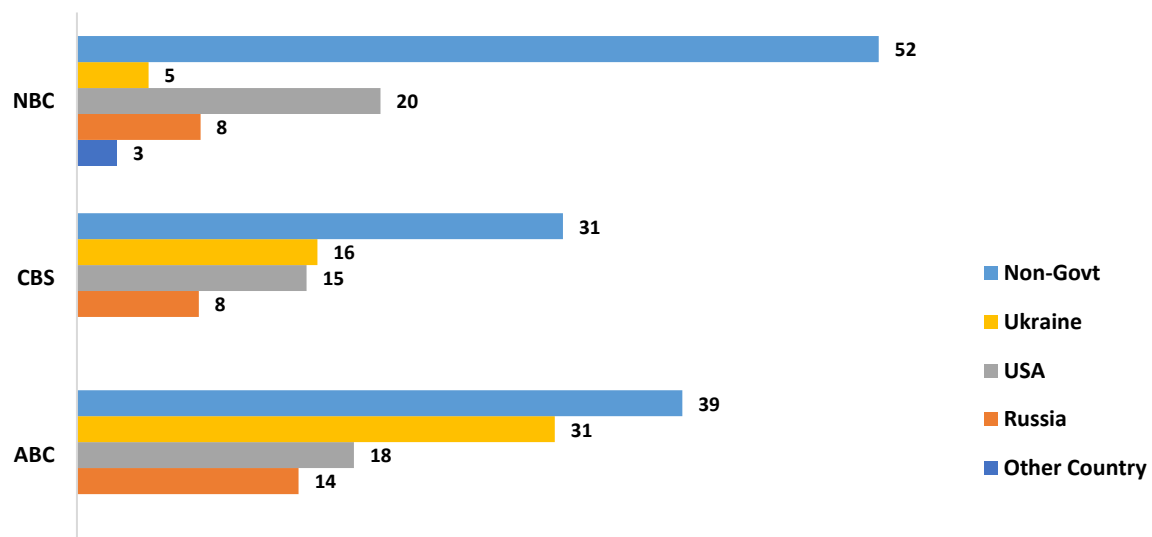
Number of minutes devoted to angles should be seen in the context of the proportion of time that the networks devoted to them. The significant plurality of war-related coverage on each of the three networks was from a non-governmental perspective, NBC, 49%; CBS, 38%; ABC, 32% (Figure 3). That angle was significantly focused on the plight of civilians and refugees, which is understandable given that the study dates occurred in the first ten weeks of the war when the plight of non-combatants became increasingly dire as Russia targeted civilians and residential neighborhoods.

Figure 3: Total war-related time devoted to angles by network (%)
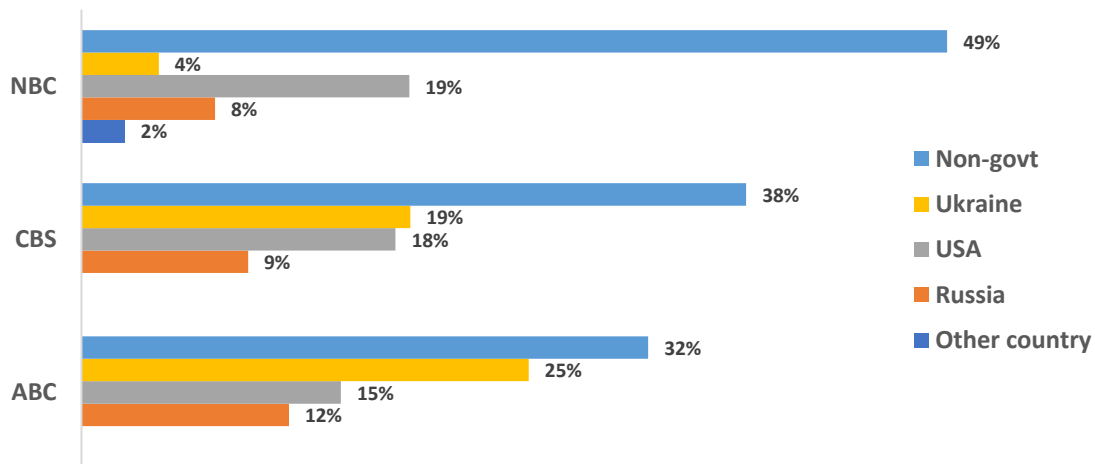
Angle & Topic

As the networks framed the war through several angles, they chose very different topics through which to deliver that coverage (Table 4). The most prominent angle through which coverage was communicated was Non-governmental (47%, 57 out of 122). And within that angle, the stories focused on civilians (22) and refugees (19). When the networks used the Russia and Ukraine angles, they focused on the battlefield (53%, 8/15 and 75%, 15/20), respectively.

Table 4: Topics covered by angle (number of stories).

Topic	Russia	Ukraine	USA	Non-governmental
Battlefield	8	15	0	7
Civilians	0	3	0	22
Disinformation	0	0	0	1
Justification	3	0	0	0
NATO Policies	0	0	3	0
Nuclear hazard	2	1	1	0
Refugees	0	1	1	19
Sanctions	2	0	6	2
Security	0	0	0	1
UN	0	0	1	1
US Policies	0	0	18	0
Other war-related	0	0	0	4
Total	15	20	30	57

Production factors

The war in Ukraine presented a unique opportunity for the broadcast networks. It is an event that affects the entire world. The geopolitical order that had been in place since World War II was severely threatened and in the early days of the war (when we looked at coverage) there was no reliable way to predict outcomes. What we did know is that Putin vastly *overestimated* the fitness of his army and vastly *underestimated* the fight in the Ukrainians. By any measure, the war required serious attention from news organizations and the networks covered it. But once the news selection decision to cover the war was taken, the networks had to determine *how* to cover the war. That involved an economic calculus. We looked at three production factors that represent a "cost" to the network: time, placement and presentation mode.

Time

The decision to use a proportion of broadcast time for any story is a major production consideration. Time is the scarce attribute of a television broadcast. The calculus is a zero-sum game—if some stories are in, then other stories are out. And two fundamental news selection criteria are whether a story can achieve and hold an audience. Therefore, the proportion of broadcast time that the networks devoted to the Ukraine war had economic implications. To be sure, the Ukraine war was *the* news story when the invasion began and that was reflected in the high proportion of broadcast time that the war occupied in the early part of the study period (see Figure 1). However, the U.S. networks tempered that coverage as time passed (see Figure 1).

Placement

A complimentary characteristic of time in a broadcast is story placement. Just like the judgment regarding how much time will be devoted to a story, the decision about where to place it in the newscast is critical because the stories of a newscast are viewed by the audience in a series. Unlike for print media, the audience cannot skip over the first story to get to the second or third or others. Therefore, each story in the broadcast has two purposes: to inform the audience and to hold that audience for the next story. Consequently, the placement of a story is a crucial factor in the cost calculus of a newscast. The station explicitly indicates in the placement decision what information it thinks will achieve and hold an audience.

The variable we constructed for story placement was block, defined as the time between the commercial breaks. The first block is the period from the opening of the newscast to the first commercial break. It typically lasts between nine and 11 minutes and it is, by far, the longest period of uninterrupted news in the program. It is *the* opportunity for the broadcast to capture and hold an audience. We examined how the networks used the first block by the distribution of war-related and other stories. Consistent with the use of broadcast time (see Figure 3), the war accounted for the overwhelming majority of stories in the first block; 77 percent on the day of the invasion with over 60 percent for the next three dates (Figure 4). In general the pattern showed a lower percentage as the war progressed. However, on April 7, the war occupied as much of the first block as it did when the invasion began. That was due to the call by Ukrainian officials for the immediate evacuation of the eastern regions of Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv.

Figure 4: Stories in Block 1 by type (% stories)
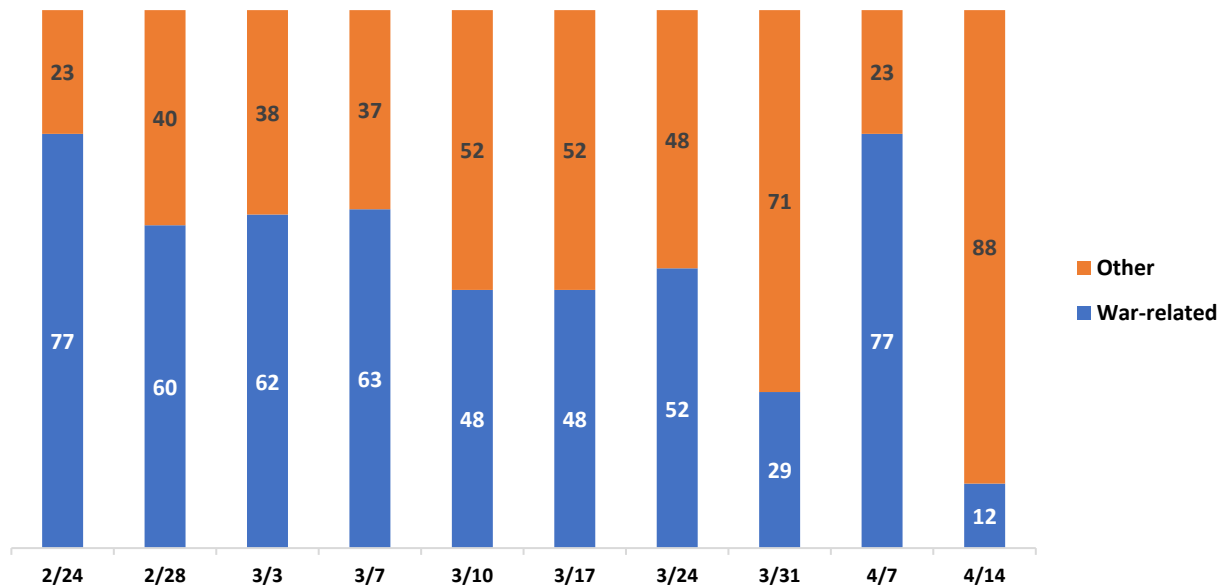
Presentation mode

Selection, duration and placement are all important production aspects of news stories. However, the most cost sensitive factor in the production of a newscast is the presentation mode of the story. It involves decisions regarding the deployment of the station's most costly resources—personnel. And, news production is an extremely labor-intensive activity. Therefore, the decisions regarding how a news story is conveyed represents a major economic decision. By definition, different presentation modes require different expenditures of resources and the choice of presentation mode for story types reflects the station's judgment regarding which stories can capture and deliver an audience to advertisers. Consequently, the choice of presentation mode in a newscast has major economic implications.

We defined presentation mode as the method used to communicate the narrative and/or the pictures of the stories. We identified four types of presentation mode: package; voice-over by anchor; live location report; panel/interview/reporter live in the newsroom.

In the package presentation mode, a news crew (reporter and camera operator) went to the scene of the story, shot video, produced the video for broadcast and the reporter wrote the narrative for the voice-over. The package mode required more time and resources and was the most expensive method for presenting a story.

In the voice-over by anchor mode (VO/anchor), the story was delivered by the news anchor who provided narrative as the videotape that was shot for the story was shown on the screen. This presentation mode was the overwhelmingly preferred choice of news directors and accounted for over half of the stories (52%). The frequency of the use of this mode makes economic sense. The anchor represents the "brand" of the station to the community and, typically, the anchor is the highest paid member of the news staff. Using the anchor in the presentation of as many stories as possible increases the return on that investment.

Live location reports involved the reporter going to the location of the story and broadcasting from there during the newscast. In this case, the live location was invariably Ukraine. This mode involved an introduction by the anchor and who then "tossed" the remainder of the presentation to a live reporter in Ukraine who completed the narrative.

The presentation modes of panel discussion, guest interviews (which typically involved interviews with in-studio guests) and live reporter in newsroom were aggregated because they represented the least expensive of the options available to the news producers. The presentation mode of live reporter in the newsroom is a variation on the theme of the VO by anchor. In this approach, the anchor introduces the story and then the remainder of the story is presented by a reporter who is somewhere else in the newsroom.

The networks used the presentation modes very differently for war-related and other stories. Over half (54%) of the war-related stories used the package, significantly higher than the "other" stories (43%) (Figure 5). Conversely, Voice-over by anchor accounted for the plurality of "Other" stories, more than doubling the proportion for those that were war-related (46% and 20%, respectively).

As we indicated, the package is the most expensive presentation mode, but the live location report, especially in a war zone, is a major expense for the networks. Beyond the work of reporting, the very security of the network staff was a considerable expense. That said, the networks still used that mechanism for 15 percent of the war-related stories. Combining that proportion with that represented by the package (54%), about two-thirds of the network coverage was accomplished by the most expensive presentation modes. That use of resources conveyed the networks' judgement about the importance of the story.

Figure 5. Presentation mode by story type (% stories)
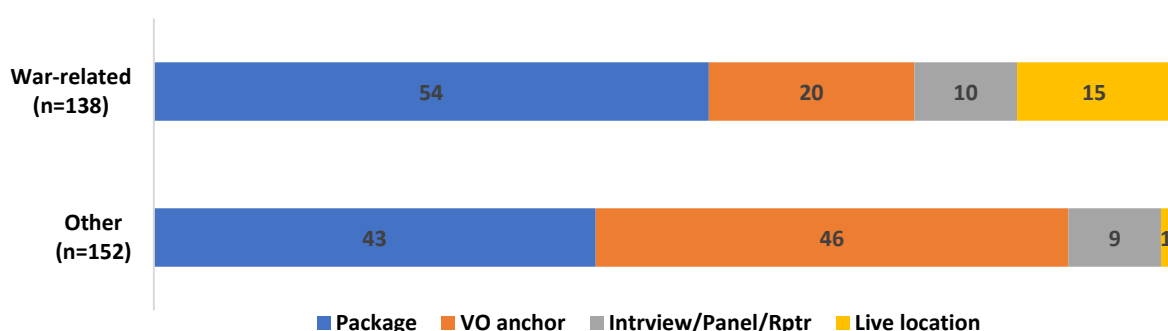
Summary

This content analysis of 30 broadcasts, evenly drawn from NBC Nightly News, CBS Evening News, and ABC World News Tonight between the outbreak of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24th and April 14th, demonstrated several themes. The most prominent non-cable American national news programs largely focused their coverage on a select few topics while rarely covering others. Specifically, stories categorized as Battlefield, Civilians, Refugees, and U.S. policies related to the war represented 73 percent of war-related stories across the three programs (see Table 1). Stories focused on NATO policies, nuclear hazard, and the United Nations represented less than 10 percent of all stories aired. This significantly differs from coverage in other countries in this report, which tended to cover these categories, especially NATO policies, as a larger percent of total coverage.

The angles or perspectives of news stories across the three largest non-cable nightly national news programs in the U.S. were similarly disproportionate. About 71 percent of all war-related news stories were from a Non-governmental or U.S. angle. Stories from a Non-governmental angle were typically from the perspective of Civilians and Refugees whereas stories from a U.S. angle generally focused on American policies related to the war. Stories from the angle of a foreign country were significantly less likely than stories from the perspective of the U.S. or Non-governmental bodies.

Context

The invasion of Ukraine was the most serious violation of national borders in Europe since World War II. The implications were and remain enormous. A nuclear power and permanent member of the United Nations Security Council had invaded a neighboring nation state with the express purpose of conquering its territory and installing a new government. Countries across the world, with a few notable exceptions, strongly condemned the Kremlin's actions. In relatively short order, international organizations like the European Union, NATO and the UN organized and delivered aid to Ukraine. That was particularly critical because the Russian expectation of a relatively easy military operation was dashed as the Ukrainians effectively repelled the Russian army.

As we might expect, the early broadcasts focused almost exclusively on the war. However, as riveting a story as the war represented, the networks used less than half of their stories to address the invasion over the ten study dates. As the war progressed, coverage on the three largest non-cable nightly national news programs in the U.S. followed two major patterns related to war coverage. In the first weeks of the war, nearly all stories in the broadcasts were focused on different aspects of the crisis, primarily Battlefield and Civilians. That is understandable given that the war was (and remains) a crisis. However, as time progressed, fewer stories within a broadcast were related to the war and more domestic news coverage took its place.

This largely linear decrease in war-related coverage as weeks passed changed at times when a major event occurred in the war. In these instances of breaking news stories from the front, coverage would focus on these events. This was also true for domestic news items. The U.S. was in the midst of its seemingly unending campaign cycle. During the study period the primary elections were being held in the United States in preparation for the general election in November 2022. The political campaigns always command news time in the U.S. However, the Ukraine war was such an overwhelming story that only in the case of an extraordinary domestic news event would the first item of the broadcast not focus on Ukraine.

The extensive and dramatic coverage of the war has engaged the American public and that engagement has provided support for the significant financial commitment to Ukraine aid. That said, some Republican members of the House of Representatives have indicated that they will reduce that aid when they assume control of the chamber in January 2023. But that position has met with opposition even within the Republican party. As we write (in November 2022), the Russians are destroying the power infrastructure of Ukraine. That tactic has no effect on their battlefield losses in the east of the country. It is simply wholesale destruction because Putin cannot do anything else. And, of course, the U.S. networks have covered the story extensively with video and live reports. A policy to reduce aid to Ukraine will have to negotiate the gauntlet of that coverage of the war. The coverage has won and will probably continue to do so.

Reference

Statista Research, *Total bilateral aid commitments to Ukraine between January 24 and October 3, 2022, by type and country or organization,* November 11, 2022. https://www.statista.com/statistics/1303432/total-bilateral-aid-to-ukraine/

Country report: USA

Cable Networks CNN and Fox News

Aaron Hyzen[12] & Hilde Van den Bulck[13]

TV channels and news programs

Cable News Network (CNN) is a US based, multinational cable channel, founded by Ted Turner in 1980 and currently owned by Warner Bros Discovery through CNN Global. The channel was considered to be politically left of center at the time of writing. At the start of the Ukraine war reporting, on average CNN had 1.22 million viewers in prime time, a 1% increase compared to March 2021. Throughout the entire day, it averaged 886,000 viewers which was a 9% increase from 2021 (Johnson, 2022a). By September 2022, these numbers were down to 682,000 in primetime, a 14% loss compared to the same time in 2021 and 580.000 over the entire day, the same as in 2021 (Johnson, 2022b).

The Fox News Channel or Fox News is a US based, multinational cable news television channel, created by Australian born Rupert Murdoch and owned by Fox Corporation through Fox News Media. The channel was considered to be politically right of center at the time of writing. In March 2022, Fox News on average had 2.86 million viewers in primetime, up 19% from the same month a year earlier. By September 2022, viewing averaged at 2.13 million during primetime, down 15% from 2021 (Johnson, 2022a,b).

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For the analysis of the Ukraine war reporting, we selected programs that can be considered the two cable channels' closest approximation of 'regular' news programs on broadcast channels. Based on research into cable news (Kim et al., 2022) we decided on *CNN Newsroom* for CNN and *Special Report with Bret Baier* for Fox News. Each are daily programs with a duration of 50 minutes not counting commercial breaks and announcements. CNN Newsroom ratings for the first and second quarter of 2022, the periods that include our sampled days, show that it reached 696,000 (Q1) and 545,000 (Q2) households, and 821,000 (Q1) 688,000 (Q2) viewers older than two years of age (https://ustvdb.com/networks/cnn/shows/newsroom/). *Special Report with Bret Baier* on average had 2.87 million viewers in March 2022, the fifth most watched program on Fox News. In September 2022, it reached 2.34 million viewers (Johnson, 2022a,b).

All broadcasts were provided by the Internet Archive, with helpful support from Roger Macdonald and Kalev Leetaru at the Internet Archive. The coding schedule and codebook were based on the one developed by the University of Delaware team. Dr. Koen Panis (Thomas More University of Applied Sciences) helpfully advised on our quantitative data analysis.

The introductory chapter of this report provides results for CNN and Fox News combined. It shows that, averaging for both programs, 80% of the time was dedicated to war reporting and 20% of the time to other, non-war related items. It further shows that, for both channels combined, the five most mentioned topics were the Battlefield (28%), Other war-related topics (18%), Sanctions (14%), Civilians (12%) and Refugees (11%). However, these combined data hide considerable differences between the two sampled programs, as we will analyze. Below we discuss the results for both channels separately in greater detail, first for *CNN Newsroom,* followed by *Fox Special Report with Bret Baier*, while the summary provides comparative findings.

CNN Newsroom

Story types

CNN Newsroom is characterized by its continued, extensive attention to the Ukraine war throughout the period of analysis. Looking at the entire sample, timewise, 94.4% of all analyzed news was related to the Ukraine war and only 5.6% dedicated to other topics. What is more, the distribution over time shows that non-war related topics only appear late in the sample, as can be seen in Figure 1. However, the overall length of the program was not extended, related to the strict formatting and scheduling of cable tv. The war was covered in other, commentary style CNN programs, too.

Figure 1. Percentage of war-related and other news in *CNN Newsroom* based on coverage duration on the sample days*.*
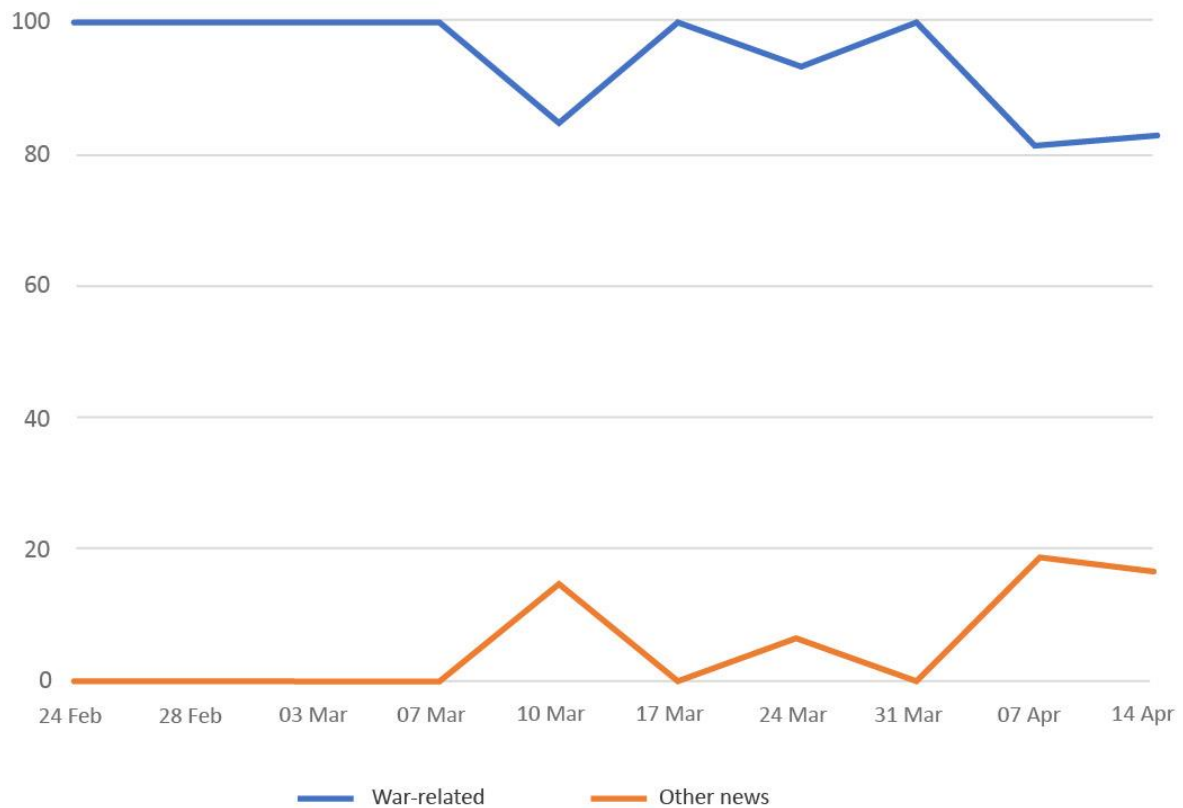
Topics

Next, we look at all war-related reporting on *CNN Newsroom* to understand the specific topics that were covered, both in number of items and in duration (minutes).

