



**HAWASSA UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION**

**FRAMING THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NEWS  
BY BBC AND RT WORLD**

**MA. RESEARCH**

**BY: WORKNESH BEGNA**

**ADVISOR: MELISEW DEJENE (PhD, ASSOCT.PROF.)**

**A RESEARCH SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND  
COMMUNICATION**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION**

**NOVEMBER, 2023  
HAWASSA, ETHIOPIA**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

First of all, I would like to thank the almighty God for the wisdom he offered me and guided me throughout my entire life, as well as for strengthening me to accomplish this study.

Secondly, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and respect to my advisor, Dr. Melisew Dejene (PhD, Assoct.Prof.). His knowledge, insights, and constant support have been an invaluable asset throughout the duration of this research.

Thirdly, I would like to thank my family and all my classmates for motivating me to overcome my difficulties and get through them.

## Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	II
ACRONYM and ABBREVIATIONS .....	VI
Abstract .....	VII
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study .....	5
1.3.1 General objective .....	5
1.3.2 Specific objectives .....	5
1.4 Research Questions.....	6
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	6
1.6 Scope of the Study .....	6
1.7 Limitation of the study.....	7
1.8 Organization of the research .....	7
CHAPTER TWO .....	8
RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW .....	8
Introduction.....	8
2.1 News Framing.....	8
2.2 International Media Trends in the War News Report .....	9
2.3 Crisis between Russia and Ukraine.....	11
2.4 Western news media and their coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.....	13
2.5 Russian media coverage of the Ukrainian issue.....	15
2.5.1 Russia Today (RT).....	16
2.5.2 Russian media censorship during the war.....	17
2.6 Frame Typology.....	19
2.7 The inductive method.....	20
2.8 Theoretical Framework .....	21
2.8.1 Framing Theory.....	21
2.8.2 Agenda-setting theory .....	23
CHAPTER THREE .....	24

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	24
Introduction.....	24
3.1 Research Design.....	24
3.2 Research Approach .....	25
3.3 Data Sources .....	25
3.4 Research subjects and samples .....	25
3.4.1 The study subject .....	25
3.4.2 Sampling Method.....	26
3.4.3 Sample Size and Unit of Analysis.....	27
3.4.4 Sampling Procedures.....	27
3.5 Method of Data Collection and Analysis .....	28
3.5.1 Qualitative Frame Analysis (Textual Analysis).....	28
3.5.2 Data Analysis Procedure.....	29
3.5.3 Time Frame for Story Selection.....	30
3.6 Ethical Considerations .....	30
CHAPTER FOUR.....	31
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION .....	31
Introduction.....	31
4.1 Subjects of the study .....	31
4.2 Portrayal of the Russia-Ukraine War by RT and BBC .....	32
4.2.1 Conceptualization of the war .....	32
4.2.2 ‘War’ versus ‘Special Military Operation’ frame .....	33
4.2.3 ‘Invasion’ versus ‘liberation’ frame.....	36
4.2.4 War-oriented versus peace-oriented news framing.....	37
4.3 Dominant frames.....	39
4.3.1 Military conflict frame .....	40
4.3.2 Human interest frame.....	44
4.3.3 Geopolitical conflict frame .....	51
4.3.4 Justification Frame .....	57
4.3.5 Attribution of Responsibility Frame .....	61
4.3.6 Military Aid Frame .....	66
4.3.7 Profile Frame .....	69

4.3.8	Violence of the War Frame .....	73
4.3.9	Genocide frame .....	75
4.3.10	Anti-war frame .....	76
4.3.11	Advance frame .....	78
4.3.12	Diagnosis Frame .....	80
4.4	Ethical issues in the war news framing .....	82
4.5	Discussion of the findings .....	88
CHAPTER FIVE .....		93
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION .....		93
Introduction .....		93
5.1	Conclusion .....	93
5.2	Recommendations .....	95
References .....		97
Appendix A .....		105
Appendix B .....		107
Appendix C .....		108
Appendix D .....		109
Appendix E .....		110
Appendix F .....		111