Table 1 shows that Battlefield was, by far, the most covered issue both in terms of topics (34.21%) and (slightly less) of time (29.39%). The second biggest category is Other war-related topics which covered a diverse set of issues (see below), so in terms of specific topic, the second biggest category is Civilians both in items (14.74%) and time (18.78%), followed by Refugees (13.16% items, 15.78% time). Overall, CNN's coverage of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, centered on Battlefield reports and Civilian/Refugee reports, followed by Sanctions (7.89% items, 7.51% time). Little attention was paid to specific responses from the EU or UN and the US/NATO reporting concentrated almost entirely on US policies, together indicating limited attention to transnational governance bodies. Notably absent from the news was any justification of the war and discussion of (potential) peace.

Table 1. Topics by number of war-related items and their coverage time in *CNN Newsroom.*

Topic	Number of news items	Percentage	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Battlefield	52	34.21%	105.37	29.39%
Civilians	22	14.47%	67.3	18.78%
Disinformation	4	2.63%	14.2	14.2%
EU Policies	2	1.32%	0.9	0.24%
Justification	0	0%	0	0%
Nuclear hazard	4	2.63%	10.5	2.93%
Peace	0	0%	0	0%
Refugees	20	13.16%	56.6	15.78%
Sanctions	12	7.89%	26.9	7.51%
Security	1	0.66%	0.5	0.14%
United Nations	0	0%	0	0%
US / NATO	6	3.95%	5.9	1.65%
Other war-rel.	29	19.08%	70.3	19.61%
Total	152	100%	358.5	100%

Table 2 provides a more detailed overview of the distribution of various topics across the sampled period.

Table 2. Sample days by topics of war news in percentages of duration in *CNN Newsroom.*

Sample day	Battle-field	Civili-ans	Disin-form	EU policy	Justifi-cation	Nuc-lear	Peace	Refu-gees	Sanc-tions	Secu-rity	UN	US/ NATO	Other war	Total
24 Feb	65.98	7.68	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.32	0	0	3.49	8.55	100%
28 Feb	23.57	38.96	0	0	0	13.00	0	2.08	10.97	0	0	2.30	9.12	100%
03 Mar	40.53	27.48	0	0	0	12.97	0	6.63	1.41	0	0	0.91	10.07	100%
07 Mar	30.89	12.06	0	0	0	0	0	20.10	14.72	0	0	0	22.24	100%
10 Mar	33.81	9.31	7.30	2.33	0	0	0	21.00	1.34	0	0	2.91	21.99	100%
17 Mar	33.04	5.20	0	0	0	0	0	36.76	0.34	0	0	0	24.67	100%
24 Mar	17.54	20.48	0	0	0	0	0	18.41	25.76	1.69	0	5.66	10.46	100%
31 Mar	22.15	0	14.69	0	0	0	0	23.17	2.76	0	0	0	37.23	100%
07 Apr	4.45	36.97	0	0	0	0	0	16.83	4.78	0	0	0	36.97	100%
14 Apr	6.89	36.03	21.05	0	0	1.63	0	14.27	0	0	0	1.52	18.61	100%
Total	29.39	18.78	3.97	0.24	0	2.93	0	15.78	7.51	0.14	0	1.65	19.61	100%

Given the aggregate results across the entire sampled period, it is not surprising that Battlefield appeared in all and Civilians/Refugees returned in all but one of the sampled programs. Despite fewer items and times spent, the topic of sanctions did appear in all but one of the programs. Each episode covered items that go beyond typical war reporting (category of Other war-related). The Nuclear threat was a point of attention early in the reporting but was absent afterwards, only being mentioned near the end of the sample period. Although brief, US (and some NATO) strategy was a point of interest in almost every program.

Angles

Beyond analysis of the topics covered in war-related news on *CNN Newsroom*, we aimed to understand the presence of various countries and transnational institutions' angle or perspectives on the war. An item was coded as having a particular country's angle when it contained a position expressed by a government/official representative of that country while civilians' presenting their perspective was considered as a Non-governmental angle. Table 3 provides an overview of the presence of various angles expressed in time.

Table 3. Angles by duration of all war-related news in *CNN Newsroom.*

Angle	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Russia	14.8	6.6%
Ukraine	63.7	28.3%
US	47.7	21.0%
Other country	48.9	21.7%
Non-governmental	50.5	22.4%
Total	225.3	100%

A total of 225.3 minutes of the war-related coverage in *CNN Newsroom* referred to a particular position as expressed by a government/official representative of a particular country (country angle) or to non-government angle, which included civilians. *CNN Newsroom* prioritized the perspective of Ukraine, most prevalent timewise (63.7 minutes). This included regular airing of the Ukrainian president's and other Ukrainian officials' statements. The second dominant angle, timewise (50.5 minutes, i.e., 22.4% of all angles time) was the NGO perspective, with much room for voices of 'ordinary Ukrainians', i.e., civilians and refugees. The US angle was presented a little less than that of other countries in terms of time but was present in twice the number of items. Other countries mostly included China, India and some of the European allies. The Russia angle was the least dominant of those represented in terms of time (14.8 minutes, 6.6.% of all angles), yet there was even less attention to the position of transnational and international bodies such as the EU, UN and NATO, all mentioned mostly in passing. Overall, *CNN Newsroom* coverage was international in perspective, but relied heavily on statements from US officials.

Below we take a closer look at the various topics and the angles represented in them, reviewed in order of dominance of the topics in the overall war-related news in *CNN Newsroom.*

Battlefield

Battlefield by far was the most covered issue both in terms of topics (34.21%) and (slightly less) of time (29.39%). When the topic was presented from a specific angle, this was predominantly the Ukrainian perspective, followed by a Home country US angle, to a much lesser extent a Russia angle and only a few mentions of Other countries and Non-governmental angles. Interestingly, though, while the Non-governmental angle was present in only one Battlefield item, it takes up the most time.

Other war-related topics

The second biggest category was Other of all war-related news representing 19.08% of items, 19.61% of time. This unusually high share suggests that *CNN Newsroom*, more than other broadcast and cable channels in the US and news programs in other countries, spent time on issues that are considered less standard in war reporting. The Other war-related topics category covers a wide range of topics (see narratives).

Civilians

As a specific topic, the second biggest category is Civilians both in terms of items (14.74%) and time (18.78%). Importantly, it appears in every but one of the sampled programs, suggesting specific attention to the impact of the war on the Ukrainian people. The latter is confirmed by looking at the angles present in this category. While it has four (Russia, Ukraine, US and NGO) out of the five analyzed angles, it is dominated by the Ukraine angle and the NGO angle.

Refugees

The issue of refugees was a topic in all but the first program in the sample, i.e., the first day of the war, making it the third most often (13.15% of all war related items) and third longest (15.78% of time) appearing specific topic. What is more, four of the five coded angles were presented in the refugee topics, with the Russian angle notably absent. Not surprisingly, the perspective of NGO's and other countries (mostly neighboring countries dealing with refugees) appeared each for a similar amount of time, followed by the official Ukrainian perspective. While the US perspective only appeared in two items on refugees, it was discussed for a relatively long time.

Combining the topics of Civilians and Refugees as the 'human factor' shows that 33.25% of items and 34.56% of time was spent on the impact of the war on ordinary Ukrainians. They are often given a voice through interviews on the ground by CNN reporters.

Sanctions

Mentioned in each but the final episode in the sample, Sanctions were a recurring topic of interest in the war reporting, with 7.89% of all items and 7.51% of time dedicated to war reporting. Only three official perspectives were presented, the Russian, US and Other countries, with the Ukrainian and NGO angle not represented in an official capacity.

US/NATO

US/NATO policies was ranked next in number of items (3.95% of those dedicated to the war) but comes after disinformation in terms of time, with 1.65% of all war-related time. This news was mostly about the US position and actions with regards to the war rather than about NATO. Given the role of NATO in this conflict, the limited attention is noteworthy. Only three official positions were presented in this regard, namely the Russia, Ukraine and US angle, with the latter unsurprisingly dominating in number of mentions and time devoted to it.

Disinformation

Disinformation appeared in just four of the sampled programs but took up more time (3.97%) than US/NATO. Interestingly, it was discussed from each of the coded angles, suggesting that disinformation was presented as a wide-spread issue, although the US angle dominated.

Nuclear hazard

With four items in the overall sample, nuclear hazard appeared as often as disinformation but received a smaller (2.93%) share of the overall war-related time. Its coverage was spread unevenly across the sampled period, appearing on two days early in the period and on the last day of the sample. Just two perspectives, a Ukrainian and a US angle, were provided.

EU policies

Despite the geographical nearness to the war and the political relevance of the EU, there were only two war-related mentions regarding the EU, taking up 0.24% of the time. The only official angle was that of Ukraine and appeared in one of the EU items. This suggest that, for the *CNN Newsroom*, EU policies towards the war were of secondary relevance.

Security

Security was considered even less important as there was only one item dedicated to it, taking up 0.14% of all time dedicated to war-related news, and presented without any official angle.

United Nations / Justification / Peace

Notably absent from the news were items focusing on the UN, any justification of the war, the latter suggesting a stance against the Russian invasion, and any discussion of (potential) peace.

Key Narratives

Next, we aim for a better understanding of important narratives, which were analyzed for each topic and included the tone of the stance towards the main parties in the conflict. Table 4 provides an itemized overview of narratives for each topic, the latter presented in decreasing order of occurrence in the overall sample. This is followed by a more extensive description of the narratives.

Table 4. Key narratives and their tone in topics in *CNN Newsroom.*

Topics and number of related news items	Key narratives Tone: Positive – *Pos*; Negative – *Neg*; Neutral – *Neu*
Battlefield: 52	Battle Map and Troop Movements / *Neu / Neg* Air strikes and bombing / *Neg* Footage of battles and damage / *Neg* Battle for Mariupol; damage and airstrikes / *Neg* Ukrainian military successes and morale / *Pos* Russian Military shift to Donbas Region / *Neu*
Other war-related: 29	Putin characterized as ruthless war criminal, isolated and potentially 'unfit' mentally / *Neg* Attention and criticism regarding China's policies / *Neg* Protests of the invasion around the world / *Neu*
Civilians: 22	Civilian death toll / *Neg* Civilians wounded; injured / *Neg* Civilians interviewed on attacks and invasion experiences / *Neg* Civilians sheltering in subways and bunkers / *Neg* Mariupol Theatre bombing / *Neg*
Refugees: 20	Refugee total # estimates / updates / *Neu* Refugee locations Poland, Moldova, Romania / *Neu* Ukrainian men not allowed to leave Ukraine / *Neu* Trains as main 'lifeline' for refugees / *Pos* Russia & Ukraine agree to humanitarian corridor for fleeing refugees / *Neu*
Sanctions: 12	US and EU sanctions against Russia / *Neu* Sanction effectiveness / *Neu / Neg* EU sanctions affecting energy supplies / *Neu / Neg* Sanctions against Putin's inner circle and oligarchs / *Pos* China and Indian fail to join sanctions / purchasing energy / *Neg*
US/NATO: 6	US policies regarding sanctions and sending arms to Ukraine / *Pos* NATOs response in terms of arms support of Ukraine / *Neu* (single mention) Finland and Sweden interested in joining NATO / *Neu*

Disinformation: 4	Ukraine and Russia accuse each other of planning chemical weapons attacks, both accuse the other of disinformation. Discussions regarding debunking Russian disinformation specifically within Russia, internal efforts as well as external / *Neu / Pos*
Nuclear hazard: 4	Concerns regarding the Russian occupation of Chernobyl power plant and potential battles near / at the site / *Neg*
	Concerns on how Russia will use its nuclear arms deterrent towards Ukraine and NATO / *Neg*
EU policies: 2	(single mention) Versailles EU summit to discuss Ukraine membership, sanctions and response / *Neu*
Security: 1	(single mention) US and EU decide not to expel Russia from G20, calming concerns of escalating a new cold war / *Neu*

Battlefield

Nearly all programs began with updates from the battlefield. The tone was generally neutral, providing raw information on troop movements and territory gained or lost. Most other battlefield news skewed negatively towards Russia and positively towards any Ukrainian successes. It was never favorable to Russia. Key narratives identified were the size and might of the Russian military compared with Ukraine's forces. Footage of airstrikes and resulting damage had a tone of negativity towards Russia and sympathy for Ukrainians. Graphic footage was occasionally shown. The port city of Mariupol became an intense battleground under siege by Russian forces. The peak of this narrative was the bombing of a Mariupol theatre where civilians were sheltering, resulting in many casualties. In contrast to the narrative of overwhelming Russian forces, Ukraine's successes in slowing or halting Russian's advance were reported with a tone that was somewhere between neutral and positive. Positive coverage showed Ukrainian military personnel patrolling cities, in sorties headed for battle and interviews with soldiers committed to fighting. In the latter half of the ten-week period, Russian troop movements began to center on the Donbass region. Coverage hereof was neutral in tone and implied the region could be annexed similarly to Crimea.

Other war-related topics

This topic included war related news items which did not directly fit into other categories. One central narrative in this coverage was that Putin had become isolated. Several reasons were reported, with an emphasis on Putin having become paranoid, potentially mentally unfit. He was characterized as an out of touch dictator. The tone was negative towards Russia and specifically Putin. Another key narrative was China's unwillingness to condemn the invasion and its affirmation of Russia as a key ally. In this case, the tone was neutral to negative. This category further had a narrative of the negative impact of the war on cultural life, such as a lengthy item on Ukrainian museums rushing to bring their art and religious symbols to safety.

Civilians

While the coverage that dealt with civilians paid attention to four (Russian, Ukraine, US and NGO) out of the five official angles analyzed (see above), in terms of narratives the topic was reported from the Ukrainian perspective. Throughout the sampled period, there were regular

updates on the estimated number of civilian deaths, featuring footage of airstrikes, civilian shelters and occasionally graphic footage of dead or wounded. Key narratives consisted of the devastation and upheaval of civilian life, with a tone of Russia as aggressor (neg) and Ukrainian civilians as innocent victims (pos). On the ground interviews with sheltering or fleeing civilians contained firsthand accounts of airstrikes and battles, and typically expressed uncertainty regarding the future. CNN reporter Jake Tapper reported from a Lviv camp providing food, shelter and aid to Ukrainians fleeing battles. Tapper, illustrating the tone of reporting, was openly critical of Putin, referring to Putin's strong alpha male image while being, in fact, weak and a leader who was willing to kill women, children and elderly people. During the siege of Mariupol, a theatre was bombed, killing estimated hundreds of civilians, and resulted in the US and others calling the strike a war crime.

Refugees

Coverage regularly updated the estimated number of refugees in a neutral tone and *CNN Newsroom* conducted reporting from refugee camps in Poland. There was discussion of how Poland, Moldova, Hunagry and Romania absorbed the largest number of refugees, in a tone that was neutral to positive. One key narrative was that men were not allowed to leave Ukraine and had to stay to fight. Therefore, refugees were largely women and children. Alongside this narrative, were the difficulties in evacuating the elderly. Families were often split with members missing or one person staying behind with an elderly member or to assist in slower travel. The tone was negative towards Russia. Another narrative was the importance of trains for fleeing refugees. With air travel unsafe and land mines and Russian ground troops making roads hazardous, trains became the most secure route out of danger, with an estimated four million Ukrainians evacuated (positive tone).

Sanctions

Sanctions were covered in a variety of tones. Key narratives included regular updates on US and EU sanctions which were generally neutral. Other narratives emerged with reports questioning their effectiveness, scope and speed of implementation which were more negative, particularly reports regarding EU energy purchases from Russia, both in terms of how effective sanctions could be without drastic cuts by EU and EU dependence on Russian energy imports. Likewise, reports of sanctions specifically targeting the Russian oligarchs were reported positively. Narratives of China's early reluctance to join and of China and India's ultimate refusal were reported with both a neutral and negative tone. There was also a narrative that the sanctions would be both severe and 'coordinated', between Western allies.

US/NATO

The key narrative which emerged regarding US and NATO policies was military aid to Ukraine. It was reported in a neutral to positive tone. While a large amount of military aid, technology and weaponry was sent to Ukraine, another narrative was US and NATOs reluctance to transfer fighter Jets and anti-aircraft systems. While Poland offered to provide such aid, US specifically opposed that step fearing a larger war between NATO and Russia.

Disinformation

Two key narratives emerged with regard to the topic of disinformation, one in the early days of the invasion and another in the later weeks, both with a negative slant towards Russia. The first was assertations by both Russia and Ukraine that the other was planning to use chemical weapons on the battlefield. Ukrainian troops went through a chemical weapons training protocol and Russia accused Ukraine of planning a chemical weapons attack on Russia soldiers. Ukraine, in turn, claimed Russia was planning chemical weapons attacks and using disinformation to escalate their tactics. Later, the narrative revolved around debunking Disinformation within Russia. Putin's political opposition, Alexei Navalny, called for the debunking of Putin's information, calling it as effective as javelins. Another report claimed groups were seeking Russian speakers to make phone calls into Russia, presumably to Russian civilians, to debunk 'propaganda'.

Nuclear hazard

Nuclear hazard reporting had two main narratives. In the early period of the invasion a prominent narrative revolved around concerns over Russia using nuclear weapons and how they would utilize their nuclear deterrent. Ultimately, the deterrent meant limited if any direct involvement by the US or NATO countries. It was reported in a tone that was neutral to negative towards Russia. Another key narrative regarding nuclear hazard came when Russian soldiers occupied the Chernobyl power plant. The potential for the battle to cause a disaster at the site was reported in a negative tone and framed as the recklessness of Russia.

EU policies

The limited reporting on EU policies focused on EU leaders meeting in Versailles, France, to discuss Ukraine's EU membership and how that could not be fast tracked because of the war. This was presented in a neutral tone. It was the only item focusing explicitly on EU policy.

Security

Security was not a major topic. The only mention was a narrative regarding Russia's membership of the G20. After a summit in Brussels, the US and EU decided not to expel Russia from the G20, claiming concern about escalating a new cold war or a wider war and the need for regional security. The tone of the reporting was neutral.

United Nations / Justification/ Peace

None.

Fox News: Fox Special Report Bret Baier

Story types

Across the entire sample period, *Fox Special Report with Bret Baier* spent 65.7% of its time on the Ukraine war, leaving 34.3% of its airtime dedicated to other news, this is considerably less attention to the war than *CNN Newsroom* and more in line with other cases studied in this report. The distribution across time (see Figure 2), shows a steady decline in time dedicated to the war, from almost the entire news program (97.19%) on the first day to just over one third of the time (34.33%) at the end of the sampled period. As in the case of *CNN Newsroom* and different from e.g., the cases of Russia and the UK (elsewhere in this report), the overall length of the program was not extended, related to the strict formatting and scheduling of cable tv. The war, however, was also covered in various other, commentary style programs on Fox News.

Figure 2. Percentage of war-related and other news in *Fox News Special Report* based on coverage duration on the sample days.
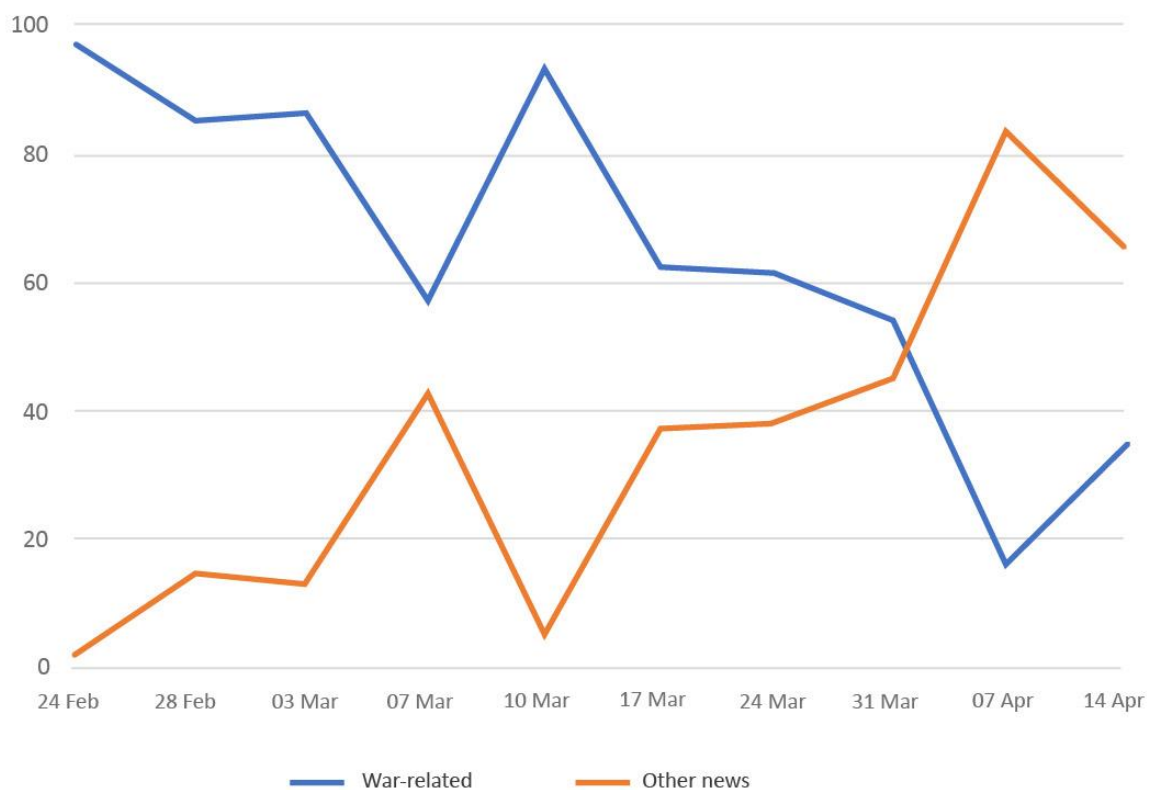
Topics

Next, we coded all war related reporting and analyzed what specific topics were focused on, by item and in minutes (Table 5).

Table 5. Topics by number of war-related news items and their coverage time in *Fox News Special Report*.

Topics	Number of news items	Percentage	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Battlefield	31	31%	69.2	26.69%
Civilians	3	3%	7.1	2.73%
Disinformation	2	2%	1.3	0.50%
EU Policies	0	0%	0	0%
Justification	0	0%	0	0%
Nuclear hazard	4	4%	7.6	2.94%
Peace	1	1%	2.0	0.77%
Refugees	8	8%	13.6	5.25%
Sanctions	16	16%	59.4	22.89%
Security	5	5%	12.4	4.78%
United Nations	0	0%	0	0%
US / NATO	12	12%	47.9	18.45%
Other war-rel.	18	18%	38.9	15.00%
Total	100	100%	259.4	100%

Looking at all war-related news on *Fox News Special Report* during the sampled days, most attention, both in terms of items and of time, went to Battlefield (31 items, 26.69% of time). The second most occurring category in number of items was Other war-related topics, however it only came fourth in time spent on the topic, suggesting many shorter items. Timewise, Sanctions received the second most airtime (22.89%), although it only had the third most items (16). Third in amount of time (18.45%) and fourth in number of items (12) was US/NATO policy, which focused almost exclusively on the US (see below). Refugees came fifth in number of items (5) and time (5.25%). Security was more prominent in sixth position both in terms of items (5) and time (4.78%). While Nuclear hazard received the same amount of attention (4 items, 2.94% of time) on *Fox News Special Report* as on *CNN Newsroom*, just three items and 2.73% of the time was dedicated to Civilians. Disinformation and Peace received even less attention, while the UN, EU and any Justification for the war were totally absent from *Fox News Special Report*.

In Table 6, we provide a more detailed overview of the distribution of various topics across the sampled period.