## **ACRONYM and ABBREVIATIONS**

**BBC**- British Broadcasting Corporation

**(DPR and LPR)**- Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics

**EU**-European Union

**GIC**-Government Information Cell

**G7**-Group of Seven

**IGOs**-Intergovernmental organizations

**NATO**- North Atlantic Treaty Organization

**OSCE**- Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

**(psyop)**- Psychological Operations

**RT**- Russia Today

**UK**- United Kingdom

**UN**-United Nations

**UNHCR**- United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees

**US**- United States

## **Abstract**

*Nowadays, news organizations are settled in the heart of conflict zones and have been crucial players in informing the public and shaping its understanding of specific issues. The military conflict between Russia and Ukraine is happening in the military as well as in the information sphere. Leaning on the media outlet, its audiences see a very different picture of the war. This study examined how the BBC and RT portrayed the war between Russia and Ukraine, covering the first month of the war. The general objective of the study is to explore how the BBC and RT media outlets are framing the war between Russia and Ukraine in their daily news reports posted on their official websites. The research employed a comparative analysis of the portrayal of the warring countries in Western and Russian media. The research employed a qualitative research approach and an exploratory research design. Some 52 website news stories from both, 26 from each medium, were selected using the purposive sampling method. Framing theory and agenda-setting theory were used to guide and interpret the findings. Both news media have different perspectives and framings of the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war. From the beginning, BBC News calls it a 'war' or an 'invasion', while RT News calls it a 'special military operation'. The BBC condemned the Russian aggression, while RT claimed that Russia was defending its national interests and security. The result of the analysis revealed that there were noticeable differences in the choice of frames for reporting refugees, civilians, and military fatalities between both media under study. BBC news stories were mostly about Ukraine, whereas RT News stories mostly narrate the Russian government announcements and offer their justifications. Analysis revealed that the most dominant frames used in the BBC were the military conflict frames, human interest frames, and geopolitical conflict frames, whereas RT used predominantly justification frames, attribution of responsibility frames, and military aid frames. BBC News and RT News portrayed Ukraine's war differently, with BBC News describing it as an illegal invasion by Russia, while RT News defended Russia's security interests. The researcher recommends that BBC and RT World enhance their portrayal of the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict by offering diverse, credible information, avoiding misinformation, and upholding professional standards and ethical principles.*

---

*Keywords: Russia-Ukraine war, Russia invasion, Ukraine war, special military operation, Russia, Ukraine.*

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter mainly discusses the background, problem statement, objectives, and research questions of the study. It also presents the scope, significance, and limitations of the study. The research background provides a brief overview of what the study is about, the problem statement describes the knowledge gap, and the research questions deal with the specific issue that the research was set to address.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Journalism is about interpreting the world. This is often why the framing approach could be a powerful tool to analyze journalistic practices; it focuses on communication as a process of creating a sense of the world (Bruggemann, 2014). A frame is a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration (Reese et al. 2001). Framing has been described as a concept, an approach, a theory, a class of media effects, a perspective, an analytical technique, a paradigm, and a multi-paradigmatic research program (D'Angelo & Kuybers, 2010). In a communication context, to frame something is to highlight certain elements of a seen reality in order to support a certain issue evaluation, casual portrayal, moral evaluation, and/or helpful suggestion for the thing being described (Entman, 1993).

Previously, a lot of media studies on war news framing have been conducted, aiming to understand how different media outlets and journalists report on conflicts and wars and how their coverage affects public opinion and policymaking. Based on various theoretical and methodological approaches, such as agenda setting, framing, indexing, propaganda, and peace journalism, these studies have analyzed the content, sources, tone, and effects of war news across different media platforms, countries, and contexts. The framing of other news and events during coverage of international conflict may also affect perceptions about military actions (Basilaia et al., 2013; Gans, 1979). Furthermore, if media framing affects public opinion powerfully, then research examining wartime media is particular interest to the scholarly community. Previous framing

studies of conflicts and war have shown that the press puts greater emphasis on the military portion of the conflict (Dimitrova et al., 2005; Basilaia et al., 2013).

Nowadays, conflicts usually involve the mass media in a major way. It has been clear that the growing complexity of the media landscape is having an impact on how wars are fought ever since Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2013) developed the notion of dispersed war, which can be understood as the diffusion and amplification of conflict through media channels (Fisher, 2023). The Russian-Ukrainian War appears to be one of the most heavily mediated conflicts in human history, given the rise of digital media.

The war has been the topic of large protests around the world, starting with the large-scale demonstration within the times leading up to the invasion (Babu & Rao, 2017). Ukraine and Russia are two countries that border one another in Eastern Europe. Historically, Ukraine's relationship with Russia began in the late 1920s and 1930s. A root of Russia's war in Ukraine offers a first-rate overview of varied approaches to the roots of the current war (Delwaide, 2022). For many within the west, the crisis over Ukraine has laid bare the foremost unsettling features of President Putin's government: lack of any appreciation for political pluralism; readiness to disperse with opposition forces by DE legitimization through state-controlled propaganda and possibly forceful repression; and resolve to defend what Putin perceives as Russia's vital interests with any means, along with the usage of force, land grabs, and undermining practices like provoking and directing pro-Russian nationalist protests in other nations (Alcaro, 2015). "The crisis in Ukraine has also made it clear that the west is now faced with the matter of how to deal with the revenge-seeking orders of a former superpower", Alcaro stated. Signs of growing competition between the West and Russia were evident long before the unrest in Ukraine escalated into a full-blown crisis. And currently, eventually, it escalated into war.

On February 24, 2022, Russia sent its army into Ukraine and began trying to take over the country by force. This invasion surprised many people because it was the first major war in Europe in several years. The United Nations, G7, EU, and other countries still condemn Russian actions and support Ukrainian forces. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine war has grabbed the world's attention as a top story in the media's outlets. The news of the war between the Russian and Ukrainian governments is gaining tremendous attention from the media across the globe. The reporting of the war in Eastern Europe by global media outlets seems to vary from media to media. While the

Ukraine government and some other western media considered the invasion as if it were a war, Russia acknowledged it as a special military operation.

Within the wealth of framing studies, news sounds' contributions to shaping the frames within the news are an area that deserves much attention. Therefore, this study raises the question of how media and journalists' contribute to the news frame, specifically in the framing of war news. By using framing and agenda-setting theories, this study aimed to explore whether or not both selected news outlets depicted the same war differently. Thus, the study viewed the framing of the Ukraine-Russia war by taking the BBC and RT World as the study cases to examine the portrayal of war, taking the first month of the war in Russian media and western big international news outlets.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

A frame is “a central organizing idea for creating a sense of relevant events and recommending the issue” (Gamson, 1989). Facts remain neutral until framed; thus, how the media frames an issue or event will affect public understanding of that issue or event. Although it's argued that providing contextual cues for interpretation of events can be a necessary part of reporting, when journalists infuse their political preferences into news stories, the potential for manipulation of audience perceptions increases. This becomes especially important when one considers that a robust feature of frames is that they define problems, causes, and solutions, although not necessarily in this order (Kuypers, 2002).

What's been happening in Ukraine since February 24, 2022, is seen in a very different light and interpreted in several ways, using different terms and depending on where people live. Ukrainian and western media call the invasion “war”, whereas the Russian media use the term “special military operation”. It seems like there might be some differences in framing the war news between some western media and non-western media outlets. Consequently, as The Guardian reported on March 4, 2022, the BBC website was blocked in Russia as shortwave radio was brought back to cover the Russia-Ukraine war. “Access to BBC websites has been restricted in Russia, hours after the corporation brought back its shortwave radio service in Ukraine and Russia to ensure civilians in both countries can access news during the war,” The Guardian reported. BBC is one of the globally popular media from the west, and on the other hand, RT is one of the non-western media that the researcher picked as its study subject to examine and evaluate the issue at hand.

A number of studies have been conducted on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and war with different approaches, taking various worldwide media outlets and their coverage using different methodologies and analyses. (See for instance, Atiner, 2022; Vrba, 2022; Zhend, 2022; Pavlik, 2022). The study on war reports during the first week of the Russia-Ukraine war of 2022, as reported by the New York Post, the Global Times of China, and South Africa's Citizen newspapers (Atiner, 2022), found that the three newspapers adopted different degrees of war reporting frames to cover the war, with the consideration of the audience affecting not just the choice of a story but also the tone and style of its presentation. According to Atiner (2022), the Russia-Ukraine war is a global event with implications for every country in the world; hence, the study included western, Asian, and African media news. The framing differences uncovered in the study might point to important regional ideological differences between Western, Asian, and African news organizations; however, the study didn't include neither Russian nor Ukrainian media, which are closest to the events of the war. And also, it is fair to consider the ethical issues regarding the war news, which the current research intends to fill.

Vrba (2022) studied the framing of the war in Ukraine by taking the U.S. media. The researcher examined the view that there might have been more attitudes toward the Ukraine war in the American media. The researcher collected online articles from February 14 to April 18 from the CNN archive and used the qualitative method of data analysis. Even if the study can be a good root and provide a much more important contribution to the understanding of an issue, it hasn't included any media from both countries.

Zheng (2022) examined the BBC Live news reports on the Russia-Ukraine war, including the change in battlefield situations, the reactions of other countries and some international organizations such as the United Nations, and its influence on Ukraine. The study, which conducted in-depth analysis about how the BBC encouraged Ukrainian people, the Ukraine army, and the Ukraine government's dilemma, aroused the sympathy of many people all over the world through live news reports of the Russia-Ukraine war. Pavlik (2022) stated that "however, disinformation campaigns are being run, and through the use of social media, the public in Russia and many other countries of the world is seeing only a grossly distorted picture of the reality of the war in Ukraine".

The existing studies have made important contributions regarding the issue at hand. However, what makes the current study different is that it examines the framing of war news by the BBC and RT and how they portrayed the war in Ukraine, along with filling the time and geographical gap. Beyond that, there has been no publicized research conducted on a comparative analysis of the BBC and RT to investigate how frames have been influenced by the media's position towards the war. The BBC is one of the most respected media, especially influential among citizens in western countries. RT is a Russian state-controlled international news channel, and it evolved into an important tool by the time Russia invaded Ukraine, even if it is regularly cited as a propaganda medium for the Russian government.

Additionally, there is also a methodology gap. In the previous studies mentioned, the researchers used either the quantitative method or the mixed method and used interviews and questionnaires. In the current study, the researcher used a qualitative frame analysis method. Generally, the researcher picked this topic because the Russia-Ukraine war has been a global topic. It has become the number one worldwide topic, and this study examined at least a portion of the media coverage of this war. The study aimed to fill the gap in collaborative research by looking at a currently active issue and examining the framing of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war across the leading BBC and RT World.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 General objective**

The general objective of the study is to explore how the BBC and RT media outlets are framing the war between Russia and Ukraine in their daily news reports posted on their official websites.

#### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

The following are the specific objectives of the study:

1. To examine how BBC and RT media outlets portrayed the Russia-Ukraine war in their news.
2. To explore the dominant frames implemented by the news media under study while covering the Russia-Ukraine war.
3. To identify how selected media outlets exercised ethics of journalism in the news framing of the Russia-Ukraine war.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

With the research objectives in mind, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. How did the BBC and RT world media outlets portray the war between Russia and Ukraine in their daily news?
2. What forms of dominant frames are implemented in the news reports of the Russia-Ukraine war in the selected media?
3. How did the selected media outlets exercise ethical journalism in the framing of the Russia-Ukraine war?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is believed to point out the various perspectives of the two selected international media framing in news reporting of the war between the two forces. Comparative studies have the potential to counteract naive universalism, deepen understanding of one's own country media by contrasting its familiar features with those of other media systems, and shed more light on questions about how political elite positions within nations affect media coverage (Rossler, 2009; Dimitrova & Stromback, 2005; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Gurevitch & Blumler, 2004).

By taking a look at the review literature's and therefore the study cases of the research, the readers may become familiar with the conceptualization and practicalities of varied media framing materialized by the international news agencies while interpreting the issue from their different points of view. Thus, this study can help the theoretical and practical users of the research know what reasonably sound news framing is being deployed by the selected global media and, further on, be aware of how they're reporting the war. The study also helps readers anticipate what kind of positive and negative impact those news reports could have on Russia and Ukraine. Generally, the study would also be a stepping stone for media and communication researchers who aspire to pursue further research on Russia-Ukraine war framing and its world media representation.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study is limited to analyzing the news frames within the stories of two selected international media: the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) and RT (Russia Today). The study was particularly concentrated on the framing of the war news between Russia and Ukraine within the time frame when the war began, from February 24 up to March 24, 2022. This study is limited to

investigating how the BBC and RT represented the war in their news, the frames that the media outlets under study employed to define their portrayal of the Russia-Ukraine war and whether or not those selected media outlets adhered to journalistic standards when reporting on the war between Ukraine and Russia. One-month data from February 24, 2022—the beginning of the war when Russia sent its army to Ukraine— and March 24, 2022 selected because in this month there were many major events that took place during the war that grabbed the attention of media all over the world. It is limited to examining how the BBC and RT framed the Russia-Ukraine war between February 24, 2022 (when Russia sent its army to Ukraine) and March 24, 2022 (when NATO leaders met in Brussels for the next steps of the Russia-Ukraine war).

### **1.7 Limitation of the study**

Limitation of the study: the focus of this research was to analyze the online published textual news stories from only two media outlets. In this case, news framing effects, journalists, and the media house's pressure on frame issues concerning the subject could have been studied, but because of the existing distance between the researcher and research area, it was limited to analyzing only the news stories published on both media websites. This sphere of focus has not made any simplifications about the framing of the Russia-Ukraine war. Therefore, it is critical to understand that the war is too complex to obtain a comprehensive idea based on the sampled data of the study.

### **1.8 Organization of the research**

This study is organized as follows: chapter one presents the introduction part, statement of the problem, the general and specific objective of the study, research questions and significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations, and organization of the study. The second chapter review of related literature and the theoretical framework were discussed in this chapter. Chapter three deals with, the research design, research approach, qualitative frame analysis, data sources, sampling technique, time frame, selection of news, and data analysis procedure. Chapter four focuses on the analysis and presentation of data and the discussion of the findings. The fifth chapter deals with the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

Under this chapter, related literature has been reviewed in a way that allows for the identification of similarities and differences with the overall concerns of this study investigation. In addition, different conceptual and theoretical frameworks that can support and guide the data analysis part of the research are also the main issues to be discussed within the next subtopics of this chapter.

#### **2.1 News Framing**

People can use framing to make meaning of the world around them and reestablish a reality that is valid according to them and their own view of the world. “Frames help to minimize the complexity of information and serve as a two-way process: frames help to interpret and reconstruct reality” (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, p. 407; Wubishet, 2016). There are four frames: journalist, audience, issue, and news (content) that, along with subordinate frame types, constitute the main elements of the news framing process; each frame is rooted in the two conceptual dimensions of frames (De’Angelo & Shaw, 2018). Media researchers are taking the approach of framing from the opposite end. They try to decode the frame that has previously been applied to the message by the author. After finding certain frames, researchers can draw conclusions on what the author wanted to convey, how he or she wanted to convey it, and what his or her intentions for doing so might have been. Once the intention for a certain way of framing has been detected, media researchers can look at its actual impact on the audience. Thus, they can decide whether the frame was successful or not (Janssen, 2010).

Journalist frames are located within journalists’ thoughts about an issue, person, or event. Bruggemann (2014) defined journalists’ frames as “cognitive patterns of individual journalists” which is consistent with Scheufele (2004), who defined them as “consistent patterns of expectations” and a “consistent bundle of schemata”. Functionally, a journalist frame forms a context for understanding, interpreting, and ultimately expressing the facts of an issue, making it similar to the issue frames of sources that associate with journalists because they wish to use news

stories as a technological platform for social advocacy and public persuasion (De' Angelo & Shaw, 2018). When news coverage is influenced by strong cultural traditions, particularly the relationship between the authorities and the media, the tendency for sanitized press coverage may also correspond with the selection of specific government sources (Basilaia, 2009).