Table 6. Sample days by topics of war-related news in percentages of duration in *Fox News Special Report.*

Sample day	Battle-field	Civili-ans	Disin-form	EU policy	Justifi-cation	Nuc-lear	Peace	Refu-gees	Sanc-tions	Secu-rity	UN	US/NATO	Other war	Total
24 Feb	17.37	4.84	0	0	0	0	4.76	0	52.34	3.81	0	9.36	7.53	100%
28 Feb	21.55	0	0	0	0	19.78	0	7.37	27.93	0	0	11.53	11.84	100%
03 Mar	26.24	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.68	0	10.58	0	33.67	24.83	100%
07 Mar	57.78	11.51	5.44	0	0	0	0	0	8.86	0	0	0	16.40	100%
10 Mar	12.85	0	0	0	0	4.89	0	19.15	24.46	0	0	0	38.64	100%
17 Mar	26.64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31.68	17.70	0	17.61	6.37	100%
24 Mar	11.49	10.64	0	0	0	1.39	0	17.81	0	0	0	58.67	0	100%
31 Mar	32.33	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.28	39.76	0	0	0	20.63	100%
07 Apr	31.74	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	53.31	14.95	100%
14 Apr	66.31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.58	0	0	0	17.11	100%
Total	26.69	2.73	0.50	0	0	2.94	0.77	5.25	22.89	4.78	0	18.45	15.00	100%

The breakdown of topic across the sampled days shows that the battlefield was discussed in every sampled program of *Fox News Special Report* and each but one day had an item that was not covered by the other categories. At the other end, we see that disinformation was mentioned in just one episode. Other topics are distributed unevenly across the sampled days.

Angles

We furthermore studied which countries and non-governmental perspectives on the war were reported. As noted, an item was coded as having a particular angle when it contained a position expressed by a government/official representative of a country or non-governmental organization with civilians expressing their views considered as part of the latter category. Table 7 provides an overview of the presence of various countries and transnational angles in terms of minutes and percentages of total time dedicated to war-related news.

Table 7. Angles by duration of all war-related news in *Fox News Special Report.*

Angle	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Russia	8.5	4.6%
Ukraine	34.0	18.6%
US	108.1	59.1%
Other country	21.2	11.6%
Non-governmental	11.1	6.1%
Total	182.8	100%

The most noticeable result is the US angle, covered for a total of 108.1 minutes, representing 59.1% of all time spent on particular angles. By comparison, official viewpoints from Ukraine only took up 34 minutes or 18.6% of the time spent on angles, and the Russia angle was mostly ignored, taking up just 8.5 minutes or 4.6% of all time dedicated to specific angles.

Below, we elaborate on the occurrence of the various topics and the angles from which they are discussed. We analyze them in the order from most to least prominent topic based on number of items, which is often different from share of time, as we will show.

Battlefield

The topic that most dominated the war reporting both in terms of items (31%) and time (26.69%) and that appeared in every sampled episode was Battlefield (battles, troop movement, casualties, etc.). What is more, *Fox News Special Report* discussed the battlefield paying attention to all five of the coded angles. The dominant perspective was that of Ukraine. The perspective of Russia appeared second most often but only briefly, while the US angle was covered much more extensively, if slightly less often, followed by other countries and, infrequently and briefly, NGOs. The latter suggests less attention to the voice of the ordinary Ukrainian in the Battlefield compared to *CNN Newsroom*. The US angle related more than once to speculation and updates on plans to (not) have US boots on the ground.

Other war-related topics

As with *CNN Newsroom*, the category of Other war-related topics is the second largest in number of items (18) but here only fourth largest in terms of time (15% of total time dedicated to war-related news). This suggests a range of shorter news items, of varying topics (see below). Interestingly, while four of the five coded angles make an appearance, almost half (11) of the items in this category have a US angle, next to a Russia (3 items), Ukraine (2 items) and NGO (2 items) perspective.

Sanctions

Timewise, sanctions received the second most airtime (22.89%), although it only featured in the third most items (16%). It appeared on seven of all sampled days. The US angle dominated in items relating to sanctions, in which the US is presented as taking the lead but staying close to its allies.

US/NATO

US strategy was discussed explicitly in six of the ten sampled programs. There was a strong focus on US strategy towards the war as can also be seen from the US angle that dominated this reporting (11 items) next to some attention to other countries (4 items) and one item that mentions the formal Ukraine perspective. NATO was rarely mentioned and only in passing.

Refugees

Refugees appeared in eight items, taking up 22.89% of the total program time devoted to the war across the sample. The issue appeared in half of all sampled episodes and was discussed presenting four of the five coded angles, with the NGO angle present five times, the US and Ukraine angle each four times while there were two perspectives from Other countries.

Security

The issue of security received more attention on *Fox News Special Report* than on *CNN Newsroom*, appearing in the first, third and fifth sampled episodes, after which it disappeared from the news. Of the eight instances of an angle being presented, four referred to the US perspective, three to the perspective of Other countries and one to the Russia angle.

Nuclear hazard

The topic of Nuclear hazard appeared in the second sampled episode, where it took up quite a considerable amount of time, and two more times later in the sample, but then very briefly. Of the five times a particular angle on the issue of Nuclear hazard was presented, three provided the US and two the Russia perspective, a ranking reflected in the time dedicated to these perspectives.

Civilians

While civilians were a central theme for *CNN Newsroom*, *Fox News Special Report* paid much less attention to them, with just three items and 2.72% of the time dedicated to them. This did not prevent a multi-perspective view as all angles except Russia appeared in these items. Unsurprisingly, the Ukraine perspective received the most airtime, followed by NGOs while the US and other countries' angles were presented only briefly.

Disinformation

The issue of disinformation appeared in only one episode of *Fox News Special Report*. No official angle was presented.

Peace

There was only one item dealing with Peace in *Fox News Special Report*, representing 0.77% of all war related time. This occurred on the opening day of the conflict, presented from the angle of China's call for peace talks. As such, like C*NN Newsroom, Fox News Special Report* appeared more focused on conflict, than on (potential) peace.

Justification / United Nations / EU policies

As in the case of *CNN Newsroom,* no justification of the war was provided, suggesting a condemnation of the war by *Fox News Special Report.* No items dealt explicitly with EU or UN policies and strategies. The EU, UN (and NATO) only received brief mentions-in-passing.

Key Narratives

We analyzed the emerging narratives for each topic and included the tone of the stance towards the main parties in the conflict. Table 8 provides an overview of narratives for each topic, the latter presented in descending order of frequency and followed by a more specific description of the narratives in each topic.

Table 8. Key narratives and their tone in topics in *Fox News Special Report.*

Topics and number of related news items	Key narratives Tone: Positive – *Pos*; Negative – *Neg*; Neutral – *Neu*
Battlefield: 31	Invasion daily updates on touch screen battle map, illustrates battles and airstrikes *Neu* Following Russian Troop movements; particularly setbacks *Neu* Effectiveness of US arms in supporting Ukraine, details weapons used *Pos*
Other war-related: 18	Putin's 'mental fitness' was questioned *Neu* Coverage implied discord between Putin and top advisors over the Russian military's progress in Ukraine *Neu* Putin warns critics and calls for patriotism in response to sanctions *Neu* Genocide implied by top US and Ukrainian officials *Neg*
Sanctions: 16	Updates on US sanctions and effectiveness *Neu* Strong criticism of Biden administration's implementing sanctions; speed and US energy production *Neg* China's lack of sanctions and Biden's weak response *Neg*
US/NATO: 12	Criticism of Biden's US energy and economic policy with regards to Russia's energy exports and oil prices *Neg* Discussion of US policy alongside NATO; securing the NATO alliance to face Russia *Neu* NATO military aid to Ukraine *Neu*
Refugees: 8	Coverage of fleeing refugees with a focus on food and medical aid in Polish refugee camps *Neu / Pos*

Security: 5	Geostrategic threat of Russia-China alliance, US and NATO concerns and response *Neg*
Nuclear hazard: 4	Russia's nuclear alert and refusal to 100% confirm not using nuclear weapons *Neg*
	Critical of Biden's Iran nuclear deal which could benefit Russia *Neg*
Civilians: 3	Focused on civilians killed in bombings and airstrikes *Neg*
Disinformation: 2	Russia would use disinformation to claim Ukraine used chemical weapons to escalate the war *Neu*
Peace: 1	China calls for peace talks

Battlefield

Programs would generally begin with battlefield updates, airstrikes and troop movements in a neutral tone. Often there would be further updates later in the program with the anchor engaging a battle map on a large touch screen, further specifying troop movements, battles and airstrikes, called the Attack Map. While there was footage of airstrikes, damage and soldiers, there was no graphic footage. A key narrative which emerged was that Russian forces had stalled and encountered a stronger Ukrainian push-back than anticipated. Perceived Ukrainian victories had a positive tone. During battle updates, anchors and reporters often detailed the weapons deployed with a narrative of what weapon systems the US could provide. Likewise, US weapons provided through military aid were framed as effective, calling for more aid and sometimes punctuated by training footage.

Other war-related topics

There were several key narratives in this category. One questioned Putin's mental fitness, claiming he was irrational, did not own a cellphone or use the internet. Likewise, he was presented as lashing out at top advisors over Russian's lack of success and warning his internal critics. All together the tone of this narrative was negative to Putin and suggested discord and disorganization at the top levels of the Russian government. Another key narrative featured both Americans going to Ukraine to help, and 'saluting' Ukrainian civilians participating in the war effort. The tone here was positive. There were also two interviews, one with a top US official and one with a Ukrainian official, both pushing the narrative that Russia was committing 'genocide' in Ukraine, the tone was negative.

Sanctions

Narratives regarding Sanctions focused on the energy sector, sanction effectiveness in terms of the cost to Russia and the cost to the West. Another key narrative was criticism of US President Biden claiming his sanctions were not strong enough or enacted too late. Importantly, Biden's wider energy policy, Green Energy, EPA regulation and not increasing US oil production, 'the war on carbon', was criticized as something that would impair the effectiveness of sanctions against Russia. The tone was negative. Another narrative was criticism of China for not participating in sanctions. Although Biden suggested 'secondary' sanctions on China, he was presented as 'too weak' to counter China.

US/NATO

The key narratives identified regarding NATO featured reports and interviews confirming both NATO's mission and unity. The tone was positive. There was a related narrative regarding the military aid NATO could provide, as well as suggesting a no-fly zone to counter Russia's air dominance. NATO discussed Poland providing fighter jets to Ukraine. NATO reports were generally presented in a neutral tone. This coverage was used to develop a narrative further criticizing Biden by criticizing US policy, specifically energy policy continuing the narrative of a 'war on carbon'. A narrative that President Biden was the reason for high petrol and oil prices was also featured in this topic by connecting inflation with sanctions. The tone was negative, particularly towards US President Biden.

Refugees

Updates were reported on the growing refugee crisis providing the estimated number of Ukrainians leaving Ukraine and which neighboring countries were absorbing the refugees. The tone was neutral. The key narrative was the importance of the medical supplies and food aid Ukrainians were receiving and for the US to maximize efforts. The tone was neutral to positive.

Security

The narrative that emerged out of reporting on security was the threat of China-Russia alliance. The alliance was connected to other threats to the US, like potentially Iran and cyber-attacks. Likewise, that Russia's invasion of Ukraine suggested a future where China would invade Taiwan, upsetting regional security in Asia, the way Russia upset European regional security. The narrative further suggested that the US and NATO would need to counter these forces. The tone was negative.

Nuclear hazard

The main narrative which emerged regarding nuclear hazard was that Russia was unclear about its nuclear arms policy and that it refused to say it would not use nuclear weapons in Ukraine. The tone was neutral. This narrative was also used to criticize US president Biden and his Iran nuclear deal. Reporting claimed that Iran could sell uranium to Russia which could be used in weapons ultimately bound to be deployed in Ukraine. The tone was negative.

Civilians

The news covered civilian deaths and particularly those from airstrikes and shelling. One key narrative came after the bombing of a theatre in Mariupol, a city already heavily damaged from fighting and airstrikes. Interviews with civilians and evacuees described the devastation and the mood of 'no hope'. The tone was negative.

Disinformation

Coverage reported claims that Russia would use disinformation to accuse Ukraine of using chemical weapons to escalate the war. The tone was neutral.

Peace

While China called for peace talks between Russia and Ukraine, the reporting was critical of China for not acknowledging the invasion, fitting into a larger narrative critical of China. The tone was negative.

Justification / United Nations / EU policies

None.

Summary and comparison

By means of a conclusion, we provide a comparative summary, pointing to the main characteristics of the coverage of the Ukraine war by *CNN Newsroom* and F*ox News Special Report*, indicating similarities and differences.

Number of items/amount of time. *CNN Newsroom* dedicated entire programs in the sampled episodes from February 24 up to and including March 17. Even towards the end of the sample period, in April, these numbers were still around 80% for items and time. *Fox News Special Report* coverage of Ukraine war started with almost all items and time spent on the war, gradually diminishing as the weeks went by to about one in four items and only one third of the time dedicated to the war.

Topics. Both *CNN Newsroom* and *Fox News Special Report* paid a lot of attention to events and developments on the battlefield while both showing a distinct absence of any attention to the justification of the war, suggesting that the Russian position was not presented (favorably). *CNN Newsroom* focused on the 'victims' (civilians, refugees, but also culture) of the Ukraine war, including heartbreaking stories regarding human tragedies for Ukrainians. Underscoring the horrors of the war, *CNN Newsroom* several times showed graphic footage. *Fox News Special Report* dealt with civilians and refugees more distant and focused less on the human loss and more on US citizens going over to help. It paid more attention to sanctions across the sample and mostly from a US perspective. The latter was, overall, a bigger focus for *Fox News Special* Report while *CNN Newsroom* was distinctly more international in scope.

Angles. An item was coded as having a particular country's angle when reference was made to a position as expressed by a government/official representative of that country while civilians' presenting their perspective was considered as non-governmental. The war reporting on *CNN Newsroom* showed a predominance of the Ukraine angle, followed by the US and the Russia angle. A large share of Other countries' angles appears in Battlefield news. Human topics on Civilians and Refugees were dominated by the Ukraine angle, next to the Non-governmental angle (i.e., civilians/refugees being given a voice) and, in the case of Refugees, Other countries angles. In *Fox News Special Report*, the US angle dominated across almost all topics, especially Sanctions, Battlefield and US strategies related items. It was followed by the Ukraine angle, mostly in relation to Battlefield and to a much lesser extent in items on Refugees, Civilians and Sanctions. The Russia angle, by contrast, appeared rarely and predominantly in the discussion of the battlefield.

Narratives. Both *CNN Newsroom* and *Fox News Special Report* focused most reporting on battlefield developments. After the initial invasion, both programs suggested a narrative of Russian forces stalling in their advance and meeting unforeseen Ukrainian resistance. *CNN Newsroom* presented narratives of Putin, more than the Russian people, as the aggressor. He was presented as an isolated, evil, possibly unstable dictator who was sometimes at odds with his top staff and population. This was contrasted with narratives about the Ukraine government and Ukrainians as heroic, resistant sufferers and victims of a surprising, unprovoked invasion. Notably there was minimal reporting from a Russian perspective or regarding peace talks. *Fox News Special Report* also presented a narrative of Ukraine as the combative victim of an invasion. However, *Fox News Special Report* gave almost equal attention to a narrative of Russia as the problem/aggressor as to a narrative criticizing President Biden and his administration for their handling of the war and sanctions ('too little too late'). For example, regarding US inflation, narratives rhetorically related to the impact of the war on fuel prices were seen as the result of Biden's unacceptable 'war on carbon' and energy policy nearly as much as Russia's invasion. This was observed across topics which in turn were used to continue this narrative as well as criticism of China.

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Country report: Brazil

Liziane Soares Guazina[14], Fernando Oliveira Paulino[15], Fernanda Vasques Ferreira[16] & Bruno Araujo[17]

TV channel and news programme

In the case of Brazil, the research team analysed the *Jornal Nacional* (JN), the traditional Brazilian TV newscast produced by Rede Globo, market leader of free TV and of the Globo Group, the major Brazilian private media conglomerate. The Globo Group is the 19th largest media conglomerate in the world, having outlets and networks in all Brazilian media markets. Historically, the Globo Group plays a key role in the Brazilian media system, which is known for its "high concentration of audience and ownership, high geographic concentration, lack of transparency, besides religious, political and economic interference" (Media Monitor Brazil, 2017).

In recent years, TV Globo has been politically aligned with supporters of Dilma Rousseff's impeachment process and the conservative government after she was overthrown. (Paulino and Guazina, 2020). After the election of Bolsonaro in 2018, however, the Globo Group became one of the main targets of criticism among far-right wing supporters of the Brazilian president.

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On air since the 1960's, *Jornal Nacional* was the first newscast to be transmitted nationwide. Even after the recent rise of social media as a source of news in Brazil, JN is considered a model of journalism for other media groups.

The JN editions are aired during prime time, from Monday to Saturday, and last around 51 minutes not including the weather forecast. All content is available in the Globoplay platform for subscribers. A couple of anchormen/anchorwomen present the newscast and the editions usually dedicate few reports to international issues compared to national issues coverage.

Story types

Unlike television news from countries closer to Russia and Ukraine, *Jornal Nacional* paid special attention to the conflict only in the first days of the war in February, as can be seen in Figure 1.

Since March, the presence of combat and its effects have been significantly reduced, with other topics gaining more visibility in the daily schedule, strongly influenced by the general elections (Presidency of the Republic, governors, senators, federal deputies and state deputies) scheduled for October 2022.

Figure 1. Percentage of war-related and other news in *Jornal Nacional* based on coverage duration on the sample days.

Topics

After analysing a ten-day sample, we identified 66 items dedicated to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. More than a half of the news was related to Civilians, Battlefield, and Sanctions (44). It called the research team's attention to the absence in the sample of the topics Disinformation (0), Nuclear hazard (0) and Justification (0).

The number of items was variable in each edition, with more stories at the beginning of the conflict (16 items on 24 February) than in the later months of the sample (only two items on 14 April).

Table 1 shows the topics in the *Jornal Nacional* by number of news items and duration of coverage in minutes. The topics Civilians (32%), followed by Sanctions (18%) and Battlefield (15%) constituted more than 60% of total news items content. Also, these first three topics accounted for 66% of the total duration of war-related content. On the other hand, EU policies and Refugees accounted for the lowest number of news items (1 news item for each one) and had the lowest durations in minutes.

Table 1. Topics by number of war-related news and their coverage time in *Jornal Nacional.*

Topic	Number of news Items	Percentage	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Battlefield	10	15%	32.0	15%
Civilians	21	32%	66.7	32%
Disinformation	0	0%	0	0%
EU policies	1	2%	3.3	2%
Justification	0	0%	0	0%
Nuclear hazard	0	0%	0	0%
Peace	5	8%	13.2	6%
Refugees	1	2%	5.2	3%
Sanctions	12	18%	38.6	19%
Security	4	6%	8.0	4%
United Nations	3	5%	10.6	5%
US policies	4	6%	12.2	6%
Other war-related	5	8%	17.6	8%
Total	66	100%	207.3	100%

Table 2 shows the topics by duration of news items on the days sample from 24 February to 14 April. It is interesting to note how the topic Civilians took up much time in the *JN*'s coverage from the beginning of the invasion until the end of the first month of the war (from 24 February to 31 March), but on the last two days of the sample (7 and 14 April) this topic was totally absent.

Table 2. Sample days by topics of war-related news in percentages of duration in *JN.*

Sample day	Battle-field	Civili-ans	Disin-form	EU policy	Justifi-cation	Nuc-lear	Peace	Refu-gees	Sanc-tions	Secu-rity	UN	US policy	Other war	Total
24 Feb	22%	26%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	14%	9%	0%	8%	18%	100%
28 Feb	17%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	31%	0%	17%	0%	12%	100%
03 Mar	9%	57%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	18%	0%	12%	0%	0%	100%
07 Mar	0%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%	19%	0%	10%	0%	3%	12%	0%	100%
10 Mar	0%	36%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	23%	14%	0%	0%	0%	14%	100%
17 Mar	0%	58%	0%	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	21%	0%	100%
24 Mar	28%	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
31 Mar	30%	22%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%	0%	0%	19%	0%	100%
07 Apr	46%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	54%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
14 Apr	54%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	46%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Sanctions and Security became the dominant topics of JN airtime. On the other hand, the topic Battlefield got 22% of the JN's airtime at the beginning of the war (24 February). This decreased over the following days, being more than 20% of duration after 24 March. Further, the Refugees news topic was only featured on 10 March, during the crisis of the mass exodus from Ukraine.

Angles

Due to the historical characteristics of Brazilian TV journalism, the international news tends to include different positions based on secondary sources and present the material with a panoramic view of the daily facts. The reporter contextualizes positions from more than one country in the same item. Most news items presented two or more angles on the days sampled. Only one news item related to Sanctions presented one angle (the story was based on a US point of view).

In general, the content edit and presentation of the facts allowed a coverage with a broader perspective, where the domestic point of view is represented but compared to other perspectives.

Table 3 shows the overall prominence of the Brazil and Other-country angles in terms of duration in *Jornal Nacional*. In fact, more than a half of the duration was dedicated to these angles and to the Non-governmental angle. In addition, the Ukraine angle (13%) received more attention than was dedicated to the Russia angle (9%).

Table 3. Angles by duration of all war-related news in *Jornal Nacional.*

Angle	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Russia	17.94	9%
Ukraine	26.12	13%
Brazil	60.62	29%
Other country	59.04	28%
Non-governmental	43.62	21%
Total	207.34	100%

Battlefield

This topic was the third in terms of the number of news items, with 10 reports. Although the reports show, in general, the different positions of Russia and Ukraine regarding the facts, the reports on this topic emphasized the destruction of cities, the despair of civilians under attack and the dynamics of mutual recriminations between Russia and Ukraine. In this sense, the difference between Putin's statements omitting the use of the word 'war' and the Russian military's offensives in the invasion of Ukrainian territory, were highlighted in the news.

The coverage of this topic was presented 35% from the Ukraine angle, 23% from the Other Country angle and 20% from the Russia angle. In this case, the news coverage focused on the attacks and statements by Russian authorities.

Civilians

This topic was the first in terms of number of news items (21). The reports on the topic emphasized the impact of the Russian attacks on the Ukrainians' daily lives, the negotiations to create humanitarian corridors for civilians to exit and the increasing number of civilians leaving their homes. In this topic, it is important to mention the work of the Brazilian photojournalist Gabriel Chain in bringing emotional testimonies of civilians fleeing the country or taking the difficult decision to stay in risk areas. In addition, one report showed the protests of Russian civilians against the war. The Non-governmental angle, expressed in dramatic testimonies of common people in Ukraine and Russia, constituted the main part of the time devoted to Civilians (52%).

Sanctions

This topic was second in terms of number of news items (12). Most of the reports showed an overview of the positions of different countries on the war, with a focus on the economic pressures from the EU and US against Russia and the impact of the sanctions on the Russian economy. The reports highlighted statements by leaders in France, the UK, Italy and the EU in the negotiations of the sanctions package and the reaction of China and Russia to the strategy of the Western countries. The presence of different global leaders in the news was expressed in terms of time duration: 59% of this topic presented the Other Country angle. In addition, Brazil's abstention from the vote on the suspension of Russia from the UN Human Rights Council by the General Assembly was emphasized.

Refugees

Only one report on this topic was found in the ten-day sample. The report chronicled the journey of Brazilian and Ukrainian families (68 people in total) repatriated to Brazil from Warsaw, Poland. The report described the dramatic experiences of adults and children leaving Ukraine under bombardment to live in another country. The footage also showed the Brazilian president welcoming the families at the airport in Brasília, the capital of Brazil. This report lasted more than five minutes and essentially offered two points of view: that of the Home country angle (60%) and that of the Non-governmental angle (40%).

Security

Security appeared in only four stories. In this topic, the stories described the disputed power relations between countries and the role of Russia in trying to change the geopolitical context dominated by the US and EU. The reports pointed out the impacts of the beginning of the war in the UN Security Council Meeting, the reaction of China to US advances in Taiwan and the threats of Russian officials against Finland and Sweden if they should join NATO, including mentions of "undesirable consequences". For this topic, the angles were distributed according to four different points of view (Russia angle with 19%; Ukraine angle with 16% of the content; Home Country angle with 24% and Other Country angle with 41%).

United Nations

The three stories on this topic reported on the UN emergency meeting to pass a vote of condemnation of Russia, Russia's boycott of the hearing at the International Court of Justice in The Hague and the Investigation of the International Criminal Court in search of evidence of war crimes committed in the conflict. This story focused particularly on the decisive influence of EU/UK leaders (France, Germany and the UK) on the UN's decisions. All three stories included the points of view of different countries. The percentage of the Other country angle was significant: 68%. In contrast, the Russia angle accounted for 9% and the Ukraine angle for 18%.

EU policies

In the ten-day sample, only one item was identified. The focus of the report was the speech by the Ukrainian president to the German parliament and his appeal to Chancellor Scholz to tear down the new 'wall' in Europe. In addition, the story noted that Scholz expressed solidarity with Ukraine, but stated that NATO would not go to war with Russia. The report further

mentioned Russia's demands for an end to the war and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's perspectives for the global economy. The report lasted for a little more than three minutes and provided four different angles (Russia angle 19%; Ukraine angle 36%, Home Country angle 11% and Other Countries angle 34%).

US policies

Jornal Nacional closely monitored President Joe Biden and US official statements. The four stories on this topic reported on the meetings and discussions of the US, NATO and other countries related to the role of the US and NATO in the conflict with emphasis on statements like "the US is doing everything to end the war; the US will defend every inch of NATO territory; China does not openly condemn the war". In addition, the reports included the announcements of President Biden's administration's intention to contain the increase in fuel prices in the USA and Biden's criticism of Putin's actions. In terms of angles, Other country angle predominated in 89% of the content, followed by the Russia angle (7%), the Ukraine angle (2%) and the Home country angle (3%).

Peace

The five news items related to the topic of Peace were connected to a) international efforts to achieve an urgent ceasefire in Ukraine and the importance of global stability, b) the plans of the Brazilian Air Force to rescue Brazilians leaving Ukraine, c) a meeting involving senior Russian and Ukrainian diplomats in Turkey, c) Protests in front of the White House calling for peace and d) attempts by the Vatican to facilitate negotiations between Russia and Ukraine. The Home country angle was predominant (49%), followed by the Other country angle (31%), the Ukraine angle (9%) and the Russia angle (7%). The Non-governmental angle was present in only 3% of the topic content.

Other war-related topics

Like the topic Peace, the Other war-related topics also appeared in five news items. The Brazilian research team classified as "Other" a story about the increase in the price of petrol and diesel oil in Brazil after the war in Ukraine and the news focused on the impacts of rising fuel prices on Brazilian families' budgets. The team also classified as "Other" a story that used infographics to show the role of Russia and Ukraine in the conflict and a report showing the Chinese government's position in relation to the war in Ukraine, noting that China did not condemn Russia's attack on Ukraine.

Two other items were classified as "Other", both connected to President Bolsonaro's modus operandi. A week after his controversial meeting with President Putin, the story showed that Brazil did not condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine and Bolsonaro was on a motorcycle and spoke only in the middle of the afternoon about Brazilians in the country. In other content, Bolsonaro insisted on a neutrality speech in the face of the Russian attack on Ukraine.

In terms of angles, the Brazil angle was present in most news items (79%), followed by the Ukraine angle (15%) and the Other country angle (6%).

The Brazilian research team did not classify content on the topics "Justification", "Nuclear hazard" and "Disinformation".

Key narratives

Table 4 identifies the key narratives and the number of items in which they appeared under each topic, with a positive, negative or neutral tone of the narratives.

Table 4: Key narratives and number of related stories in *Jornal Nacional*.

Topics and number of related news items	Key narratives and number of related stories Tone: Positive – *Pos*; Negative – *Neg*; Neutral – *Neu*
Civilians: 21	The situation of Ukrainian and Brazilian civilians in Ukraine during the war (18) *Neg* Humanitarian corridors (2) *Neg* The possible impact of the arrival of Ukrainian civilians in Brazil (1) *Neu*
Sanctions: 12	Suspension of Russia from the UN Human Rights Council by the General Assembly for human rights violations by Russian soldiers (1) *Neu* Russian billionaires face economic sanctions (2) *Neu* Exclusion of athletes from Russia and Belarus from the Winter Paralympics in China and other competitions (2) *Neu* Impact of Sanctions on the economic situation of Russia (6) *Neu* Impact of Sanctions on the European economy (Putin changes payment method for gas supplies to nations he considers hostile) (1) *Neg*
Battlefield: 10	Daily narrative on attacks, explosions and local destruction (7) *Neg* Putin's strategies for the war (2) *Neg* Situation of Ukraine under attack by Russian troops (1) *Neg*
Other war-related: 5	Increasing prices of petrol and diesel oil in Brazil (1) *Neu* Informative explanation of the threat of war in Ukraine (1) *Neu* Neutrality of Brazil (2) *Neg* The Chinese position on the war (1) *Neu*
Peace: 5	1) Negotiations (4) *Pos* 2) Brazil offers humanitarian aid (1) *Pos*
Security: 4	Russian representative's statements against Finland and Sweden (1) *Neg* Tensions caused by failure to evacuate Brazilians from Ukraine (1) *Neg* Taiwan complains about Chinese air force missions (1) *Neu* Impacts of the beginning of the war in the UN Security Council meeting (1) *Neu*
US policies: 4	US Secretary of State meets with leaders from Lithuania and Latvia (1) *Neu* President Biden's statements against President Putin (2) *Neu* President Biden announced measures to try to contain the increase in fuel prices in US (1) *Neu*

UN: 3	Investigation of crimes committed in the conflict (1) *Neu*
	Russian boycott of the hearing at the International Court of Justice (1) *Neu*
	UN holds emergency meeting to pass vote of censure on Russia (1) *Neu*
Refugees: 1	The dramatic experiences of refugees (1) *Neg*
EU policies: 1	President Zelensky's speech to the German parliament and the position of Germany on the war (1) *Neu*

In the *JN* sample, most of the news items offered at least two different and contrasting angles, with one exception. In addition, the focus on daily facts favoured a neutral tone most of the time. On the other hand, the reproduction of leaders' and official statements showed the high impact of the conflict on the global balance of power and pointed out the Russian and Chinese attempts at achieve a new multipolar world order.

Also, the civilians' testimonies described the war situation in a vivid and emotional way to the Brazilian audience. Beyond that, the Battlefield reports underlined the destructive impact of the Russian attacks and Putin's "real" strategies against Ukraine. The images of the Ukrainian cities destroyed by the Russian army negatively emphasized Russia's position in the war.

Summary

The 66 news items analysed by the Brazilian research team confirmed the historical characteristics of Brazilian journalism on international issues, using and adapting content, especially images, produced by news agencies and the insertion of content related to the conflict including positions based on secondary sources.

These characteristics contributed to a panoramic view of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, including numerous angles and the presence of many points of view in most of the news items. Most of the topics received neutral coverage, with reproductions of statements and dramatic war images. Also, most of the news items had to do with a focus on Civilians (21 news items), on Sanctions applied to Russia by the USA and the EU, and on the daily news on Battlefield.

The impacts of the reduced number of correspondents in Eastern European countries were offset by the work of special envoys, especially Gabriel Chaim, who managed to present important information based on contacts with the population of Ukraine and transcended official positions and the absence of a permanent correspondent in Ukraine.

As mentioned earlier, the main topics had a variety of angles. Most news items (79%) presented the perspective of the Brazil angle, but other angles were also found in the majority of the sample. The three main topics found (Civilians, Sanctions and Battlefield) in terms of numbers and duration of news items highlighted different angles. In the case of Civilians, more than half of the content presented the Non-governmental angle (52%). Sanctions were reported from the

Other country angle in 59% of the content. The topic Battlefield was presented somewhat more from the Ukraine perspective.

The ten-day sample had a high number of news items dedicated to the Russia-Ukraine issue in the initial months of the conflict (February and March) and a decrease in *Jornal Nacional's* attention in the last month (April) of the sample. The coverage observed did not offer foreign affairs experts' analysis or any more profound interpretation of the daily war facts.

Finally, mention should be made of the position of the Bolsonaro government, which was reluctant to condemn the attacks largely due to exchanges with Russia and the need to continue buying essential fertilizers for the agribusiness in Brazil and since the Brazilian president visited Putin days before the attack on Ukraine.

Context

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine emerged in the *Jornal Nacional* coverage as an issue with economic and human implications. The unexpected Russian attack on Ukrainian cities and the destruction of citizens' normal lives captured the news media's attention.

Despite the global attention to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, most Brazilians are more interested in domestic issues, especially the severe economic crisis and the political tensions in election year. According to a follow-up survey YouGov for Digital Report Reuters Institute for the study of journalism in 2022, around 40% of Brazilian respondents were not following it closely. The same survey pointed out that 10% of Brazilian respondents did not follow the conflict "at all", the highest percentage among the five countries researched (Germany, Poland, UK, USA, Brazil). Further, more than 50% of respondents reported actively avoiding news on the conflict during the period of the sample (from 29 March to 7 April 2022).

In addition, a survey conducted in March 2022 showed that 75% of respondents reported that Bolsonaro was right not to take sides in the conflict. Even among the supporters of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, approval for Brazil's neutrality was more than 70%. Despite this, the majority (68%) expressed unfavourable opinions of Russia (Castro, 2022).

It is worth mentioning that the scholarly public debate in Brazil tends to be critical of US positions due to the historically intrusive role over the decades of US governments in Latin American politics. Due to this, the multipolar narratives (including the Russian ones) also gain support from well-known analysts. In contrast, the mainstream media in Brazil are historically often more focused on the countries of the global North and their information flows, minimizing Latin America's local approaches (Tavares and Fernandes, 2019).

Several analysts have criticized Bolsonaro's position related to the war, pointing out the loss of opportunity to reposition the country in the global scenario and the negative impact of the controversial choice of "neutrality" (Cappomacio, 2022; Milz, 2022; BBC News Brazil, 2022). The critics of his choice appeared twice on JN, but it was not a key point of the coverage.

Also, this criticism of the USA was not to be expected, with a significant presence of US official positions. The variety of angles and actors in the news may be indicative of both the

journalistic characteristics of *Jornal Nacional* and a particular Brazilian mainstream media view of international issues.

The ambiguous position of the Brazilian government and the lack of interest on the part of the Brazilian population in the war serve to express the distance between European reality and Brazilian perceptions. After the Covid-19 pandemic, Brazilian society seems to be engrossed in its own issues of high political polarization, disinformation, political violence and economic crisis to pay too much attention to the wider world.

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Country report: India

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TV channel and news programme

India has over 900 television channels in multiple languages including state and private players. There are 392 exclusive news channels operating in India (Reuters Institute, 2021). For the present study, we selected the state-owned international channel *DD India,* which is available in more than 190 countries through satellite. *DD India* is a part of the Doordarshan network (DD), a public service broadcaster founded by the Government of India. It operates a network with 36 satellite channels, besides providing free-to-air DTH service at the national level. It telecasts news, education and entertainment programmes in all languages used in India, its viewership exceeding six billion in 2021 (Ghosh, 2022). Despite a reputation for being autonomous, DD complies with the Government in power. The news tends to favour the government of the day, most of the news being exclusively about the Government.

DD India delivers 24/7 news bulletins in English. The programme *The News* is in news bulletin format and is telecast twice during the day, at 7:30 AM and 2:30 PM. The morning bulletin aired on DD India was selected for the analysis as there are no formal news bulletins available in the evenings. *The News* is usually of 30 minutes' duration, unless it covers the live events of the Government of India, when it may extend to an hour or more. The sample was selected from the designated dates from YouTube archives. If the bulletin of a particular date was not available in YouTube, it was replaced with the next available date.

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Story types

The entire sample included 170 news items with a total duration of 403.02 minutes, of which 80 news items relating to the war accounted for 155.73 minutes. It was observed that the number of non-war news items (90) was almost equal to the number of war-related items (80). However, in terms of duration of coverage, the war-related news was only 39% of the total time. This is explained by the channel's tendency to cover primarily news on Indian political leaders and to prolong some of the bulletins from 30 minutes up to one hour.

Figure 1. Percentage of war-related and other news in *The News* based on coverage duration on the sample days.
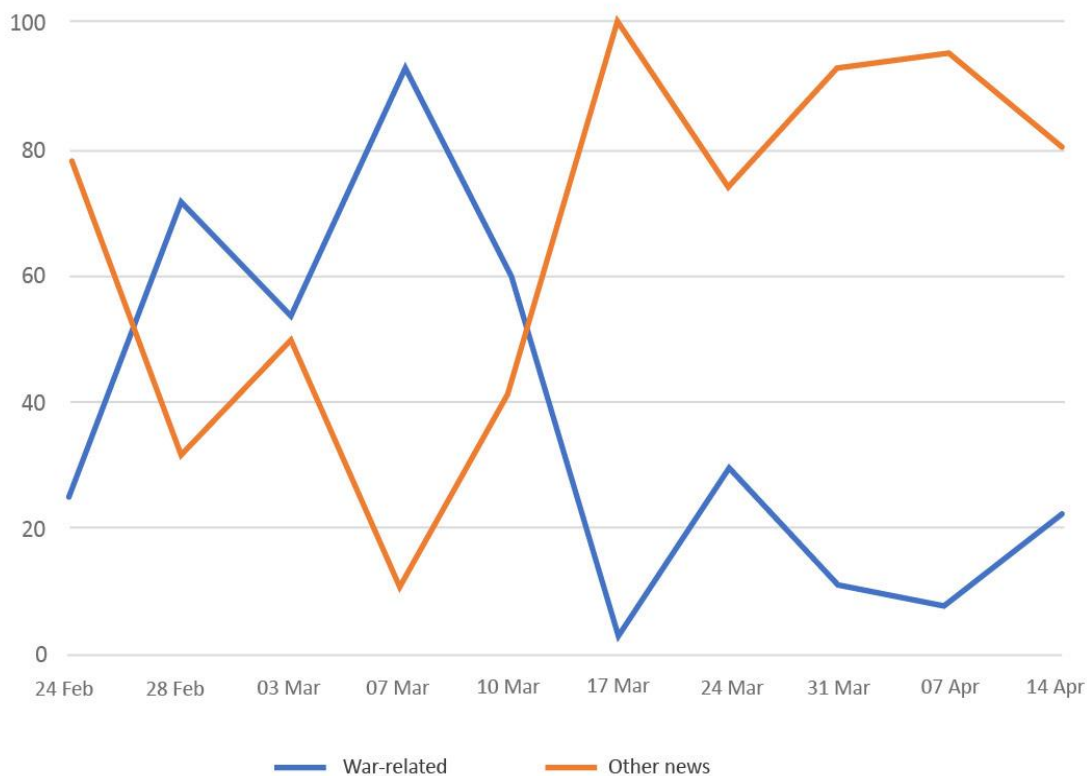

Figure 1 shows that war-related news dominated the coverage during the first half of the sample period, while in the second half war had fallen quite low in the news agenda. On the first sample day, 24 February, one has to note that war-related news was given less time than other news, while on the next four sample days the coverage was dominated by war-related news. The first day's odd situation is explained by the hour of the day: *The News* was broadcast at 8 AM in India, at which time the Russian invasion had not yet taken place. The war broke out at 04:45 Moscow time and news about it got around right after the bulletin. For this simple reason *The News* reflected the situation on the eve of the war, while in all other countries involved in this study the war was fresh breaking news on 24 February. This was also the case in the other Asian country China, where *CCTV News* was broadcast 7 PM – several hours after *The News*.

Topics

As seen in Table 1 below, *The News* covered 11 war related topics out of the total 13 topics analysed. The top three measured by number of news items are Battlefield (15%), Civilians (15%) and United Nations (15%). The top three topics measured by coverage in minutes are Civilians (48%), Refugees (13%) and Peace (9%). The three topics that received the least coverage in terms of number of news items as well as duration were Security, and Nuclear hazard at 1% and EU policies, which amounted to three percent of the number of news items and 1% of their duration. In the sample taken, there were no news items related to Disinformation and Justification.

Table 1. Topics by number of war-related news items and their coverage time in *The News*.

Topic	Number of news items	Percentage	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Battlefield	12	15%	10.89	7%
Civilians	12	15%	74.2	48%
Disinformation	0	0%	0	0%
EU policies	2	3%	1.7	1%
Justification	0	0%	0	0%
Nuclear hazard	1	1%	1.36	1%
Peace	10	13%	13.33	9%
Refugees	8	10%	20.1	13%
Sanctions	6	8%	4.8	3%
Security	1	1%	1	1%
United Nations	12	15%	12.82	8%
US policies	8	10%	10.2	7%
Other war-related	8	10%	5.33	3%
Total	80	100%	155.73	100%

Table 2 below shows, first of all, that on 24 February the actual war news had not yet reached the bulletin. Secondly, the table indicates that the topic Civilians received the highest coverage (81%) on 28 February 2022. *DD India's* coverage of civilian issues was at its peak from 28 February to 10 March, as the government launched a special operation to evacuate Indian nationals from the war zone. Once the last of the Indian students reached India, the interest in its coverage diminished to almost nil.

Table 2. Sample days by topics of duration of war-related news in percentages in *The News.*

Sample day	Battle-field	Civili-ans	Disin-form	EU policy	Justifi-cation	Nuc-lear	Peace	Refu-gees	Sanc-tions	Secu-rity	UN	US policy	Other war	Total
24 Feb	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	16%	0%	0%	18%	14%	37%	15%	100%
28 Feb	3%	81%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%	4%	0%	5%	0%	2%	100%
03 Mar	3%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	5%	0%	14%	0%	5%	100%
07 Mar	2%	39%	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%	23%	0%	0%	3%	0%	4%	100%
10 Mar	9%	20%	0%	5%	0%	0%	4%	41%	0%	0%	1%	16%	3%	100%
17 Mar	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	100%
25 Mar	42%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%	0%	39%	8%	0%	100%
30 Mar	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	56%	0%	13%	0%	13%	0%	0%	100%
07 Apr	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	36%	0%	46%	0%	0%	100%
14 Apr	32%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	23%	38%	0%	100%

The coverage of Refugees at 41% on 10 March was also high as the channel covered the Indians who were stranded and later managed to reach border cities. The coverage gave special emphasis to the religious organizations which distributed food and other essentials to Indians as well as to refugees from Ukraine. Similar to Civilians, the coverage of the refugees was totally absent after 10 March as all the Indian students had reached home by then.

The news related to US policies and the UN received more coverage on 17 March at 50% each, as it focused on the UN Security Council discussion regarding the situation in Ukraine and also the US President's announcement of military aid to Ukraine. This also shows a distinct pro-western bias in the Indian media and the Government, although not completely ignoring the Russian side.

Angles

Table 3 below shows that the majority of news stories, measured by coverage in minutes, were reported from the India angle (54%), followed by the Ukraine angle (11%) and the Russia angle (3%). The Other country angle constituted 27% of coverage time.

The analysis found that from the Russia angle, 56% of coverage time concerned news related to Peace and 19% news related to Sanctions against Russia, while from the Ukraine angle 46% of the coverage time was devoted to news related to Battlefield. From the India angle 77% of news coverage was of topics related to Civilians, particularly the Indian students stranded in Ukraine. In addition to this, 13% of news coverage time in India was devoted to Refugees and 8% of news time to stories related to Peace. In the Other Country angle, most coverage was devoted to news related to the UN (25%) and US policies (24%).

In the analysis of data on angles and coverage time, it was found that 70% of news related to Battlefield was covered from the Ukraine angle, while 87% of news on Civilians was covered from the India angle, 81% of news time on topics related to Sanctions against Russia was covered by the Other country angle.

Table 3. Angles by duration of all war-related news in *The News*

Angle	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Russia	4.8	3%
Ukraine	16.7	11%
India	84.7	54%
Other country	41.7	27%
Non-governmental	7.8	5%
Total	155.7	100%

The topics and angles represented in them are reviewed below in order of frequency.

Battlefield

The news stories related to Battlefield received significant coverage when it comes to reporting a conflict or war. In the sample taken from *The News*, there were 12 news stories related to Battlefield, which constitutes 15% of the total news stories. This segment amounts to 7% of the total coverage time on *The News*. Of news related to Battlefield, 70% was covered from the Ukraine angle.

Civilians

In war, civilians suffer most, and their safety and evacuation become paramount. There were 12 stories related to Civilians in the sample taken, i.e., 15% of the total news stories. This topic received the maximum coverage time of 74.2 minutes, which constitutes 48% of the total coverage time of *The News*. The topic received 87% of the coverage time from the India angle.

United Nations

This topic received equally many news items as Battlefield and Civilians. It was one of the topics that received the highest number of news stories at 12, which formed almost 15% of the total number of items. However, in terms of duration it was third at 12% after Refugees (20%) and Peace (13%). Of stories related to this topic 80% was from the Other country angle.

Peace

News stories related to Peace constituted 13% of the total sample (10 stories) and received 9% of the total coverage time. This topic received maximum coverage at 48% from the India angle, 28% from the Ukraine angle and 20% from the Russia angle.

Other war-related topics

There were eight stories under the category Other war-related topics comprising 10% of all stories taken together and accounting for 3% of the total duration. This category received maximum coverage 55% from the Ukraine angle.

Refugees

There were eight stories related to Refugees, which constituted 10% of all stories taken together and filled 13% of the total coverage time. This category took up 55% of the coverage time from the India angle.

US policies

Of the total news items 10% were related to US policies in connection with the war. This topic received 7% of the total coverage time. Of the total coverage time on US policies 99% was from the Other country angle.

Sanctions

There were six news stories related to Sanctions, amounting to about 3% of the coverage time. Of the total coverage time on Sanctions 81% was from the Other country angle (USA and the West), while 19% was from the Russia angle.

EU policies

There were just two stories related to European Union policies, amounting to only 1% of the total time. These were covered from the Other country angle.

Nuclear hazard

This topic also received minimal coverage with just one story in the ten-day sample. The coverage time was only 1%. This topic received 90% coverage from the Other country angle.

Security

The topic Security had minimal coverage, with only one story covered from the Other country angle.

Key narratives

The next stage of the content analysis was to identify in the war-related coverage of *The News* the more or less explicit ideas – narratives – under each topic, including their tones in a positive, negative or neutral direction with their relation to the main parties in the conflict: Russia, Ukraine, the West and Home country India, which was covered prominently.

The narratives and the number of items in which they appeared under each topic are listed in Table 4 below. The number in brackets shows how many times this particular narrative appeared in the topic.