## **2.2 International Media Trends in the War News Report**

The world has been blown over with a speculum of battles that make the human planet surrounded by continents with war-torn countries. This study enactment, characterized by the repugnant frictions and hostile collisions that whip up warfare between groups, countries, and allied superpowers, is also the leading common phenomenon on the agendas of the Global Media daily news report. According to Farida (2011), reporting about war and peace, however, requires journalists to adhere to different demands. The journalists who conduct war news reports demand to approach the army general on war fronts, the leaders of the warring states, official spokespersons, and public relations officers, as well as the leaders in charge of leading their troops.

Most of the time, in conducting and transmitting war news reports, journalists should have to be critical in selecting the appropriate words in their language usage, even though they are challenged by the terminologies used by their interviewees, which are found to be victimizing and demonizing. Among the basic tents in the objectives of journalism, the use of qualified and accredited news sources, along with personal objectivity, is an essential code of ethics within the domains of the professional standard. Embedded reporters were those who traveled with combat troops and essentially co-existed with a particular unit in the field (Kuypers, 2005).

## **War Journalism and Peace Journalism**

The war has been highly newsworthy. Depictions of the course of wars, victories, and defeats are dramatic and affect the fortunes of many people, and in some cases, almost the entire world. It is not only fought by military means; besides the fighting on the ground, in the air, and at sea, a media war is fought over public opinion and the will to fight of the population and troops (Thussu & Freeman, 2003; Nohrstedt, 2009; Taylor, 1997).

War journalism is the most common and prevailing way of depicting war. The media become a battlefield, and journalists are drawn into the war, either willingly, under orders, or even

unexpectedly. Modern war cannot be fought without public support, and great efforts are made by the public to accept and preferably support their own side's actions in the conflict. Fighting parties are creating ever greater efforts to influence, direct, and control the reporting disseminated via global media, and this is particularly real in the case of visual materials such as pictures and videos (Nohrstedt, 2009).

War news attracts a huge audience and often engages people both emotionally and intellectually (Nohrstedt, 2009). War journalism contributes to risking an escalation of war, in which the media plays an important role in the execution of the propaganda war (Andersson, 2019). Since conflicts are portrayed as a dual power game between winners and losers in a black-and-white context, which leads to the psychological electrifying of conflicts (Ottosen & Ovrebo, 2016), special emphasis is placed on visual storytelling in news reporting, which has come to just about completely lead war journalism as well as various other forms of journalism, though with significantly more serious and controversial inferences. Strovsky (2015) argues that propaganda seems set to propagate warlike jargon and does not allow for alternate viewpoints in assessing political events. Such media portrayal leaves an alternative impression in the audience's thoughts. This can be recognized when considering the entire situation in Ukraine from late 2014 to the present. Mcgoldrick and Lynch (2000) offered 17 journalism-based practices that include avoiding portraying the conflict as consisting of only two parties, focusing on solutions rather than differences, finding ways to report on the long-term consequences of psychological damage trauma instead of only discussing short-term visible effects, and using language that empowers people rather than victimizing language that dis-empowers them (Gouse et al., 2018).

According to Galtung (1998; 2003), there are four key distinctions between war and peace journalism. First, whereas peace journalism emphasizes a win-win perspective, provides historical and cultural contexts for the conflict, gives voices to all parties, chooses a proactive approach to preventing the conflict before it occurs, humanizes all sides, and focuses on violence's invisible effects, violence-oriented war journalism emphasizes a zero-sum perspective, presents only the conflict's real-time data, emphasizes the dominant side, and gives voice to one side. Second, peace journalism, which has the quality of being truth-oriented, allows journalists to expose lies and untruths from all sides, in contrast to war journalism, which Galtung (2003) describes as propaganda-oriented, focusing on hiding one side's falsehoods and exposing the other side's lies.

As a result, peace journalism may provide a framework for the media to avoid reporting that is intended to spread propaganda, allowing their audience to form their own opinions about conflict based on the available information (Lynch, 2006). Thirdly, peace journalism identifies everyone who is harmed by the war, exposes all criminals, and celebrates peacemakers. Contrarily, war media highlights the hardships of the dominant side, focuses on men and elite peacemakers, and decries the wrongdoers on the opposing side. Fourth, whereas war journalism seeks triumph, peace journalism is solution-oriented (Nguyen, 2023). Notably, despite the differences between the indicators for peace and war journalism, one news story can contain both war and peace frames thanks to the dual nature of the two types of journalistic measurement.

### **2.3 Crisis between Russia and Ukraine**

The political unrest in Ukraine and relations between Kiev and Moscow increased the potential for Ukraine to tumble into a crisis with Russia. The abrupt decision by the Ukrainian government to develop economic connections with Russia rather than the European Union, set off anti-government protests in Kiev in November 2013, which led to the beginning of the Ukraine crisis (Watanabe, 2017). After violent encounters with the police, pro-EU protests in the capital resulted in President Viktor Yanukovich's ouster in February. Despite vehement condemnation from the new Ukrainian government, the United States, and the European Union, Russia reacted to the fall of the pro-Russian government by annexing Crimea in March. Midway through 2014, the conflict was resolved, although pro-Russian militants are still active in east Ukraine and Crimea is still under Russian authority.