Table 4. Key narratives and their tones in topics in *The News.*

Topics and number of related news items	Key narratives and number of related stories Tone: Positive – *Pos*; Negative – *Neg*; Neutral – *Neu*
Battlefield: 12	War updates and details of civilian casualties, damage to civilian infrastructure and military targets in Ukraine and Russia (6) *Neg to Russia* Ukrainian president reaching out to the West, seeking support (1) *Pos* Ukrainian president no longer pressing for NATO membership (1) *Neu* USA/UK announce financial and military aid package to Ukraine, US forces in Poland liaising with the Ukrainian army (3) *Pos to Ukraine, Neg to Russia* Russian Missile Cruiser damaged (1) *Neu*
Civilians: 12	India evacuates its nationals, particularly students stranded in the war zone (8) *Pos* Clarifications regarding the fake news about hostage situation of Indians in Ukraine (1) *Pos* Indian prime minister overseeing the rescue operation (1) *Pos* Indian student injured in the crossfire, airlifted (1) *Neu* Anti-war protests in Russia (1) *Neg to Russia*
United Nations: 12	UN resolutions in emergency meetings of the Security Council blaming Russia for the invasion and adopting sanctions against Russia (9) *Neg Russia, Pos Ukraine* US and its allies on sanctions against Russia and supplying weapons to Ukraine (1) *Neg to Russia and Pos to Ukraine* Situation in Ukraine and among its people who have become refugees and their conditions including food security issues (2) *Neg*
Peace: 10	Russia-Ukraine peace talks (5) *Pos* In a press conference before the Russian attack, President Zelensky vows to defend every inch of his territory (1) *Neg to Russia, Pos to Ukraine* Indian PM telephone discussion with Putin and Zelensky over rescuing stranded Indian nationals (2) *Pos* Russia declares ceasefire to allow safe passage of civilians (1) *Pos* A special event is organized in Busan in solidarity with Ukrainian people (1) *Pos*
US policies: 8	Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the repercussions on civilians (3) *Neg* US's warnings to Russia about its aggressive stance (3) *Neg* Military aid packages to Ukraine (1) *Pos to Ukraine* Negotiating with allies to help Ukraine (1) *Pos*
Other war-related: 8	Ukraine seeks support, appeals to UN and ICJ, requests EU membership, Zelensky addresses Greek parliament, IMF emergency aid to Ukraine (5) *Pos to Ukraine* ICC investigations regarding war crimes committed by Russia (1) *Neg*

	Indian prime minster speaking to Ukrainian and Russian presidents (1) *Pos*
	Animals from Kharkiv shifted to safer location (1) *Neu*
Refugees: 8	Stories of refugees and personal accounts of those fleeing Ukraine and the effect of this on neighbouring countries (7) *Neg and Pos*
	International bodies' condemnation of attacks on medical facilities (1) *Neg*
Sanctions: 6	EU, Japan and other allies want to impose sanctions on Russia (2) *Neg*
	Russia aggressive if pushed to the wall?? subjected to pressure?? warns Putin (2) *Pos for Russia*
	NATO and US want to expel Russia from G 20 (1) *Neg for Russia*
	Russia's efforts to overcome economic losses due to sanctions (1) *Pos for Russia*
EU policies: 2	Russia-Ukraine war to dominate in EU Versailles summit. (1) *Neu*
	The EU parliament votes to suspend the 'Golden Passport' scheme granting EU passports for Russians who have significantly invested in EU countries (1) *Neg to Russia*
Nuclear hazard: 1	Putin orders his military to put Russia's veteran forces – reference to units with nuclear arms – on high alert (1) *Pos to Russia, Neg to Ukraine*
Security: 1	Cyber-attack on Ukrainian embassy in USA for which Russia is blamed. (1) *Neg*

The following section reviews how these key narratives as well as the main angles were presented in each of the 13 topics (in the above order).

Battlefield

Five major narratives emerged under this topic including 1) war updates from the Ukraine angle viz. civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure in Ukraine; 2) the Ukrainian president appealing to the USA and EU for support; 3) major financial and military aid packages announced by the USA and UK in an effort to bail out Ukraine; 4) Ukraine declared that it no longer wanted to join NATO and lastly 5) a Russian missile cruiser damaged in the war. Most stories related to Battlefield were from the Ukraine angle and the narrative was markedly negative towards Russia; also, an indirect reference portraying Russia as the aggressor and Ukraine as the victim.

The news reports included visuals of war-ravaged Ukrainian cities, destruction of people's homes and details of civilian casualties. The narrative elaborated on the humanitarian crisis; the damage caused by mortar shelling and airstrikes against non-military targets was evident in *The News* coverage of the war. The news stories on Battlefield also included some of the visuals released by the Ukrainian army to substantiate its claim that Russia was targeting its civilians and public infrastructure, in particular the bombing of a children's and maternity hospital in Mariupol. It also featured President Volodymyr Zelensky's appeal for help from NATO allies and requests for military aid.

One story was reported from the Russia angle concerning the missile cruiser *Moskva,* the flagship of Russia's Black Sea fleet that sank in the Black Sea after sustaining damage during the military operation in Ukraine.

Three stories were reported from the Other Country angle. These favoured the USA and the UK. The news covered American President Joe Biden pledging $2 billion in aid and another $2 billion in armaments and other investments in Ukraine: the British prime minister's announcements in a press conference during the G7 summit meeting promising 6,000 additional missiles and other aid to Ukraine. Another story featured a Pentagon spokesperson claiming that the American troops stationed in Poland were in touch with Ukrainian forces and were supplying them with weapons, underlining the role played by Americans in the conflict.

Despite the guarded neutrality in the reporting of *The News*, the narrative shifted towards the pro-West and pro-Ukraine angle. *The News'* coverage of the battlefield included information sourced from news agencies, and media releases by Ukraine, Russia and the USA. It did not include any exclusive coverage as *The News* did not dispatch its own reporters to Ukraine. The reports had visuals with a background voice-over giving details of the happenings.

It is to be noted that out of the total time devoted to battlefield related news, 70% was from the Ukraine angle.

Civilians

The media frame was built from the Indian perspective, focusing on the rescue of Indians stranded in Ukraine. Of stories on the Civilians topic, 87% were reported from the Indian perspective. The tone was mostly positive; there were eight stories enumerating the Government of India's efforts to bring Indian students home, while the rest of the narrative included how the Indian prime minister was monitoring the situation and accounts by the Ministry of External Affairs regarding the situation in Ukraine. One story about a special flight repatriating Indian students from Ukraine received almost 40 minutes of coverage. There was one story on anti-war protests in St. Petersburg which was reported in a negative tone towards the Russian government. The channel provided comprehensive coverage of the civilians stranded in the war zone and their rescue and rehabilitation led by the Government of India. Ukraine is a major destination for international students, almost a quarter of whom are Indians. During the initial weeks, following Russia's attack on Ukraine, the focus of the Indian government was on the safe evacuation of its nationals. As part of this operation, the Government of India arranged special flights to bring back the hundreds of students who had crossed over to Ukraine's neighbouring countries like Romania, Poland and Slovakia etc.

The Indian prime minister along with his cabinet ministers personally monitored the situation in Ukraine. The PM was in constant touch with the Russian and Ukrainian presidents to establish a humanitarian corridor for the safe evacuation of Indian nationals. *DD India* being a state-owned broadcaster, the coverage was pro-government as a lot of time was devoted to applauding their achievements. There was one story of an Indian student who sustained gunshot wounds while fleeing Ukraine and how the Indian embassy in Poland had safely evacuated him and transferred him into an ambulance provided by the Polish Red Cross. One story which received more coverage was the journey to Poland by the Indian Union minister V.K Singh specifically to co-ordinate efforts to safely repatriate Indian students who had fled

to Poland from Ukraine. *DD India's* reporters were present at the Polish border and provided exclusive coverage of the events there.

It is pertinent to note that 77% of the total coverage from the India angle included stories related to Civilians. There were no civilian stories from the Ukraine and Russia angles. There was a brief news report about the anti-war protests in Russia noting that 8,000 demonstrators/protesters were arrested in St. Petersburg.

United Nations

Three main narratives emerged under the topic United Nations. The majority of the stories (9) were about the UN resolutions against Russia condemning Russia's action, while one story was about the USA and its allies making similar statements on the sidelines of the UN Security Council meetings. The third narrative that emerged was of the UN and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s concern regarding food shortages and the ripple effects of the war internationally.

This topic included all news reports related to the UN and its various arms like the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) making statements regarding the effects of the continuing war on various fields. For instance, the World Food Programme warned of food shortages across the world as Ukraine was the "breadbasket" of the world; the UNGA voted on suspending Russia from the Human Rights Council; and the International Court of Justice ordered Russia to immediately suspend military operations. The coverage had an anti-Russia tone as it described the atrocities committed in Ukraine. The UN along with the USA warned that Russia would be isolated and forced to retract from its position on Ukraine as sanctions against it were being imposed. However, the Russians also issued a counter warning of the effect on bilateral issues if the vote went against it. Some countries, including India, which considers Russia a long-time ally, abstained from voting while others, like China and Pakistan, voted against the sanctions, indicating a clear divide or at least no near total isolation of Russia as the USA hoped. The statement by Indian officials in the UN on abstaining from voting against Russian sanctions was televised prominently as justification was provided for this abstention. This had a routine tone in the reporting, as the report listed other countries along with India that either abstained or voted against the sanctions.

Peace

Five different dominant narratives were observed in this category. Five of the stories were about the rounds of peace talks between the two countries although little progress was made in terms of outcome. One story was about the Ukrainian President Zelensky, who appeared aggressive, blaming Russia and vowing to safeguard his country against all odds, while another story was of the peace rally organized in Busan in support of Ukraine. In terms of numbers, out of a total of ten stories, three to four were about the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi negotiating for the safe passage of the Indians stuck in Ukraine. Even in the story where Russia declared a ceasefire to allow civilians safe passage, there was news of the home country with the prime minister welcoming Russia's decision. The news of the prime minister's telephone conversations with both leaders took almost 50% of the duration, at 6.5 minutes (50%) out of

a total of 13.3 minutes. The political narrative of the ruling party in the local media, however, was to project India as a superpower and Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a strongman acting as an arbitrator between the two warring parties. The rest of the stories gave equal time to Russia and Ukraine. The format of the news channel is to have a voice-over reporting the story with visuals. A sound byte is given at the end of the narrative. The sound bytes were about the press conferences held by the spokespersons of Russia and Ukraine being willing to commence peace talks. Although the content of the narrative is peace, it clearly indicates the lack of trust on both sides, as the Russian side blamed the Ukrainian authorities for failures in peace talks while President Zelensky stated in the news bulletin of 30 March 2022 that "his people were not so naïve as to trust the representatives of a state that continues to fight for their destruction".

US policies

Four narratives emerged on the US policies with negative tone for Russia and an obvious positive and supportive tone for Ukraine. Of these, three were on the issue of the 'invasion' of Ukraine by Russia with the USA voicing concern and condemning Russia's action. It was more about the diplomatic efforts of the USA over the state of refugees crossing over to Poland and other neighbouring countries. The second narrative was a direct warning by the USA to Russia accusing Russia of genocide and calling for Putin to be tried for war crimes. There was a clear indication of the support Ukraine enjoyed with the USA in this narrative. Armaments packages promised to Ukraine was the third narrative emerging in this category. In the two stories which were of maximum duration of two minutes and 2.2 minutes respectively, the news was of press conferences by US authorities and was delivered as a byte. According to the US spokesperson, "Moscow has reached out to some of the most repressive autocratic undemocratic governments in this hemisphere. Russians are making statements that they are committed to a diplomatic path while their actions suggest exactly the opposite." Such statements condemning the Russian attitude sum up the tone of this topic. At the same time, there was open support for Ukrainians as massive aid in terms of food, weapons etc. was being sent to Ukraine. There was an absence of any obvious bias for or against the warring countries by the Indian news channel, as they gave a simple straight narration with sound bytes from both sides. As the section only concerned US policies, it naturally had a pro US bias.

Other war-related topics

We can observe four key narratives under this topic, the tone of the reporting being mostly positive towards Ukraine. The first narrative concerns how Ukraine was lobbying for support including appeals to the UN, ICJ, IMF and seeking to join the European Union. The story about the International Criminal Court investigations into possible war crimes committed by Russia formed the second narrative.

Most of the news stories were reports without any perspective expressed by *The News* (such as lists of events and happenings). The majority of these reports (6 stories) seemed to portray Ukraine from a favourable angle and Russia from a negative angle, in spite of some attempts to balance and present them in a neutral tone.

One of the news items was about Ukraine seeking UN help to stop Russian aggression. The anchor also presented the Russian perspective stating that Russia said *it could not ignore the*

blatant genocide of Russian speakers in eastern Ukraine. The story also included a clip of the press conference addressed by a Ukrainian spokesperson. The entire footage (0.8 mins) was clearly from the Ukraine angle.

The second story was also completely from the Ukraine angle as it reported Ukraine's appeal against Russia to the International Court of Justice, while the third story reported on Ukraine's request for fast-track processing of its application for European Union membership. Another news report focused on the address by the Ukrainian president seeking support in the Greek parliament; the story also mentioned his earlier addresses to the US Congress and the parliaments of France, Germany, Italy and Japan to rally support for his country.

Two stories were reported from the Other Country angle, including the IMF approving $1.4 million emergency funding for Ukraine to help cover urgent spending while the other story reported on the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation into possible war crimes and genocide committed by Russia after several countries had submitted petitions. Both these stories indicated the international community's support for Ukraine and negative portrayal of Russia.

The only news report from the India angle was about the Indian PM speaking to the Russian and Ukrainian presidents and expressing his concern about the crisis. Of stories in the Other Country category 55% were reported from the Ukraine angle.

Refugees

The majority of the stories (7) had video footage of Ukrainian refugees walking, or waiting for transportation with children, women and men waiting near various borders to move out of Ukraine. In the usual style of the channel, the voice-over gave some statistics interspersed with the humanitarian angle of the suffering refugees but no reporting on the ground. It was only in one story that there was the UN Secretary General's sound byte, giving the statistics of the refugees who had died or had to flee, and the level of destruction that was taking place. There were stories of those who returned safely giving accounts of how they were taken care of, which is why this category had both positive and negative narratives. Similarly, in the narrative on the condemnation by international bodies of attacks on healthcare facilities, it showed the Russians' indiscriminate attacks on civilians. This also placed more emphasis on the work by the Indian spiritual organizations in taking care of refugees who crossed the border.

The surprising part is that the Home country India angle in terms of duration was 55% of the total time, as 11 minutes out of a total 20 minutes were from the India angle although there were no Indian refugees. Of the 11 minutes with the India angle, visuals of the Indian spiritual organizations like Art of Living and ISKCON volunteers offering food and support to the refugees who crossed the border was of almost eight minutes' duration. In another story, three minutes were devoted to Indians and other refugees who crossed the border at Budapest and were fed Indian cuisine.

Sanctions

Four main narratives emerged in this category. As the category was Sanctions, it included three stories that were negative in tone about Russia. NATO, the USA, the EU, Japan and other allies were united in voicing their opinions on imposing sanctions against Russia, seen as the

perpetrator of the invasion. Despite the dominant narrative being one of imposing sanctions, which was almost 80% of the duration, there were three stories (20%) that also showed Russia's reactions to these sanctions.

Almost the entire coverage (80%) was about economic sanctions imposed on Russia, the International Olympic Association deciding to ban Russian athletes from participating under the Russian flag and the USA and NATO together warning Russia about sanctions if the war did not cease. However, around 20% of the duration also covered the Russia angle. Russia tried to overcome the economic sanctions imposed by offering to pay back the dollar bonds in rubles while in another item the Russian president warned that any country voting to expel Russia from the Human Rights Council or abstaining in a vote, would be viewed as unfriendly, with consequences for bilateral ties. This direct threat reflected Russia's aggressive stance and shows that, despite the USA's efforts to rally the rest of the world on its side, Russia was relentless. In the same story, the USA warned China against supporting Russia. The imposition of visuals of Vladimir Putin throughout the narration even though the narrative shifts midway to the US angle, with the US spokesperson addressing a press conference about the sanctions against Russia and its warning to China, gave the story a slight Russian bias.

EU policies

Only two stories on European Union policies constituted just 1% of the total broadcasting time. The key narratives concerned the EU summit at Versailles, where the Ukraine situation, including the refugee crisis, was discussed. The second narrative was on the EU parliament that had voted overwhelmingly to suspend the 'Golden Passport' scheme – a scheme allowing EU passports to be granted to Russians who had invested significantly in EU countries. '

Nuclear hazard

There was only one narrative which was favourable to Russia. The news report, without giving any background reference, quoted the Russian president ordering his military command to put Russia's veteran forces – a reference to units including nuclear arms – on high alert citing aggressive statements by NATO leaders and economic sanctions against Russia. The report also mentioned the strong condemnation by the USA and UK.

The visuals showed the Russian President Vladimir Putin with no sound byte. The narrative included a single sentence on Putin's intent, while the UK prime minister had a long byte against Russia. The news report devoted more time to the reactions of USA and UK condemning Russia for reckless behaviour and less time to the Russian account.

Security

There was only one story of one minute's duration on Security, which also reflected the lack of interest on the part of India in such issues that were of minimum concern. The main story was about Ukrainian cyber security issues as the websites of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry and the state security service were down. This seemed to have happened on US territory, as the statement came from the USA, assuming that the attack was from Russia as it seemed "consistent with the type of activity that Russia would carry out in a bid to destabilize Ukraine". The implication was enforced through the sound byte of the US representative, which formed the entire story. A pro US bias was obvious in this story.

Summary

The following conclusions could be drawn from the analysis of the stories:

- *DD News*, the Indian public broadcaster prioritized the Home Country with maximum coverage given to the India angle, even though India was never a dominant player in the entire conflict unlike the USA, UK or the UN. It was also clear that the Ukraine angle in stories, in terms of duration, was greater than the Russia angle.

- The bias in the coverage towards the Home Country under the Civilians category was overwhelming as the amount of time and detailed narration in the stories involving the Indian students who were 'rescued' by the Indian Government indicated. Apart from the press conference, the news highlighted the cabinet ministers dispatched to various border countries to bring the Indian students home. It was the only time when a correspondent was present to provide live details of the Ministry of External Affairs and the ministers' efforts to repatriate the stranded students. This news dominated the Indian media for the first few weeks until all the students safely exited Ukraine, after which it was totally absent. In addition, there was almost an hour of a press conference by the Ministry of External Affairs that provided details of the rescue operations in one of the news bulletins.

- Even in topics with no Indian involvement, like Refugees, the India angle took up over 50% of the total time, with coverage to the Indian spiritual organizations that helped the refugees. There were typical visuals of the long line of Indian students trying to reach the nearest border. The Indian Government declared that they could not help students who were inside Ukraine, and they had to fend for themselves and reach the nearest border.

- The role of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was accentuated as the media presented him as the sole leader capable of bringing both sides to the negotiating table, while, in reality, the negotiation was clearly to evacuate the Indian students from the war zone. The news of Prime Minister Modi talking to President Putin and President Zelensky clearly indicated that India was equidistant from both the warring parties. Russia's proximity to India was evident as President Putin agreed to a ceasefire to enable all refugees to leave Ukraine. This helped the stranded Indian students. The announcement of the ceasefire after the telephone conversation demonstrated to the people of India Modi's global influence.

- The relatively longer time devoted to the Ukraine angle (11%) over the Russian angle (3%) was for several reasons, although traditionally Russia is regarded as a close ally of India. The coverage of Russia was limited when compared to Ukraine as the scene of the action was in Ukraine and the coverage of refugees leaving Ukraine, the bombing and President Zelensky's addresses to various fora had prominent coverage. The support from the West and the UN added to the overall coverage of Ukraine. Further, the *DD India* channel was dependent for news stories on Western News Agencies as there were no correspondents at the site of action, which led to skewed coverage.

- Relatively speaking, although the Russia angle did not get as much coverage as the Ukraine angle, there were efforts to balance some of the stories. Sound bytes from the

Russian spokespersons as a counter to the US, UN and Ukrainian allegations and President Putin's rejoinders were covered through the wire agencies reports. There were no efforts to obtain any live coverage from the Russian side as no correspondent was stationed in Russia. Nor was there any coverage of the Russian diplomats in India, which leaves the DD coverage a very moderate affair – one of the prime reasons for the Indian apathy towards the public broadcaster.

- The news of the efforts and statements by the United Nations commanded sizeable coverage. India had not openly taken sides as it only abstained from voting against Russia in the UN but did not openly vote against the sanctions as China did. India chose to appear impartial in its diplomatic endeavour. The time period of the study was when there was ample activity by the UN to have some kind of control over the conflict. India's ambition to become a permanent member in the UN Security Council (UNSC) is another reason for the prominent coverage given to the UN. It is currently a non-permanent member of the UNSC.

- A large part of the news from the West was in the context of its negotiations with the UN in terms of sanctions, and condemnation. In all, it was no surprise that the Western viewpoint was the dominant position taken by the channel. Indian interests, however, were above all these.

Context

Historically, India has always maintained guarded neutrality during international conflicts. India was a founding member of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1956, which now comprises 120 member countries. The NAM, the second biggest global alliance after the United Nations, was conceptualized as an alternative to power politics of the Cold War era, a neutral forum that acts as a counterbalance to the bi-polar geopolitics. The collapse of the Soviet bloc, the changing world order, coupled with India's shift from a socialist based mixed economy to the era of economic liberalization has diminished the relevance of the NAM. However, India continues to uphold and cherish the democratic values of respect for other sovereign nations, non-invasion of other country's territory and peaceful coexistence.

Over the decades, Indian foreign policy has traversed from the principle of Non-Alignment to Multi-alignment (Haidar, 2022a). Multilateral partnerships and participation in international fora like the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), the Shanghai Corporation Organization (SCO) and BRICS demonstrate India' s ambitious new foreign policy, which engages with countries like the United States, Japan and Australia to pursue economic interests, security and counter terrorism, etc.

Despite the policy of non-alignment, India and Russia have always shared a special relationship which has evolved since the Cold War era when the Soviet Union played a significant role in empowering a newly independent India by strengthening its defence establishment with much needed arms sales and boosted the Indian economy with financial aid and technology transfer to India's public sector undertakings (Basu, 2022). Most importantly, the Indo-Soviet partnership provided necessary checks on the increasing alliances between the United States, Pakistan and China. The changing world order after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the

growing partnership between Russia and China and the intensification of India's ties with the United States has altered the geopolitical situation. Today, India has strategic partnership with Russians and at the same time, has over the years built an affable relationship with the Americans (Haidar, 2022b). India has been a long-standing partner with both Moscow and Washington in the areas of military technology, civil nuclear energy, space projects, counter terrorism etc. This balancing act was put to the test in the aftermath of Russia's attack on Ukraine (Malhotra, 2022).

The Ukraine-Russia conflict has emerged as a major global crisis in recent times. The international community, except for a few countries like China and Belarus, have openly condemned the attack by Russia on a sovereign nation. India is steadfast in its condemnation of civilian killings while not taking an explicit stand on the Russian invasion. The official statements released by the Indian Government maintain that the 'conflict needs to be resolved peacefully through dialogue'. However, India continues to abstain in all United Nations votes that criticize Russia's actions in Ukraine, including the bombing of civilians and the annexation of occupied territories (Verma & Gupta, 2022). The European Union and United States have imposed sanctions and trade embargoes to punish Russia for its aggression, However, this has not deterred India from importing crude oil from Russia at cheaper rates; in a way negating the effect of sanctions on Russia.

In the initial months of the conflict, India's stand of remaining impartial was seen to be at odds with the West's insistence on having a united global response against Moscow. However, in recent months, the dynamics has arrived at a position where the world recognizes India's neutrality and the considerable influence it holds over Russia in steering towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has had several conversations with the Russian President Vladimir Putin over the last nine months of the war. The two leaders met face to face in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in September on the side-lines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit. The Indian PM expressed his concern regarding the war in a remark 'today's era is not of war', showing for the first time India's concern about Russia's attack on Ukraine (Gettleman & Mashall, 2022). However, when Russia announced the annexation of the four Ukrainian regions in October, India abstained from voting against Russia in the UN resolution condemning the annexation. As tensions escalated between the two countries in recent months, the Indian PM Narendra Modi proactively reached out to the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and expressed his concerns about the endangerment of nuclear facilities and stressed the need for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. He also reiterated India's readiness to contribute towards efforts for peace. India continues to be overtly cautious in its diplomatic interactions, closely monitoring the situation while trying to protect its economic and security interests in an era of uncertainty and under the threat of nuclear warfare.

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Country report: South Africa

Musawenkosi Ndlovu[20]

TV channel and news programme

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) is the country's public service broadcaster and the largest transmitter of audio-visual news content in (South) Africa, through radio, TV and online digital platforms. The SABC has six nationwide TV channels. Three of these, *SABC1*, *SABC2* and *SABC3,* are free-to-air and largely entertainment and education-oriented, but importantly, also legally mandated to also carry conventional news bulletins. The fourth channel is a relatively new sports only channel and the fifth, established at the beginning of 2023 is a 24-hour news channel in indigenous South African languages, the first on the African continent, where 24-hour news broadcasting is synonymous with English, French and Portuguese languages. The sixth channel is a satellite, subscription-based, and 24-hours news channel called *SABC News*.

All these news platforms receive and transmit news from the *SABC News*: a national news department (with the same name as the SABC's news channel), which collects, produces and distributes local, national, regional (Africa) and global news for all the SABC channels, including the growing online/digital news platforms. In addition to TV channels, the news department also serves SABC's 19 radio channels, most of which broadcast in South Africa's eleven official languages.

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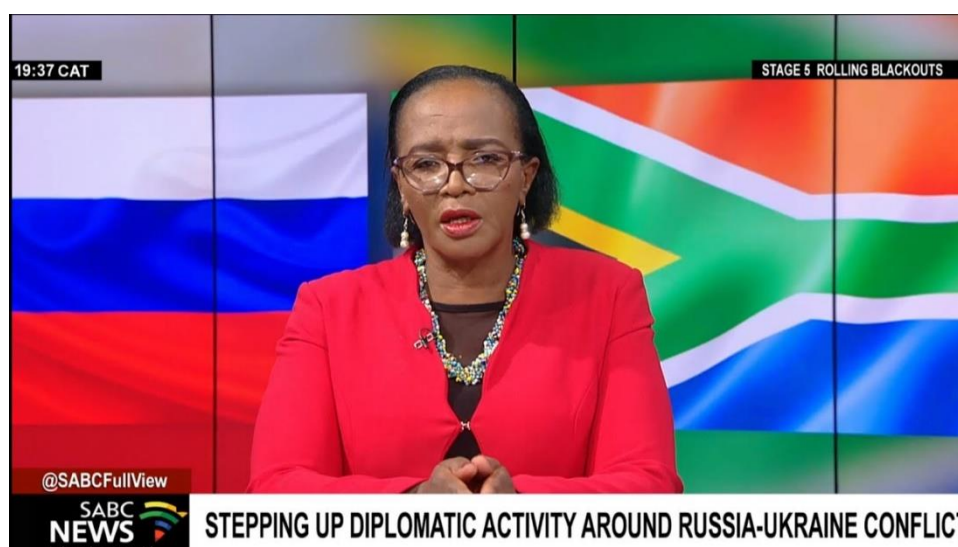
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The Russia-Ukraine war coverage analysed in this country report is drawn from the *SABC News*. This 24-hour news channel delivers local and global news updates through various technological platforms. It is, first, carried on channel 404 by DStv, Sub-Saharan Africa's dominant direct broadcast satellite service. This association allows *SABC News* to reach over fifty (50) countries in Africa. Second, *SABC News* channel integrates digital multi-media platforms into its broadcasting, something that enables it to have a global reach.

Under the 24-hour *SABC News* there are various programmes which air throughout the day. *Morning Live* (06:00) is South Africa's leading news and current affairs morning show. *The Agenda* (09:00) is a news and current affairs show. *On Point* (12:00) is a business news bulletin with interviews and insights from around the world. *SA Today* (15:00) brings the latest news and current affairs issues from around South Africa and the world. *Full View* (17:00) "breaking news happens throughout the day; we wrap it all together to bring you the #FullView of what's happening in your world". *The Watchdog* (20:00) calls itself a hard-hitting news and current affairs show. *The Globe* (21:00) moves beyond the country's borders and offers an in-depth look at global news through a network of international correspondents.

Depending on how the news stories of the day develop, these news programmes present almost the same news content, all produced by the SABC news department. Thus Russia-Ukraine war stories were the same across SABC TV channels, just presented in different news programmes at different times.

For this study, the SABC downloaded its archived Russia-Ukraine war news stories as they were presented on the sample days, on different news bulletins. Most but not all stories were included in the *Full View* bulletin, which is why it is not listed here as the leading bulletin as in the other countries of this study. Accordingly, the object of this country report is not a single news programme but a whole channel.

Topics

Table 1 below gives the figures of the number of war-related news items and their accumulated duration on the ten sample days for the 13 topics included in this study. The total number of items discovered in the *SABC News Channel* was 100 and their total duration was over 153 minutes.

The figures show that *SABC News* covered all the topics. Of these, the top five, measured by number of news items, were Security (14%), Peace (14%), Other war-related stories (12%), United Nations (11%) and Civilians (11%). The top five topics, in terms of duration by minutes, were Security (18%), Refugees (15%), United Nations (14%), Civilians (14%), and Peace (12%).

Table 1. Topics by number of war-related news items and coverage duration in minutes on *SABC News Channel.*

Topics	Number of news items	Percentage	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Battlefield	4	4%	3	2%
Civilians	11	11%	21	14%
Disinformation	2	2%	2	1%
EU policies	2	2%	2	1%
Justification	7	7%	6	4%
Nuclear hazard	4	4%	4	3%
Peace	14	14%	19	12%
Refugees	6	6%	23	15%
Sanctions	8	8%	8.5	6%
Security	14	14%	27.4	18%
United Nations	11	11%	22	14%
US policies	5	5%	3	2%
Other war-related	12	12%	12.49	8%
Total	100	100%	153.39	100%

Table 2 below lists the duration of *SABC News* items on each sample day from 24 February to 14 April.

On 24 February, the first day of Russia's invasion, the coverage on *SABC News* was dominated by the Sanctions topic (21%). It was covered on only the first three and the last of the ten sample days but not at all on the other sample days. The second leading topic on 24 February was Justification, which was subsequently to be sparsely addressed.

On 28 February the Nuclear hazard topic dominated (26%), matched by Other war-related topic. Interestingly, although Other war-related topic was later to occupy a central space in the news treatment, Nuclear hazard was to henceforth feature only peripherally, on 24 March at 4%.

On 3 March the Battlefield topic dominated. Having been covered already on 24 February (4%), it was never covered on other days after that, making it, in the end, the third least frequently covered topic.

On 7 March the topic of Refugees was the leading one. Not only was it covered substantially (69%), but it was also reported on six of the ten sample days. To this extent, the issue of refugees received regular and substantial attention from SABC, as will be shown below.

Table 2. Sample days by topics of duration of war-related news in percentages on *SABC News Channel.*

Sample day	Battle-field	Civili-ans	Disin-form	EU policy	Justifi-cation	Nuc-lear	Peace	Refu-gees	Sanc-tions	Secu-rity	UN	US policy	Other war	Total
24 Feb	4%	0%	0%	9%	17%	0%	13%	0%	21%	10%	11%	4%	11%	100%
28 Feb	0%	9%	9%	0%	0%	26%	9%	0%	4%	0%	9%	9%	26%	100%
03 Mar	27%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	13%	13%	0%	7%	0%	13%	100%
07 Mar	0%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%	15%	69%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
10 Mar	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
17 Mar	0%	20%	7%	0%	7%	0%	13%	7%	0%	13%	7%	7%	20%	100%
24 Mar	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	4%	0%	18%	0%	71%	4%	0%	0%	100%
31 Mar	0%	36%	0%	0%	0%	0%	36%	14%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%	100%
07 Apr	0%	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	21%	0%	0%	58%	0%	0%	100%
14 Apr	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	38%	0%	15%	23%	0%	0%	23%	100%

The Civilians topic was the only war-related topic covered on its own (100%) on 10 March. In addition, it was covered less on six of the ten sample days. Apart from covering civilians in-depth and regularly, this was one of the leading topics on 17 March (20%) and 31 March (36%). Matching the Civilians topic on 17 March was the topic of Other war-related stories.

The Security topic received serious attention on 24 March. Although it was reported in detail (71%) on this day, it was covered on four of the ten sample days. This topic had the most news items on the channel.

The Peace topic was one of the two dominant topics, along with Civilians, on 31 March, amounting to 36%. This topic once again dominated on the last sample day 14 April (38%). It was covered on seven of the ten sample days.

The UN topic, although mentioned regularly, on seven of the ten sample days, dominated only on 7 April (58%).

The EU policies featured only on the first day of the invasion and not prominently (9% of time).

The US policies were reported on three of the ten days and with quite small shares of time (49% of time).

The Disinformation topic appeared only on two of the sample days and with fairly low attention (7–9% of time).

The Other war-related news topic dominated on 28 February and 17 March. It was present in half of the sample days.

Angles

Table 3 shows the angles represented by the coverage on *SABC News* measured by the time devoted to the five angles applied in this study.

Table 3. Angles by duration of all war-related news on *SABC News Channel*.

Angle	Duration in minutes	Percentage
Russia	8	5%
Ukraine	6	4%
South Africa	72	47%
Other country	65	43%
Non-governmental	2	1%
Total	153.39	100%

Table 3 reveals that most of the war-related stories on *SABC News* in the sample period were covered from the Home country South African angle (47%), followed by Other country angle (43%). The Russia angle was 5% – 1% above Ukraine. Only 1% of stories were covered from the Non-governmental angle.

The topics and angles represented in them are reviewed below in the order of frequency.

Security

Fourteen news items constituted the Security topic. They had the longest duration of 27.4 in minutes and accounted for 18% of the total news coverage in the period under review. The topic was covered on four of the ten days of the sample period. Crucially, when it was focused for some days, as was the case on 24 March 2022, the Security topic was covered in greater detail (71%) and covered largely from the South African angle (74%).

Peace

This topic had an equal number of news items as Security, accounting for 14%. The combined duration of these was 19 minutes, accounting for 12% of the total duration of all news items studied. Peace was covered on seven of the ten days of the sampling period. The Peace topic was covered mostly from the South African angle (87%).

Other war-related topics

Twelve news items came under the Other war-related topic, accounting for 12% of the number of news items. Combined, their duration accounted for 8% of the total coverage. The Other topic appeared on five of the ten sample days, presented largely from the South African angle (53%).

United Nations

The UN topic featured prominently on the *SABC News* coverage of the war. There were 11 UN-related news items in the sample period, 11% of all stories. The UN-related news items had one of the longest duration coverages (14%). The UN topic was covered mostly from the Other country angle (91%).

Civilians

The topic of Civilians was crucial to the *SABC News* treatment of the war. It had 11 news items (11% of all) and it had the fourth longest coverage duration of 21 minutes, after Security, Refugees and the UN, accounting, as such, for 14% of the total duration of news items. The Civilians topic was covered largely from the Other country angle (52%) and then from the South Africa angle (40%).

Sanctions

Eight news items constituted the Sanctions topic in the ten-day sample period (8% of all). Their combined duration accounted for 6% of the total time. Half of this topic was reported from the Other country angle, effectively from the perspective of Western institutions and countries. One fourth was covered from the Russian angle and slightly less from the South African angle.

Justification

Seven news items addressed the Justification topic (7% of all). These were reported on three of the ten days of the sample period. The duration was six minutes, accounting for 4 % of the total time. Half of the stories under this topic were reported from the Russian angle, one fourth from the South African angle and the rest from the Other country angle.

Refugees

Six items focused on the Refugees topic (6% of all). Of these stories two thirds were reported from the Other country angle and the UN angle. These stories, although few in number, were reported in greater depth, with a combined duration of 15%. One third was reported from the South African angle.

US policies

Five items were on US policies in relation to the war (5% of all). They were three minutes long in duration, accounting for 2% of the total coverage. All of these stories were reported from the Other country (US) angle.

Nuclear hazard

The nuclear hazard topic had four news items (4% of all). They had a duration of four minutes and accounted for 3% of total coverage. The topic was presented mostly from the South African angle and marginally from the Other country angle.

Battlefield

Four news items throughout the ten-day sample period were about the Battlefield topic (4% of all). They had a combined duration of three minutes and accounted for 2% of news coverage time. Two thirds were from the South African angle and one third from the Ukraine angle.

Disinformation

There were only two news items on Disinformation topic (2% of all). They were two minutes in duration, accounting for 1% of the coverage. Both were from the South African angle.

EU Policies

There were only two news items on the EU policies (2% of all). Their combined duration was two minutes, which was 1% of the overall duration of all news items. Both were reported from the Other country angle.

Key narratives

Like other countries, South Africa also identified specific narratives in the news stories, including their tones in a positive, negative or neutral direction relating to the main parties to the conflict: Russia, Ukraine and the West.

Table 4 lists the key narratives identified under each topic (topics in order of frequency). The number of times each narrative appeared in the topic is shown in brackets and the tone of the narrative indicated by the three orientations.

Table 4. Key narratives and their tones in topics in *SABC News*.

Topics and number of related news items	Key narratives (and number of related stories) Tone: Positive – *Pos*; Negative – *Neg*; Neutral – *Neu*
Security: 14	Security of other Eastern European countries (1) *Neg* NATO security preparations (4) *Neu* Ukraine's insecurity (2) *Neu* UN's reaction to Russia's security threats (3) *Neu* Africa will face food insecurity and economic hardship because of the war (1) *Neg* Anxiety about what Russia or diplomats would do with nuclear weapons if pushed to the wall (1) *Neg* New developments regarding Russia using chemical or biological weapons (1) *Neg* Widespread condemnation of Russia's possible use of chemical weapons (1) *Neg*
Peace: 14	Different countries/organisations calling for peace/diplomacy (6) *Pos* Talks between Russia and Ukraine (8) *Pos*
Other war-related: 12	Reaction to Russia's invasion of Ukraine (1) *Neg* Ukrainians in South Africa (1) *Neu* Position of BRICS countries (1) *Neu* South Africa's ideological position (2) Unequal power relations in the UN (1) *Neg*

	ICC investigating Putin (2) *Neu*
	Russian representative defending Putin's image (1) *Neu*
	Ukraine-South African diplomatic spat (2) *Neg*
	Western alliance reinforcing the eastern flank to those countries in Eastern Europe and the Baltics that feel a threat to their integrity (1) *Neg*
United Nations: 11	UN condemnation of Russia/speeches by UN representatives (5) *Neg*
	UN report on civilian crisis (4) *Neg*
	South Africa's position UN matters (2) *Neu*
Civilians: 11	Ukrainian civilians withdrawing money in panic (1) *Neg*
	Number of civilians killed (2) *Neg*
	Civilians praised for resilience and resolve (1) *Pos*
	Mass exodus of civilians (1) *Neg*
	Women civilians who had given birth (1) *Neg*
	Civilians suffering various forms of social discomfort (5) *Neg*
Sanctions: 8	Western countries and institutions planning to or imposing sanctions on Russia and other elite Russians (6) *Neu*
	Putin reacting to sanctions (2) *Neu*
Justification: 7	Russia's rationale for declaring a special military operation (6) *Neu*
	The West's reaction to Russia's Putin's rationale for war (1) *Neu*
Refugees: 6	Number of refugees leaving Ukraine since Russia's invasion (6) *Neg*
US policies: 5	We are going to hear from US President Joe Biden shortly (1) *Neu*
	US ambassador, Linda Thomas Greenfield, draft resolutions at the UN (1) *Neu*
	Biden's strong views on Putin and Russia (2) *Neg*
	Russia's response space to US Views (1) *Neu*
Nuclear hazard: 4	Possibility of Russia using nuclear weapons (2) *Neg*
	Russia using nuclear talk simply as a threat (2) *Neu*
Battlefield: 4	Reports about military activities on the battlefield (2) *Neg*
	Conquering of territory by Russian troops (1) *Neg*
	Praising of Ukrainians for their courage on the battlefield (1) *Pos*
Disinformation: 2	Possibility of disinformation (2) *Neg*
EU policies: 2	EU plans and execution of sanction on Russia (2) *Neu*

The following section is a review of how the key narratives as well as domain angles were presented in each of the 13 topics, in the order of frequency as in the above table.

Security

The security topic received noteworthy attention throughout the sample period as documented under Topics above. One news item on this topic was related to the security of other Eastern Europe countries, with a negative tone. The other focused specifically on Africa and in terms of a different kind of security, that is, food and economic security – also negatively.

Two news items related to Ukraine's insecurity as consequence of the Russian invasion, with neutral tone: *Ukraine has responded to Russia's invasion by closing its airspace to civilian flights. But the Eastern European nation has also stopped the movement of commercial vessels in the Azov Sea. It says there's a high risk to safety due to the military activities.*

The Russia angle on security matters in this context was not covered much or it mattered less. The *SABC News*, however, did have an analyst who presented the following: *And these are some of the concerns that you know, Russia has raised in terms of the potential that, you know, this could get to its borders with Ukraine and hence, the reason why we are where we are in the first place.*

NATO received more attention here, specifically in terms of security preparations. There were four news items, neutral in tone, in this regard: *NATO has ordered its military commanders to intensify preparations to defend allied territory after Russia invaded Ukraine and it has put hundreds of war planes and ships on alert.*

The UN's reaction to Russia's security threats had three news items, neutral in tone: *The Security Council meeting follows a ruling yesterday by the International Court of Justice by 13 votes to 2 that the Russian Federation shall immediately suspend the military operations that it commenced on 24 February 2022 in the territory of Ukraine by 13 votes to 2: the Russian Federation shall ensure that any military or irregular armed units which may be directed or supported by it, as well as any organizations and persons which may be subject to its control or direction, take no steps in furtherance of the military operations referred to in point one above.*

It is plausible to argue that the *SABC News* positioned Russia as presenting a security threat to the other countries concerned.

Peace

The Peace topic had the equally highest number of news items on *SABC News* coverage as the Security topic. Two primary themes typified the reporting on the Peace topic. The first theme centred on different countries' and/or international institutions' appeals for peaceful and diplomatic solutions to the war, revolving around calls for the Russia-Ukraine war to end completely, a proposal that was weighted heavily against Russia. The second theme rested on the reporting that fighting countries themselves were planning to negotiate and/or there were already ongoing talks of one form or the other, about the whole war, some aspects of it, or humanitarian aspects of it.

Six of the fourteen news items constitutive of the Peace topic were connected to the first theme, that is, propositions by different countries and international organizations for peaceful and diplomatic solutions to the Russia-Ukraine war, as well as for the war to end. On the very first day of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, for example, the *SABC News* reported, in reasonable detail, on the South African government's response/reaction to the Russia's invasion of Ukraine. South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) had

issued a statement, which at this stage was characteristically blunt, calling for a peaceful resolution to the escalating conflict.

South Africa had, in a straightforward manner, called on Russia to immediately withdraw its forces from Ukraine in line with the United Nations Charter, and to settle any disputes by peaceful means. South Africa's call for peace and SABC's heightened focus on it, by default or design, endured. Coincidentally, for example, as *SABC News* had 'opened' with South Africa calling for peace on the first day of this study's sample, it also 'closed' with South Africa calling for peace on 14 of April 2022. On the same last day of the sample period the *SABC News* reported on the decision by the South African National Assembly to appoint its Speaker, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, to mediate on the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Furthermore, *SABC News* granted space to both Russian and non-Russian supporters to air their perspectives in relation to peace. The *SABC News* reported, for example, that the USA – Russia's arch rival – remained really committed to diplomacy being given a chance. Iran too, Russia's strong supporter, was covered saying dialogue should begiven an opportunity. France and Mexico's draft humanitarian resolutions were also mentioned by the *SABC News* as part of the peace efforts by third parties. Efforts by the Turkish President regarding the possible outcome of negotiations being finalized either in Ankara or Istanbul in Turkey were reported on, likewise those by Belarus, Russia's ally in this conflict.

Regarding the second theme on this topic and with eight news items, the *SABC News* recurringly reported on diplomatic efforts by the Russian and Ukrainians to find solution to their conflict. The channel reported on video conferences taking place where the two parties were still talking to each other, and where military, political and humanitarian issues were being discussed.

SABC News substantial focus on the Peace topic, by default or design, was congruent with South Africa's ideological stance on the Russia-Ukraine issue. South Africa consistently called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and for diplomacy to prevail. The DIRCO statement on the very first day on the invasion centred on Peace and on the consequences of not pursuing it.

That said, South Africa's stance of not openly condemning Russia and its voting posture in the UN through abstaining on Russia-Ukraine matters is viewed not only as sitting on the fence, but as supportive of Russia, its BRICS partner.

Other war-related topics

Naturally, the 12 news items classified under this topic could not fit perfectly within the specific topics of included in this study. There were items in this category that related to the reaction and shock of persons the *SABC News* described as world leaders because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine; pressure on BRICS members to take an ideological stand on the war; the ideological ambiguity of South Africa; the unequal power relations in the UN Security Council; the activities of the International Criminal Court (ICC) were focused on; the reaction of the Russian representatives to Putin having been called a war criminal; and South Africa accusing the Ukrainian Ambassador to the country of using undiplomatic ways to seek an audience with President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Thus, under this topic, the *SABC News* covered a wide range of matters and gave diverse voice room for articulating their perspectives. Part of this was achieved by SABC's emphasis on the United Nations.

United Nations

The UN activities, as they related specifically to the Russia-Ukraine war, featured prominently on *SABC News*, as shown above. The UN topics developed along three themes: UN condemnation of Russia/speeches by UN representatives in a negative tone; UN reports on the civilian crisis, also in a negative tone; and South Africa's position on UN matters with a neutral tone.

Where *SABC News* focused UN topic, it focused on the UN's Security Council and the General Assembly. For the Security Council, the reporting would focus on the veto powers of certain member countries, for example, Russia blocking resolutions, and South Africa calling for the democratization of the UN Security Council. The voting of various countries in the UN General Assembly was another dimension focused on by the *SABC News*. The SABC would report, for example: *The resolution received 141 votes in favour and 35 abstentions while four countries joined Russia in voting No – Belarus, Syria, North Korea, and Eritrea.*

Furthermore, the *SABC News* concentrated on the UN in terms of the speeches of its senior representatives, more specifically its Secretary General, Antonio Guterres. The SABC reported, for example: *The United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres urge[ed] Russian President Vladimir Putin to recall his troops and says Putin needs to put a stop to what could be the worst war since the beginning of the century.*

In most cases, if not all, and as can be inferred from the above quotation, the speeches and resolutions were very critical of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as the following report attests: *[UN] condemned in the strongest terms the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine and decided that the Russian Federation shall immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine and shall refrain from any further unlawful threat or use of force. It also decides that the Russian Federation shall immediately, completely, and unconditionally withdraw all its military forces from the territories of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.*

It is not only the UN's Security Council and the General Assembly that the SABC focused on the most; it also reported in great detail on the UN and its agencies' humanitarian concerns. The *SABC News* gave space for very long interviews on the UN and its agencies, especially in relation to explaining the civilian and refugee situations. For example: *We go live now to Ukraine, and we're joined by UNICEF's spokesperson… A lot of families are on the streets cooking food for people who are coming through the city. It's about 600 kilometres from Livia here, and only 80 kilometres from the Polish border.*

Also, the *SABC News* would report as follows: *The United Nations reported that more than 1.5 million refugees have crossed from Ukraine into neighbouring countries in just the past eleven days amid bitter urban fighting and Russian bombing campaigns against major cities.*

Civilians

Civilians as a distinct topic for analysis in this study was crucial to the *SABC News'* treatment of the Russia-Ukraine war.

Fundamentally, anguish and trauma were the overriding narrative of the topic on civilians. The only other theme that developed in relation to civilians regarded them as people imbued with fortitude. The idea of anguish in relation to reporting on civilians began on 24 February, when the *SABC News* featured Ukrainian civilians withdrawing money in panic, while sirens summoned them to places of safety. Two reports, henceforth, progressed into focusing on the number of civilians killed and injured. Naturally, this was reported in a negative tone, as the

following quotation signals: *Officials from there say the Russian forces have killed more than 2,000 civilians and destroyed hospitals, schools, and homes… At least 352 people have been killed in Ukraine following Russia's invasion and 14 of those killed are children. A further 1,684 people, including 116 children, have been injured.*

Staying with theme of anguish, five news items on the topic of civilians on *SABC News* focused on civilians in various forms of social distress. The report would make a reference to: *civilians are enduring, immeasurable suffering, and the humanitarian crisis is critical. In many areas across the country, people urgently need medical supplies food, water, shelter, and basic household items.*

Mass exodus and displacement was also one of the news items focused on. The depth of focus on civilians by the *SABC News* extended to covering specific categories of civilians such as children, girls, and women, especially the number of women who had given birth during the war, as shown here: *Since the war in Ukraine started just over two weeks ago, more than 4300 women have given birth in the country as the UN's Population Fund highlights that it is women and girls that are disproportionately affected by war.*

If the broader narrative of the topic Civilians was of pain and suffering, only once did the *SABC News* report on Ukrainian civilians being praised by their President for resilience and resolve. This, too, was the only news item that was positive in tone under this topic.