Conflicts with Yulia Tymoshenko and Victor Yanukovich during their terms as prime minister account for a large part of Ukraine's delayed and halting progress toward realizing its potential in the years following the Orange Revolution in 2014 (Pifer, 2009). Ukraine's relations with Russia remain troubled by disputes over the availability of gas, Yushchenko's desire to integrate Ukraine into NATO arguments over the Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF), and other difficulties. The Russian leadership has well-kept a gentle barrage of criticism directed at Kiev; at the same time, important European countries have become hesitant in their engagement with Ukraine. The fight between pro-Western nationalists and pro-Russian separatists is being described as a civil war. After President Yanukovich was overthrown in front of thousands of protesters on Maidan Square and

Crimea was annexed, the conflict broke out. As a result, "Putin's Russia" is subject to severe sanctions from the West (Goudimiak, 2016).

According to Tsygankov (2015), the ongoing conflict in Ukraine's eastern "Donbas" region, which borders Russia, is the primary cause of the current crisis. Almost simultaneously with the invasion of Crimea, a number of anti-government demonstrations broke out in Ukraine's industrial east. Outraged by the removal of the president who was born in Donbas, pro-Russian and anti-government organizations started to stake out their claims to the territory and voice their fervent opposition to the new Western-leaning interim administration. The activists founded the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) and the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR), which stand in for the two largest cities in the Donbas region, with the support of Russia. As they ferociously expressed their displeasure with the new administration, these pro-Russian rebels and separatists started to brutally capture government buildings and regions (Goudimiak, 2016).

Goudimiak (2016) states that, while the European Union has included Ukraine in its Eastern Partnership policy, Kiev remains frustrated with the EU's continued reluctance to supply Ukraine with the prospect of future membership. Ukrainians worry that the hassle of resetting relations with Russia will come to their expense. Against this difficult backdrop, several scenarios could generate crises in Ukraine.

The majority of analysts concur that Viktor Yanukovich's (Ukraine's former president) decision to renege on an association agreement with the European Union in November 2013 mobilized anti-government opposition in the form of the Maidan movement, ushering in what has come to be known as the Ukrainian Revolution. The "Ukraine conflict" However, beyond this, political and scholarly observers have put out wildly divergent interpretations of the nature of the conflict, and these public framings have important political and ideological repercussions.

The Ukraine crisis was not only a significant geopolitical event, but it was also an intriguing case study for political communication research because numerous news stories about the crisis were created and disseminated internationally by Russian media in addition to American or West European news outlets. Media observers have referred to the struggle between the two sides to cover the situation as an "information war" (Galeotti, 2015; Hutchings & Szostek, 2015). While focused on Russia's engagement on Ukrainian territory, the western media mostly depicted the

crisis as a democratic uprising against the corrupt leadership in Kiev, while the Russian media depicted it as a nationalist takeover that threatened the safety of ethnic Russians (Watanabe, 2017).

The Russian military crossed the Ukrainian border on February 24, 2022. Long-standing tensions between Russia and Ukraine, whose relations have entered their most extreme phase since the political crisis during the 2014 Euromaidan protests, have tragically resulted in war (Fisher, 2023). The collapse of social consensus, the protracted civil war in the east of Ukraine, territorial disputes, the proxification of the conflict, the paranoid refusal to reach a compromise, and the diplomatic failure that resulted in the beginning of 2022 led to an unfolding humanitarian catastrophe (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2022; The Council on Foreign Relations, 2023; UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, 2023), as well as an unprecedented evacuation of millions of people both inside and outside of Ukraine, which sparked the worst refugee crisis ever seen outside of the nation. The media was involved in all of these processes and played a significant role in several of them.

#### **2.4 Western news media and their coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict**

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 received extensive coverage in the international media (Forrey, 2022). Numerous perspectives on the conflict's impact on diplomacy, the economy, and national security were presented. Because the military operations of nuclear powers like Russia have an international impact, it is important to note how this battle was portrayed in the media.

It's crucial to remember that this battle has been intensifying for years, if not decades. Knowing the past of Ukraine and Russia is necessary before properly analyzing the news and framing the current situation. This background explains the context in which the research on Russia's first invasion and subsequent annexation of Crimea was conducted, as well as how Russia is portrayed in Western media. It is important to study how Western media reports because it affects how people think, has a lot of power, and creates stories and images. To understand the bigger picture of society and politics, we need to know how Western media works, what it favors, and what it does. Audiences from many places depend on Western media for news, which can shape how they see the world and act on it (Fisher, 2023).