Sanctions

The topic developed along two broad narratives. The first narrative here concerned Western countries' and institutions' plans to impose or having already imposed sanctions on Russia, other Russian people and institutions. Under this narrative, there were six news stories, reported neutrally. One of the news items, typically, reported that the European Union had sanctioned several members of the Russian government and the Editor-in-Chief of Russia Today (RT). The other reported that the European Commission was considering instituting a raft of sanctions against Russia. These sanctions were to target banks, military generals and members of the Duma (the Russian Parliament): *What the EU unveiled yesterday was sanctions against several members of the Russian government against the Editor-in-Chief of the broadcaster RT that, of course, seems not to have deterred Russia in any sense.*

The second narrative, made up of two news items, pertained to President Putin's reaction to Western imposed sanctions. Putin was reported to be preparing nuclear arms: *This in response to Western sanctions.*

Justification

The topic developed alongside two narratives. The first narrative considered Russia's rationale for executing the "special military operation", reported neutrally. The second narrative considered the West's reaction to Putin's rationale for his special military operation, reported neutrally. There was one news items that related to the West's reaction to Russia's rationale for the invasion of Ukraine.

Regarding the first narrative, the *SABC News* reported that Russia had finally invaded Ukraine to protect Russians who, Russia said, were vulnerable in the face of genocide, with even Vladimir Putin using that word. SABC granted the West space to react to this view saying Putin's views were an "absurd pretext for war". Furthermore, it was reported that Putin talked about the demilitarisation, denazification and de-escalation of Ukraine as a justification for the

military operation: *So, we are still back to basics whereby Russia is invading Ukraine, because he feels that NATO is getting too close to Ukraine. Its request for demilitarization, denazification and Ukraine remaining a neutral member of NATO and of course you know, this is where we are. So, nowhere close to any form of resolution to this.*

Refugees

These stories, though six in number, were reported in greater depth, with a combined duration of 15%. The tone of was negative throughout. They produced one main narrative: the number of refugees who had left Ukraine since Russia's invasion or those had been internally displaced. *As the war enters a third week there are more than 3 million refugees and over 2 million internally displaced…. The 1.8 million children who've made it to neighbouring countries enjoy relative safety, but none of their family surroundings. UNICEF added that there are two and a half million displaced inside Ukraine.*

The *SABC News* reported that the United Nations had said a million refugees had left Ukraine since Russia's invasion began, mostly to neighbouring European Union countries. At the top of this narrative of displacement were issues of safety, including that of children: *It's now officially Europe's largest refugee crisis since World War Two 10% of the population has now fled the country, as the scale of this disaster continues to grow by the second. As of 27 March, 1,119 people have died, including 99 innocent children.*

US policies

The *SABC News* had five stories focusing on the US policy in relation to the war. In the main, news items on this topic concerned the US attitude towards Russia and the war in Ukraine.

On the very first day of the war, the *SABC News* reiterated to its viewers that *"we are going to hear from US President Joe Biden shortly"*. This was done throughout the whole news bulletin on 24 February. The US position in the UN was also reported with the draft resolution that the US ambassador was to table at the UN. The other news items revolved around President Biden's strong views on Putin and Russia.

One of the news items was about President Biden calling his Russian counterpart, President Vladimir Putin, a war criminal in relation to the Russia-Ukraine war. The *SABC News* gave Russia's response space to be aired, with Moscow slamming Biden and calling his utterances totally unacceptable. In another news item the US leader referred to Russia activities as "very unprecedented aggression". Biden also dismissed Putin's comments on nuclear weapons as attempts to escalate. Doubtless then that this topic gave enough space to the USA to present its point of view.

Nuclear hazard

Narratives on this topic developed along two themes: the possibility of Russia using nuclear weapons and Russia using nuclear talk simply as a threat, an act of desperation, or to create a stalemate. All stories were framed in a manner that put Russia in a bad light. The *SABC News* reported, for example, that *Negotiations were happening at a time when Russia put nuclear weapons on high alert. We know that in 2020 Putin approved so-called basic principles that would justify Moscow releasing nuclear weapons.*

Russia was framed in relation to nuclear weapons as an immediate threat to Ukraine and the whole world, while *Germany and France considered Putin's mention of nuclear weapons as a sign that his campaign in Ukraine is not going as well as he wanted and this is an escalation*

to try to scare off any further Western intervention, for example, by providing more weapons or providing intelligence to Ukraine. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg also raised concern that Russia may be trying to create a pretext for the use of chemical weapons in Ukraine.

Battlefield

There were two reports on about military activities in the battlefield. On the first day SABC reported reported that the *first explosions sounded before dawn yesterday as Putin launched his long-anticipated military operation in the Ukraine.* The other news item was about the conquering of Ukrainian territories by Russian troops: *It's been a week since Russia invaded Ukraine. And since then, Russian troops have taken over the southern Port of Kherson. There has also been heavy shelling in Kharkiv in the east.* All these were reported in a negative tone. The only positive item here was about President Volodymyr Zelensky praising the courage of the Ukrainians in defending their country.

Disinformation

The Disinformation topic, an expanding field of study in both the media industry and scholarship, received very limited attention on the *SABC News*, at least in the sample period here. It was reported from the South African angle and negative in tone. One news item pointed out that *we are in an information war right now. It's not just about the weapons and the boots on the ground. It's certainly the propaganda as we call it from either side and what to believe right to how do we thread this needle.* The other item related to the need for proper verification of evidence: *You should start with the evidence. And one needs to collect the evidence and separate truth from falsehood.*

EU Policies

The *SABC News* paid European Union policies minimum attention in its reporting on the war. The EU policies topic developed along the lines of sanctions: *That's something the European Union will be doing. It already has done, and we are expecting more sanctions to be unveiled in the next hour as the European Union says those will be massive in nature.*

Summary

The *SABC News* coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war was cautious balancing between the West and BRICS.

First, the coverage presented, intentionally or unintentionally, a predominantly Western world view. Most contents, although viewed from the South African angle, represented typically Western concerns, however legitimate or illegitimate. The *SABC News* covered the war primarily from the South African angle (47%) and to a large extent also from the Other country angle (43%), representing mainly the US and the UN perspectives. Stories covered from the Russian angle occupied eight minutes, accounting for only 5% of the coverage time; it was mainly on the Justification topic that Russia was given more airtime than other parties.

Accordingly, contrary to many concerns in South Africa that the *SABC News* was supporting South Africa's ideological position that favours Russia – another BRICS member – the evidence of this study shows that the SABC favoured Russia only on rare occasions.

Second, the *SABC News* relied heavily on multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and the International Criminal Court, as its sources of news. These institutions were critical of Russia and shared the same world view as Western institutions and the political elites. Stories on civilians and refugees in particular came largely from the UN.

Third, the *SABC News* coverage of the war was not uniform and simple but reflected the ideological schisms currently existing in South Africa in relation to this war. Despite the prominence accorded to the Western view, the SABC was conscious of its position in the South and respected sovereignty and institutions such as BRICS. The pervasive theme of Peace in the coverage is in line with the position of South Africa and other African countries as well as among the BRICS members.

The *SABC News* concentrated largely on the Security topic, as shown above. Although the coverage was mainly from the South Africa angle (74%), the actual news content focused on the lack of security in Ukraine, other Eastern Europe countries and Africa in terms of food and economy. Furthermore, the focus was on Ukraine's military defence against Russia and NATO's support for this. Not all this growing lack of security was attributed to NATO, US policies, EU policies or even to Ukraine, for that matter. According to the framing of these news items, it was so because Russia had *invaded* Ukraine, a term SABC News used recurringly in its reporting.

Furthermore, *SABC News* consistently framed Russia as the source of others' misery. This was also clear in the presentation of UN, UNICEF and ICC. The UN and ICC speeches, reports and resolutions were disproportionately critical of Russia. It is not an argument here that the SABC was biased against Russia *per se*. It was the number of news items and their duration that gave more space to other parties than Russia. To the extent that Russia may have had security concerns, legitimate or illegitimate, they either received less coverage or they mattered less.

On this basis it is hardly plausible to argue that just because South Africa has close historical ties with Russia and BRICS, these were extended to the way the Russia and the war was framed, at least on security issues. The same applies to peace issues, the other main topic of the coverage as shown above.

The *SABC News* gave all sides, supportive of either Russia or Ukraine, space to present their views on the possibility of peace and how it could be achieved. The focus on the Peace topic was congruent with South Africa's ideological stance on the Russia-Ukraine issue. South Africa has consistently called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and for diplomacy to prevail.

Overall, despite the dominance of the views of the West in the *SABC News*, the coverage shows a certain South African impartiality and a BRICS perspective on the global scene. This is evident in the priority of the theme of peace over the theme of war and South Africa's attempt to promote peace from the first day of the invasion. This was far from the Western approach, which immediately responded to Russia's invasion by defending Ukraine and opposing Russia ideologically and concretely – entering into a hybrid war with Russia on the political, economic and informational-emotional fronts. The *SABC News*, like South Africa around it, reflected a moderate position in this global confrontation – neither defending Russia's invasion, nor condemning it, and keeping a distance to the Western offensive, albeit relying on Western sources of news.

Context

South Africa joined the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) coalition of emerging economies in December 2010, extending it to **BRICS**. Ideologically, this aligned with the country's foreign policy of strengthening South-South relations. By late 2010, BRICS was already a powerful economic bloc, with the International Monetary Fund projecting its growth in the near future to be 61%. South Africa itself was growing economically. The 2010–2011 Global Competitiveness Report by World Economic Forum ranked the country favourably in relation to other BRICS members. The 2010 UN Conference on Trade and Development put in its World Investment Report South Africa in the top 20 of priority economies for foreign direct investment (South African Government, 2022). The standing of South Africa in BRCIS was confirmed by the 2022 BRICS Summit in Beijing, when it passed the revolving chair of the coalition to this country, expected to host the XV BRICS Summit in August 2023.

The **Russia–Ukraine War** has obviously added another layer of solidarity with Russia by other BRICS members, although different views on this exist. Western analysts, for example, often describe the Russia-Ukraine war as the post-Cold War turning point and the emergence of a new world order. In the Global South, on the other hand, the war has resuscitated ideas of foreign policy autonomy and non-alignment (Sidiropoulos, 2022).

South Africa, in this context, has vacillated between DIRCO's strongly worded statement on the opening day of the war calling on Russia to withdraw from Ukraine and DIRCO's Deputy Minister, Candith Mashego-Dlamini going as far as to urge South African citizens not to take sides (Comins, 2022) and to Defence Minister Thandi Modise's defence of South Africa's neutrality (Stoltz, 2022).

Since South Africa backtracked on its early call for Russia to withdraw from Ukraine, officials have avoided using the words "war" and "invasion" with reference to Ukraine and have at least in part blamed the NATO alliance for the "conflict", while acknowledging what they described as legitimate Russian security concerns.

The **SABC** has, in some instances, followed suit and published a Reuters wire article with the headline "Russia revokes registration of Amnesty and Human Rights Watch". This headline by Reuters was edited by the SABC and in its publishing of the article the word "war" was replaced by "conflict" (de Wet, 2022).

The *SABC News*, already under financial strain, did not have the resources to send journalists to cover the war live and report from the battlefields. SABC then had to rely on its international correspondents, based in other Western countries than Ukraine, and on other international news media. Relying on Western news media sources was ideologically tricky for the SABC. Western news media are often perceived in South Africa as anti-Russian. The United Nations then became a safer area from which to source stories and became prominent in SABC coverage, also because it has a correspondent in New York. By focusing on the UN, the SABC catered for its neutrality, which would have been compromised had it relied heavily on either Western or Russian sources.

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Comparisons and conclusions

All authors collectively

This concluding chapter compares the results of the country reports regarding the topics, angles and key narratives of the war coverage. It moreover discusses the validity of the results and makes proposals for further research.
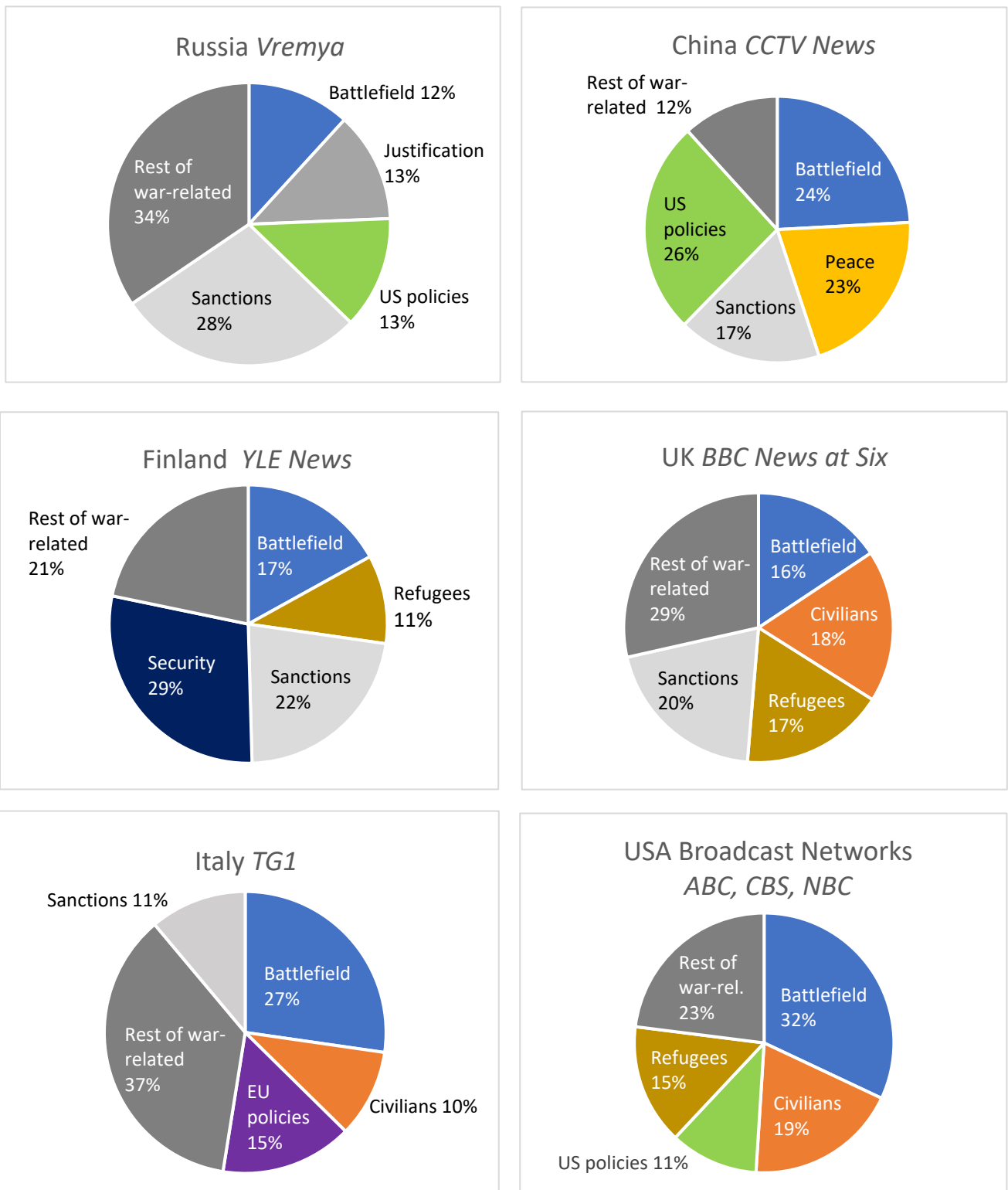
First, however, we should note how the attention paid to war-related television news differed between the countries included this study. While in Russia the coverage was focused exclusively on the war – albeit without calling it a war – the first figure in this report (page 4) shows that in the Western countries over half of the news time was devoted to the war: from 80% of the US Cable coverage to 59% of the BBC coverage. On the other hand, the BRICS countries, apart from Russia, devoted less than half of the news time to the war – and least of all China, just 7%.
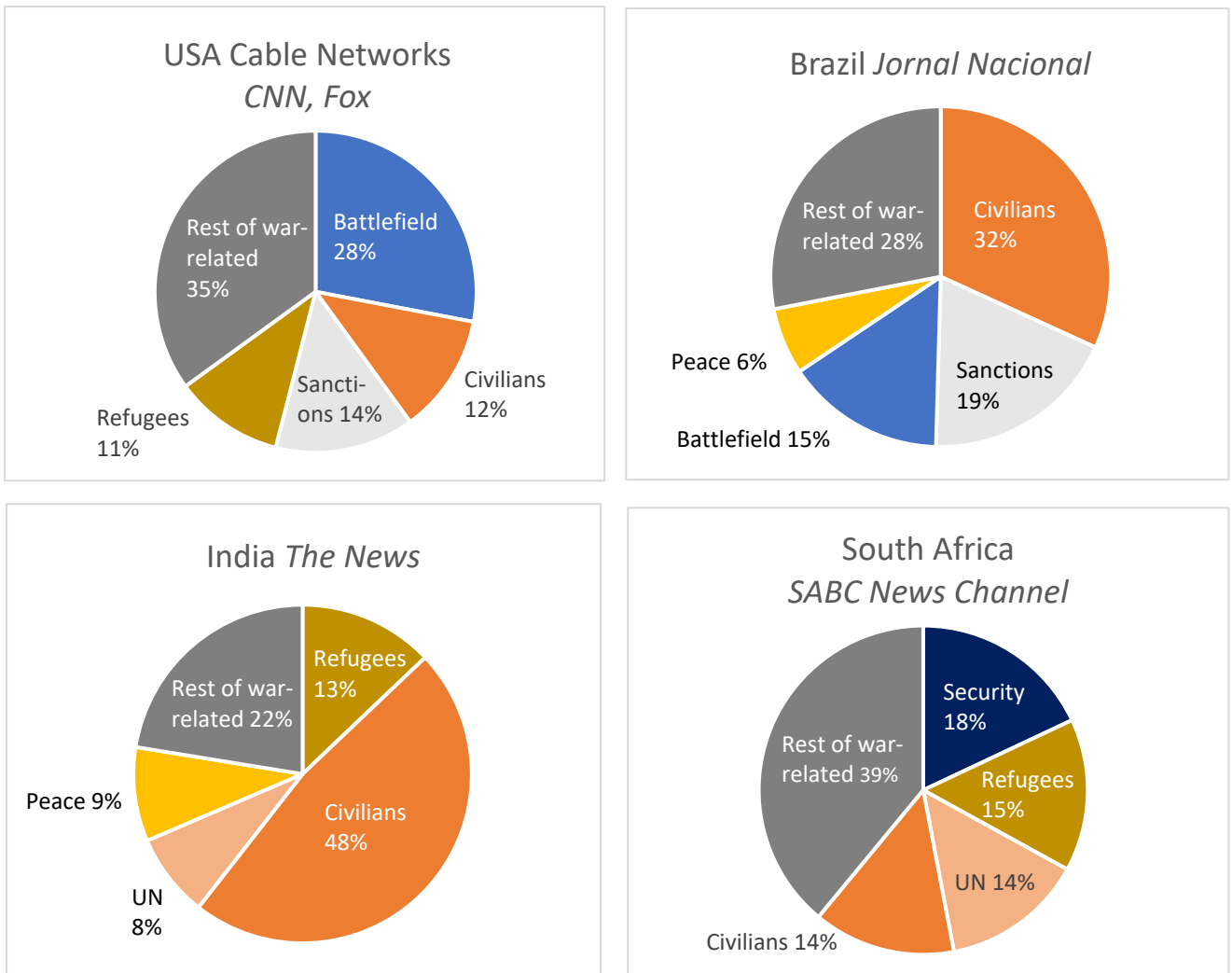
Topics

The 13 topics (see Appendix 1) were to be found in each of the ten news bulletins examined as shown in the first table of this report (page 5). Figure 1 below highlights the four main topics in each country/bulletin, in addition to the rest of the war-related topics, according to the amount of time devoted to them throughout the ten sample days (percentages from Table 1 on page 6).

The most common topic in the bulletins analysed was understandably Battlefield, absent from the four main topics only in India and South Africa. Almost equally common topic was Sanctions, not among the four main topics in the US broadcast networks, India and South Africa. Those were economic sanctions imposed against Russia by the EU and the USA – *Vremya* presenting their impact mainly as an opportunity to enhance the domestic economy, while Russia's contra-sanctions were a retaliatory measure to those Western countries which supported the EU and US sanctions. Civilians were given prominence in all countries except Russia, China and Finland. Refugees had notable coverage in Finland, the UK, both US networks, India and South Africa. Peace was among the four main topics in Brazil, China and India, while the UN was accorded the same status only in India and South Africa. US policies was notable in Russia, China and the US broadcasts. Security had prominence only in Finland and South Africa; EU policies only in Italy.

Figure 1. Percentages of main war-related topics based on minutes in each bulletin (in South Africa the number of bulletins on the News Channel).

Russia *Vremya*
- Battlefield 12%
- Justification 13%
- US policies 13%
- Sanctions 28%
- Rest of war-related 34%

China *CCTV News*
- Rest of war-related 12%
- Battlefield 24%
- Peace 23%
- Sanctions 17%
- US policies 26%

Finland *YLE News*
- Rest of war-related 21%
- Battlefield 17%
- Refugees 11%
- Sanctions 22%
- Security 29%

UK *BBC News at Six*
- Rest of war-related 29%
- Battlefield 16%
- Civilians 18%
- Refugees 17%
- Sanctions 20%

Italy *TG1*
- Sanctions 11%
- Battlefield 27%
- Civilians 10%
- EU policies 15%
- Rest of war-related 37%

USA Broadcast Networks *ABC, CBS, NBC*
- Rest of war-rel. 23%
- Battlefield 32%
- Civilians 19%
- US policies 11%
- Refugees 15%

USA Cable Networks
CNN, Fox

Battlefield 28%
Civilians 12%
Sanctions 14%
Refugees 11%
Rest of war-related 35%

Brazil *Jornal Nacional*

Civilians 32%
Sanctions 19%
Battlefield 15%
Peace 6%
Rest of war-related 28%

India *The News*

Refugees 13%
Civilians 48%
UN 8%
Peace 9%
Rest of war-related 22%

South Africa
SABC News Channel

Security 18%
Refugees 15%
UN 14%
Civilians 14%
Rest of war-related 39%

This is a rough overall picture of the bulletins. The actual content of their war coverage requires an in-depth look at the news, which was attempted through the concepts of angles and narratives.

Angles

Angles (see Appendix 2) are in coverage studies like the present one a somewhat fluid concept, occasionally open for interpretation. However, double checking between coders and teams showed that the five categories used were sufficiently consistent as indicators of general orientations.

The angles in each county/bulletin are shown in Figure 2 below as percentages of the coverage duration in the ten sample days.

Figure 2. Percentage of the angles in each country based on minutes of war-related news.
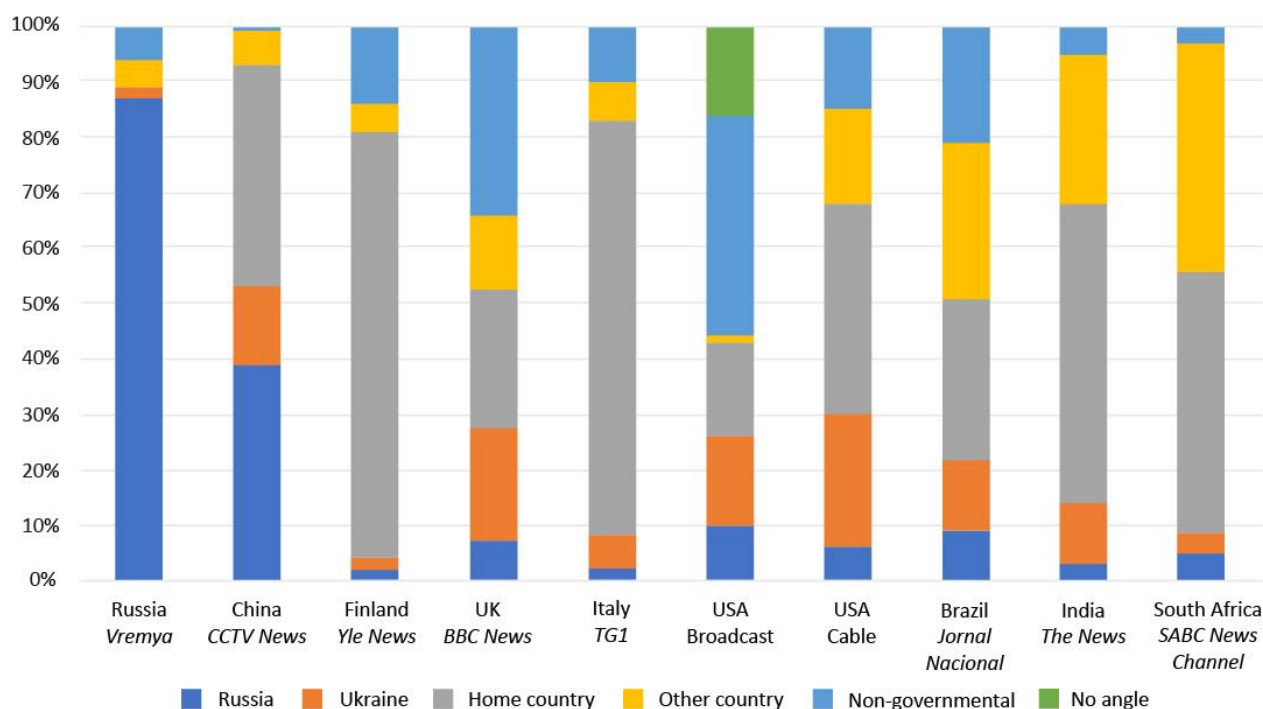
The Russia angle was marginal in all countries except in China and naturally in Russia. The Home country angle dominated in all countries except the UK (25%), the US broadcast (17%) and cable (21%) networks and Brazil (29%). The Non-governmental angle was dominant in the UK (34%) and the US broadcasts (40%). The Ukraine angle was prominent alongside the other angles in the UK (20%) and US cable (28%). However, the Ukraine angle was presented at least twice as much as the Russia angle in all other countries except in China, Finland, Brazil and South Africa.