Looking at the media background of the understudy is important for the current study to provide a short overview of them, specifically regarding Russia-Ukraine conflict coverage. According to Hallin and Mancini's (2004) media systems theory, the UK media system is characterized by the Liberal Model, which features a high level of market mechanisms, commercial media, and journalistic professionalism, alongside a low level of state intervention and political parallelism, which Blumler and Gurevitch (1975) theorize as 'party-press parallelism (Liu, 2020).

When two countries engage in war, but it does not stir our own sense of nationalism or patriotism, we mostly consume all the information we are provided with and draw opinions accordingly. In a globalized world, it is virtually impossible to remain unaffected by any war in which major world powers are directly or indirectly engaged. During the Euromaidan protests, Western media frequently concentrated on the dramatic clashes between protesters and riot police, assaults on journalists, and protester fatalities. During the conflict before the 2022 war began, Western media focused on the conflict between police and demonstrators, East and West Ukraine, and Russia and Europe. Reports highlighted the magnitude, inventiveness, and tenacity of the protests while also highlighting the split between the west and east, with pro-Yanukovich protestors and pro-European protestors using nationalist chants and symbols. Reports highlight the magnitude, inventiveness, and tenacity of Ukraine's protests, featuring music, EU flags, and solidarity messages. They suggest Ukraine's split between west and east, with pro-Yanukovich protestors forming camps and using nationalist chants (Dyczok, 2015).

### **BBC World**

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is the major public news medium in the UK and an influential media outlet among most citizens in western countries. The main income of the news media comes from the annual television license fees of most households, businesses, and organizations that use electronic devices of any kind to receive or record live television programming. With the development of science and technology, it has not only offered news through radio and television as traditional media but also disseminated news information through new media.

The study conducted by Zheng (2023), an in-depth analysis about how the BBC encouraged the Ukrainian people, Ukrainian army, and Ukrainian government in a dilemma, aroused the sympathy

of many people all over the world through live news reports of the Russia-Ukraine war. The reactions of international organizations to the war were included in BBC Live news reports, which brought more pressure on the Russian government and the Russian army. Meanwhile, the Russia-Ukraine War has been ongoing; the study only chose the BBC Live news reports during a time period of the war to conduct content analysis. Dimitrova (2006) stated that, when we analyzed the content of BBC online news coverage on the 2003 Iraq war; it was substantial, balanced, and presented international perspectives. Then, in the current study, the researcher included RT as one of the study's subject and conducted a comparative framing analysis of the Russia-Ukraine war.

## **2.5 Russian media coverage of the Ukrainian issue**

Regarding Russian media coverage of Ukrainian issues, the current political crisis in Ukraine has become markedly visualized not only because of the very contradictory situation in the country but also because of its coverage within the Russian media. Things initiated new information tendencies, which seem to be illustrative for understanding not only the relationship between Russia and Ukraine but also the development of the media sphere and its role within contemporary Russian politics (Strovsky, 2015).

Strovsky (2015) stated that media coverage of the events in south-eastern Ukraine explicitly demonstrates that this information gravitates toward a simplified understanding of the conflict and stimulates the existence of stereotypes and myths as a background for media manipulation. Journalism in Russia appears to be dwindling and giving way to propaganda, which has nothing in common with media non-partisanship (Strovsky, 2015). The media's reporting on the situation in Ukraine is being reflected in society at large and hence in the media. Since last year, there has been armed warfare in the south-eastern region of Ukraine. On the one hand, it continues between the Ukrainian national army's forces and other associate forces, as well as the detachments from the unrecognized Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics.

The Russian media frequently covers a wide range of military-related activities, the deaths of civilians, including Russian journalists, and the defense of the Russian-speaking community in Ukraine. It's important to recognize the distinctions between journalism and propaganda in order to understand the nature of the data calculations done today in the Russian media. This will help you identify the information problem related to the coverage of genuine events in Ukraine. Because of the world's objections, journalism and propaganda have very different goals. Lack of objectivity

dominates the Russian media's depiction of the political climate in Ukraine (Strovsky, 2015). In Russia, most of the population is prepared to grasp this kind of reflection of Ukrainian reality, and most people feel discomfort with the information being broadcast. On matters directly related to Russia's immediate national interests, RT's reporting sometimes becomes "materially misleading". Examples include its reporting of the 2008 Georgian war and the 2014 Crimean annexation.

Strovsky (2015) stated that a lack of objectivity dominates the Russian media's depiction of the political climate in Ukraine, and with its slanted presentation of the political agenda, this, on the one hand, exemplifies the historical roots of the information process. On the other hand, such reporting has carried over the information standards put in place by Putin. The attitude of the Russian media toward the US and EU nations was, and continues to be, a good illustration of this situation from the beginning. Political and economic sanctions have been put in place between Russia and Western nations as a result of Russia's annexation of Crimea as a part of Ukraine in March 2014 (Strovsky, 2015). A review of earlier studies on the conflict between Ukraine and Russia (Liu, 2020; Roman et al., 2017; Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016) revealed that RT has seized upon the Ukrainian government and the existence of pro-Ukraine far-right extremists and labeled them as "fascists" and "Nazis." Before the currently ongoing war, while framing the so-called "civil war," RT depicted Ukraine in a poor light by bringing up human rights incidents like Kyiv's use of chemical weapons. As RT asserted, this was made possible by the West's "immoral" and "supportive" stance in suppressing these facts while condemning Russia (Liu, 2023).