In terms of political orientation, Russia was referred to in an overwhelmingly negative tone by other countries except China and to some extent by South Africa. The *CCTV News* kept its reporting tone neutral, in line with the Chinese government's position regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Narratives

The narratives from country to country were far from uniform. However, the first bulletin of 24.02.2022 already suggested a clear difference in the coverage between the Western countries and the BRICS countries (disregarding the special case of Russia). Firstly, the tone of the news in the Western bulletins was quite emotive, whereas the tone on the BRICS channels was decidedly dispassionate. Secondly, the Western bulletins typically presented the war in terms

of military activities and national politics, while the BRICS countries focused more on explanations and background information.

The key narratives show that the coverage was largely built on antagonistic and emotional grounds, depending on the country and its attitude towards the Russian invasion. Here we only summarize the narratives in the four main topics, leaving the details to the country reports.

In the **Battlefield** coverage China was the only country to adopt a balanced approach to covering the war in a tone that was neutral to the warring sides. Russia praised its military progress at the front. The Western countries prioritized the Ukrainian view in military narratives, using a positive tone for Ukraine and a negative one for Russia; they unequivocally supported Ukraine in defending its territory and condemned Russia for having invaded. Most of the countries sided with Ukraine against Russia, demonstrating how it was impossible to be neutral when covering military events. Television news had clearly become part of the information war between Russia and the rest, with the exception of China and South Africa.

In the **Sanctions** narratives there was a clear difference between the term "sanctions" in Russia and Western countries and a different approach to the policy of sanctions in the West and the BRICS countries. In Russia, sanctions were seen as an instrument of the West's economic war against Russia. In response, Russia imposed counter-sanctions against the West. As Western sanctions escalated as of mid-April, this topic became the most important one on the news agenda of *Vremya*, along with the topic of US policies, indicating that Washington, not Kiev, was perceived as Russia's real antagonist. In Western countries, by contrast, sanctions were seen as a politically necessary and proportionate response to Russia's unjustified aggression, agreed between the Western allies. The BRICS countries refrained from joining Western sanctions against Russia. Brazil and South Africa assumed the role of neutral observers in their coverage of the sanctions, China reported on the negative effects of sanctions on the economy and people's lives and called for them to be lifted, while India adopted a negative tone towards Russia in its coverage of Western sanctions.

In covering **Civilians and Refugees**, one should note the difference in the definition of civilians in Russia and other countries. In Russia, the news was about those civilians, their situation and suffering, who were oriented towards Russia and fled from the fighting to Russia. In the other countries except China, the news was about civilians and refugees fleeing to Europe from Ukraine. In India, the news paid a lot of attention to Indian students, their evacuation from Ukraine and their repatriation. There was only one story in China about Russia's efforts to help deal with the humanitarian crisis in Kiev. That is, all countries took a politically selective approach to reaching civilians and refugees, distinguishing between "us" and "them". This indicates that the war spread not only territorially, informationally and economically, but also psychologically, not recognizing the "other".

Peace was one of the most important topics in the BRICS countries but not at all in the Western countries. In Russia, the topic developed along with the narratives of peace negotiations and political decisions, international visits by senior officials and reports on the restoration of a peaceful life. In China, the topic itself was a key focus of the Chinese government's declared policy; as in the coverage of Battlefield, this topic maintained a balance by sharing perspectives from both the Russia and the Ukraine angle and keeping a neutral tone with no recriminations

against either side. The other BRICS countries, Brazil, India and South Africa, presented their narratives mainly from the Home country perspective and kept a balance between the Ukraine and Russia angles. The Western countries – Finland, the UK, Italy and the USA – paid some attention, for example, to the early ceasefire negotiations between Russia and Ukraine but overall, the coverage of this was minimal. Obviously, the Western countries were involved in the war politically and economically, providing military aid for Ukraine, and thus not directly furthering peace, whereas the BRICS countries were more observers and detached from the war and therefore focused on peace and negotiation.

Conclusions

A comparative analysis of the news agenda of the main national TV channels in nine countries reveals a significant difference in the structure and quality of coverage of the war – in general and between Western countries and BRICS countries in particular.

The first difference lies in the selective type of journalism of the country's television channel. The news bulletins in our study show that all countries except China have developed their respective war journalism to varying degrees since the Russian invasion on 24 February 2022. Russia immediately adopted a total war approach and the countries of the West reacted promptly to this, embarking on an information war with Russia and becoming vicarious participants in the war with Russia.

Since Galtung and Ruge (1965), it has been clear that war journalism uses military language, and overemphasizes the visible effects of war, for instance, human casualties, bloodshed and material damage. It favours elite sources and adopts a superficial narrative with scant context or historical assessment (see Garcia-Perdomo, Harlow & Brown, 2022: 2-3).

In contrast, China was the only country in our sample to rely on peaceful journalism from the very first day of the military conflict. According to Galtung & Ruge (1965), Knightley (2000) and Nohrstedt & Ottosen (2014), peace journalism promotes conflict resolution by focusing on areas of agreement that bridge political and ideological differences, use the historical context, reveal cause and effect, including ordinary people as sources, and describe the invisible consequences of the conflict. Peace was the most influential topic in the CCTV war-related news, both in terms of duration (21%) and the number of news items (24%). Its peaceful journalism also introduced other topics of news items with balanced coverage of events presenting both sides of the conflict with a neutral approach without dramatizing the news.

The BRICS countries Brazil, India and South Africa took a middle way between a focus on war or peace, giving priority to peace journalism. Unlike in Western countries, Peace was one of the most influential topics on their news agendas.

Another apparent difference between the Western countries and the BRICS countries was the extent to which they followed the propaganda model proposed by Herman & Chomsky (1988). The propaganda model of journalism serves the state by using government or corporate sources of information and experts to confirm the veracity of what the official sources claim to be the undisputable truth.

The Russian news was maximally produced in accordance with the propaganda model of journalism and a national government perspective – 88% measured by duration. In the case of Russia and China, we are dealing with the unequivocally pro-government journalism of state television channels as an integral part of government policy. In the Western countries the role of mainstream journalism is supposed to be independent from government and a more or less free public service, but in reality the war coverage followed official government policies and war journalism seemed to be structurally bound to the state – a soft but nevertheless systematic pro-government orientation. Accordingly, both the Western countries and the BRICS countries could be seen to follow the propaganda model – albeit in different ways. This same pattern was also discernible in the Gulf War of the early 1990s (Kellner 1993; Nohrstedt & Ottosen, 2001).

Among the Western countries, the national government perspective was most prominent in Finland (77%) and Italy (75%) and least prominent in the USA (17% for broadcast channels and 21% for cable channels) and the UK (25%). Of the BRICS countries, in Brazil this perspective was present in 29% of the coverage; in China it occupied 40%, in India 54% and in South Africa 47% of news time.

Considering the impact of journalism on society, the most obvious conclusion is that it was a collective sense of fear that ensured the support of the majority for the government and its decisions at this historical moment. In Russia, sociological research recorded the rallying of 80% of the population behind the leadership. In Finland, the war coverage was no doubt a decisive factor in the overwhelming support of the population for Finland to join NATO, which suddenly rose from less than 40% to over 70%. In Italy, right-wing parties proclaimed their public support for Ukraine, backed sanctions against Russia and approved the sending of weapons to Ukraine as well as accepting refugees from Ukraine (Biancalana, 2023).

Discussion

Do the results of this study really present a comprehensive picture of the war in television news of these countries? And to what extent do the results apply to the coverage of the war by the rest of the mass media; how representative is the picture given by the television news bulletins of the media coverage as a whole? Such questions of **validity and generalization** are natural, given the limitations of the empirical sample and measurement instrument.

Moreover, we have to keep in mind that the reason for focusing on television news was that it typically constitutes, as stated at the beginning of this report (p. 2), "the main window on the war scene and related topics, thus having a crucial role in the process of creating and maintaining the climate of public opinion for or against the war". One may ask whether the ever-growing influence of internet-based new media, including social media, on people – and especially on young people – has superseded the role of conventional mass media and whether it is any longer feasible to concentrate solely on television news. The sources from which people derive their knowledge and beliefs have undeniably expanded in the contemporary world. Nevertheless, television news has retained a central place in today's media ecology, both in terms of its daily consumption and its perceived trustworthiness among the viewers.

The **sampling** across time in research like this is always open to discussion; it is debatable whether the number and frequency of days is enough. In this case the ten days over the period of nearly two months proved a good compromise to reveal both changes and consistency in the news coverage. This was confirmed by coding an extra day at the end of July in the bulletins from Russia, China and Finland.

Likewise, the **reliability** of the empirical measurement in a content analysis is always somewhat problematic, especially when approaching conceptually fluid and politically sensitive materials such as TV war coverage. Considerable interpretation was already involved in the identification of news items from the programme flow and in coding the items to the 13 topic categories. Even more problematic was the coding of items to the five angles based on national perspectives. We might have done better in cross-checking between coders in different countries, but our coding instructions appeared sufficient, avoiding major queries or disputes. Inter-coder reliability was only tested on the first days of the Finnish sample and proved to be at a level of 90% agreement.

The authors of this report, having devoted innumerable hours to coding TV news, assessing their contents and writing the country reports, came up with several **reflections** on the project and ideas for further activities. For example, the Brazilian team pointed out that such a comparative study not only serves to reveal editorial choices and news criteria but also demonstrates differences and similarities in journalistic cultures across countries. This provides invaluable material for training professional journalists, for the curricula of journalism schools and also for mid-career extension courses. The Indian team emphasized the lessons to be learned from this kind of study for students of journalism, helping them to understand journalistic values and political affiliations in relation to global perspectives and the variations in the significance of this war in Europe and in countries farther away from it.

The US teams in both broadcast and cable side noted that the war in Ukraine was covered much as they treat most issues. In the beginning, the war dominated the news because it was the most consequential international story at the time. The drama, conflict, life and death struggles, the villain, the victim attributes of the story justifiably commanded that attention. However, in a relatively short time the war occupied less than half of the news time, especially in broadcast networks, which returned to their news selection calculus and covered the war when it fitted that formula. Despite the war as mega event, the television news services reverted to their conventional journalistic principles and established routines guided the coverage to side with the war frame. The US team of the cable networks also observed that while social media have contributed to another view of the war with new voices on Facebook, Instagram, etc., the ideological positioning and media-state relations are firmly situated in legacy media and their news services.

In brief, the authors are confident that the study was well worth doing and that the results identify significant trends. Nevertheless, we do not claim to have achieved definite answers but rather a promising beginning for a continuing research programme with several potential avenues for further research.

The most obvious ways to **follow up on the present research** are the following concrete proposals:

First, it would be natural to extend the sample of countries to *include other countries* such as Germany and Poland from Europe as well as Qatar/Al Jazeera from the Middle East (both English and Arabic services). If recordings of the respective bulletins can be made available for the ten sample days, the same content analysis should be repeated in these countries. This might be done on the basis of voluntary participation as in the present study, counting on the interest of additional teams to join a unique international project.

Second, as the war has continued for a year after the sampling ended, a *longitudinal study* over this period would be worth doing in the same countries and on the same bulletins, with a focus on the tense relations between Russia and the Western countries and on the new friction between political alliances both within the Western world and between Western and non-Western countries. This would ideally be done by the teams of the present project by analysing the bulletins with new sample days over a period of another year.

Third, more focus should be directed to the qualitative analysis and, with the participation of political scientists, including peace researchers, to emphasizing the *perspective of international politics*. An interdisciplinary approach would ensure a thorough analysis of the implications of the Russian-Ukrainian war in the emerging new world order with an increasing role of geopolitical-military blocs such as NATO and political-economic coalitions such as BRICS. This would be a normal academic project.

Fourth, an idea inspired by the present project is to follow up earlier initiatives for systematic *monitoring of media performance* in matters of global importance (Galtung, 1999; Nordenstreng, 2004; Ramonet, 2003). A permanent system for continuous comparative study and assessment of war and peace coverage by the media around the world would be a major undertaking still waiting to be implemented, but a pilot project focusing on war and peace news in television could well be established as an extension of the present study. It would be based on the voluntary collaboration of national research teams as for example the Worlds of Journalism Study.

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Appendix 1: Topics

Categories (in alphabetical order)	Definition
1 – Battlefield	Military updates in studio and videos from Ukraine and elsewhere
2 – Civilians	Killing and saving civilians
3 – Disinformation	Allegation of disinformation in both sides, not disinformation itself
4 – EU policies	EU policies relating to the war, excluding sanctions
5 – Justification	Reasons to justify the war or challenging its justification
6 – Nuclear hazard	Nuclear plants in Ukraine and Russia's potential use of nuclear weapons
7 – Peace	Peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine and other talks
8 – Refugees	Refugees inside and outside Ukraine
9 – Sanctions	Sanctions against Russia and their consequences in Russia, in the sanctioning countries and on global economy at large
10 – Security	National and regional security issues, including public opinion
11 – United Nations	UN debates and decisions
12 - US policies	US and NATO policies relating to the war, excluding sanctions
13 – Other war-related	Any topics that cannot fit into the categories above

A topic is the main thrust of a news item. Some news items may cover more than one topic, moving from one to the other (e.g. begin with a battlefield update and move on to a section about the conditions facing civilians). In such a case, the coder should pick one as the main thrust of the item. This will usually be the topic that is emphasised in the headline and intro of the item – but specific cases can be discussed.

The topics used in coding of news were specified as follows:

1. **Battlefield** – military matters, battles, ground gained and lost, weapons, losses, soldiers, both **ground reports and analysis by experts/journalists**
   o Military updates in studio and videos from Ukraine and Russia.
   o Development of military technology and weapons currently being used in the war.
   o Military support from the West. It shall only include military capability or weapons. If the news is about US/Western countries' policies on military support, it should be excluded
   o Stories about military personnel who received awards on the battlefield, and their exploits
   o Comments of military experts on the course of the war.
   o The behaviour of the military in the cities and villages they occupy

2. **Civilians** - civilian deaths, the conditions civilians face, the impact of shortages and sanctions, their views and perspectives – covers both Ukrainian and Russian civilians. Captured soldiers are non-combatants and are included among civilians (e.g. a story about mistreatment or decent treatment of captured soldiers).
   o The reaction and behaviour of civilians.
   o Killing and saving civilians and captured military from both sides of the war, including humanitarian efforts from both ends. However, the threat to humanitarian efforts should be classified as Battlefield.
   o Refugees of Ukraine and civilians living in other countries shall be excluded from this topic.

3. **Disinformation**
   a. Allegation of disinformation from both sides and other countries, not disinformation itself. For example, a story about massacre of civilians should be categorized as "civilians" even though it could potentially be fake. But if the story is about Russia saying the massacre news is fake, it should be categorized as "disinformation". if the news covers both, then it shall depend on what is the main point of this news story.
   b. Governments blocking mainstream media and social media.

4. **EU policies**
   a. EU policies relating to the war, including military support for Ukraine and mercenaries, excluding sanctions.

5. **Justification**
   a. Reasons to justify the war from both ends, which could include why the war was started, reporting on the history of the region to justify the war.
   b. Public support for the special operation of various labour collectives, youth, and veterans and artists.

6. **Nuclear hazard**
   a. Nuclear plants in Ukraine and Russia's potential use of nuclear weapons.

7. **Peace**
   a. Peace negotiations by Russia and Ukraine.
   b. Other efforts by all countries.
   c. Reports from cities and towns about the restoration of peaceful life after the war and delivery of humanitarian aid.

8. **Refugees**
   a. Refugees inside and outside Ukraine

9. **Sanctions**
   a. Sanctions against Russia including private business and persons, and their consequences in Russia, in the sanctioning countries and on global economy at large.
   b. Plans and decisions of the Russian government on economic issues and support for the population and foreign business in Russia under Western sanctions.
   c. Policies and decisions of governments to initiate, support, protest against, mitigate or retaliate the sanctions against Russia.
   d. The impact of sanctions against Russian organizations and people abroad.
   e. Impact on civilians outside of Ukraine shall be included in this topic, including civilians living in Russia but not directly impacted by the military operation.

10. Security
   a. National and regional foreign/security issues, including public opinion in any country.
   b. Government decisions regarding the safety of citizens. For example, a ban on flights in the southern part of Russia until 2 March.
   c. If the news is centred on the policy itself, it shall be categorized as US/EU policies, unless the policy is sanction related, which is then to be categorized as Sanction

11. United Nations
   a. UN debates and decisions, and also UN officials' visits to any country relating to the war. The centre of the topic shall be UN focused. If UN is mentioned, but the news is mainly about foreign policy of certain countries, it shall be categorized as Security.

12. US policies
   a. US and NATO policies relating to the war and pre-war time, including Zelensky and his government, excluding sanctions.
   b. US policies on military support for Ukraine including mercenaries.
   c. US policies on social media (Facebook, Instagram) and giants Google, Twitter and YouTube relating to Russia.
   d. US policies regarding the image of Russia in the United States.

13. Other war-related topics
   a. Any topics that cannot fit into the categories above.

Appendix 2: Coding instructions

Field	Definition	Example
Country	Country of the news programme	China
Coder name	Name of the person doing the coding	Tao Zhang
News programme	Name of the programme	CCTV 7PM News
Total duration	Length of the programme in minutes, not including the daily weather forecast	29 (only put number into cell)
Date	Date of the programme analysed	Apr-07
Item #	Sequence number of the news item. An item is a thematically compact unit of the programme with direct or indirect focus on the war, containing any material in studio or from outside.	1,2,3,4
Duration in minutes	Length of each news item in minutes. Convert seconds into minutes.	If the item is 40 seconds, record it as =40/60. If 2 min 5 sec, record it as =125/60.
Topic	Choose one category from the list as main topic of the item.	Battlefield
Content	Describe main substance of the item and its political argument(s) if any.	Refugee families return to their homes in Donbass and Lugansk region from Russia where they were in a sanatorium. They thank Russia and Putin for their support.
Angle of Russia/Ukraine Home country/Other country Non-governmental	Overall political perspective of the item if it has a governmental/national angle. Home country: whose TV news is studied. Other country: whose viewpoint is reported independently. An item can have more than one angle or no angle at all. Non-governmental: Perspective from ordinary people, including refugees and captured military, representatives of culture and art, public intellectuals. It should not include researchers, analysts or commentators interviewed, whom should be under home country category.	If the item includes both Russian and Ukraine's narratives, then both angles should be marked with X.
Angle in minutes	Duration in minutes of each angle, including talk by news anchor and any other material. If the item contains more than one angle, duration of each angle should be marked. Convert seconds into minutes.	Same as above in item duration.

Angles

Angle in this study means the political perspective from a certain stakeholder. If the news item is about a statement, policy decision or opinion from the government agencies or military units, then it is from that country's angle.

If the news item is an interview with an unofficial researcher or analyst from a certain country, it should be marked as home country's angle as it supports the central idea of the news itself, unless it is from another country's perspective, when it should be marked as that specific country's angle.

If the news item is reporting an opinion of a civilian, no matter which country he/she comes from, it should be put under non-governmental angle.

Russia angle: Overall political perspective of the item having a governmental/national interest.

Ukraine angle: Overall political perspective of the item having a governmental/national interest.

Home country angle: Overall political perspective of the item having a governmental/national interest of the country whose TV news is studied.

Other country angle: Overall political perspective of the item having a governmental/national interest, whose angle is outside Russia, Ukraine and the home country.

Non-governmental angle: perspective from ordinary people, including refugees and captured military, representatives of culture and art, public intellectuals. It should not include researchers, analysts or commentators interviewed, whom should be under home country category.

Appendix 3: Coding scheme for the U.S. Networks

Coding instructions (June 2022), U.S. Networks (ABC, CBS, NBC)	
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Variable	Value labels
ID#	Unique identifier (continuous)
Month	month of broadcast
Day	day of broadcast
Network	ABC, CBS, NBC
Broadcast	name of broadcsast
Place	Chronological place of story in broadcast
Block	# of block (segment) in which story appears (blocks separated by commercial breaks)
Begin minute	Minute in which story began
Begin second	Second in which story began
Mode (primary mode of presentation)	1. Anchor read; 2. VO/Anchor; 3. Package; 4. Live location; 5. interview/Panel 6. Reporter live in newsroom
War related	0=not related to Ukraine war; 1=related to Ukraine war
End minute	Minute in which story ended
End second	Second in which story ended
Topic	1 – Battlefield: Military updates in studio and videos from Ukraine and Russia
	2 – Civilians: Killing and rescuing civilians, captured militaries
	3 – Sanction: Sanctions against Russia and their consequences in Russia, in the sanctioning countries and on the global economy at large
	4 – Refugee: Refugees inside and outside Ukraine
	5 – Security: National and regional security issues, including public opinion
	6 – UN: UN debates and decisions
	7 – EU policies: EU policies relating to the war, excluding sanctions
	8 a. US policies: US policies relating to the war, excluding sanctions
	8 b. NATO policies: NATO policies relating to the war, excluding sanctions
	9 – Justification : Reasons for justifying the war
	10 – Nuclear hazard: Nuclear plants in Ukraine and Russia's potential use of nuclear weapons
	11 – Peace: Peace negotiations and other efforts
	12 – Disinformation: Allegation of disinformation on both sides, not disinformation itself
	13 – Other : Any topics that cannot be fitted into the categories above
Content	Narrative of the content of the story
Russia angle	0=no angle; 1=angle present
Russia angle begin minute	Minute in which story began
Russia angle begin second	Second in which story began
Russia angle end minute	Minute in which story ended
Russia angle end second	Second in which story ended
Ukraine angle	0=no angle; 1=angle present
Ukraine angle begin minute	Minute in which story began
Ukraine angle begin second	Second in which story began
Ukraine angle end minute	Minute in which story ended
Ukraine angle end second	Second in which story ended
Home country angle	0=no angle; 1=angle present
Home angle begin minute	Minute in which story began
Home angle begin second	Second in which story began
Home angle end minute	Minute in which story ended
Home angle end second	Second in which story ended
Other country angle	0=no angle; 1=angle present
Other country angle begin minute	Minute in which story began
Other country angle begin second	Second in which story began
Other country angle end minute	Minute in which story ended
Other country angle end second	Second in which story ended
Non-govt angle	0=no angle; 1=angle present
Non-govt angle begin minute	Minute in which story began
Non-govt angle begin second	Second in which story began
Non-govt angle end minute	Minute in which story ended
Non-govt angle end second	Second in which story ended