### **2.5.1 Russia Today (RT)**

Russia Today (RT) is a Russian government-funded media network that runs cable and satellite TV channels directed to audiences outside of Russia as well as providing internet content in various languages, including Russian. RT International was established in 2005. Currently, it operates 24-hour news channels in English, Arabic, and Spanish, as well as online news outlets in six languages (Imamgaiazova, 2016). RT had evolved into an important tool by the time Russia invaded Ukraine. At the beginning of Russia's military buildup on Ukraine's borders, RT followed a familiar playbook. While experts everywhere questioned the likelihood of an actual attack, it went further, ridiculing warnings of war as hysterical. The full invasion that began on February 24 shattered an illusion. RT swung rapidly to endorsing the Kremlin's favored narrative: that its forces were

engaged in a “special military operation” defending ethnic Russians, not a violent war. Thus, such dissimilarity in framing the war led a researcher to choose the RT as one of the study subjects.

### **2.5.2 Russian media censorship during the war**

The war was described very differently by the West and Russia, creating two opposite media sides with a lot of disagreement. Both sides (West and Russia) also tried to silence the media that disagreed with their official stories, making it harder for people to get and compare different views. Ukraine shut down TV channels accused of spreading “Russian propaganda” (dw.com, 2021), and the EU banned Russian state-owned TV channels RT and Sputnik for “misinforming and lying on behalf of the Kremlin” (Council of the EU, 2022). The media in Russia only showed one perspective of the conflict, how it started and how it progressed (Newman et al., 2022), and shut down local media outlets that were more liberal, such as “TV Rain” and “Echo of Moscow”, for allegedly spreading lies about what the Russian army did in Ukraine” (Pinchuk, 2022; Gessen, 2022). Only the official perspective provides the Russian public with the opportunity to learn about the situation in Ukraine. Thus, the media gives the impression that Russians totally back President Putin's political stance on Ukraine. The polls of sociological services that frequently disseminate such information also appear to inspire the Russian media. As a result, the Russian public appears to both support Russia’s political position as being correct and distrust Western nations' political systems. Undoubtedly, such a posture is causing further tensions between the rivals.

The West backed the new Ukrainian leaders who emerged from the Euromaidan protests and opposed Russia as the situation worsened. This influenced how the Western media and politicians reported the information, supporting the goals of the new Ukraine and shaping public opinion. In the West, the media has formed a news agenda that does not follow the principles of objectivity. This media bias has become very influential and has raised concerns and debates among the public (Ebrahim, 2022; Bishara, 2022; Gregory, 2023). Some people in the West also feel that the media has not done a good job of explaining the wider implications of the conflict or providing different perspectives on it (Newman et al., 2022, p. 36). The media plays a role in creating polarized discourses, and it is important to consider the differences between the media systems of Western and Russian contexts, as they are affected by the kind of regime (Stier, 2015). The Russian media system is under a lot of government control and censorship because of its electoral autocratic

system, as shown by academic research. The Western media system is more complicated and has various perspectives that may not agree with each other.

At different phases of the war, the media plays a variety of functions, according to Susan L. Carurtheles (2011). She claims that during periods of relative peace, the media tends to be objective, but during times of war, the media becomes more propaganda-oriented. Prior to the start of the war, the media performed a preemptive and legitimizing role by establishing social acceptance for the use of skewed news reporting that benefited the ruling elites. The media takes on a propaganda role during a war's mobilization phase, spreading official messages that support the hostilities (Fisher, 2022). The media plays a crucial propaganda role in spreading state themes during the active phase of total war (Carurtheles, 2011). Conflict-related stories have become more common and visible as a result of the advancement and wide acceptance of mass media technologies, including both analog and digital platforms. These stories can have a substantial impact on both people and organizations. In addition to the news's editorial substance and the pictures and stories that are provided to us, how we interact with the media also affects how we see things (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2013).

Regarding the currently ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, the Russian government has actively worked to prevent the reporting from using words like "war" and "invasion" in favor of the softer-sounding "Special Military Operation" (Sangal et al., 2022). Unsurprisingly, the severely censored Russian news media has continuously exaggerated Russian military victories while downplaying the severity of the crisis in Ukraine (Thompson, 2022). The Russian government worked immediately to seize control of the narrative regarding the unfolding war and its multiple ramifications, including the extraordinary spectrum of sanctions imposed against Russia by Western nations soon after it invaded Ukraine.

All media outlets were instructed to utilize only information from official Russian sources when reporting on the "special operation" in Ukraine on February 24 by Russia's media watchdog, Roskomnadzor (see IRIS 2012-8/36). According to the report, "the number of cases of the media and other online information sources disseminating unverified and unreliable information has significantly increased in recent hours." This broad caution specifically alluded to Article 49 ("Duties of a Journalist") of the 1991 Statute on the Mass Media, which calls for verifying the

accuracy of information before disseminating it. Roskomnadzor instructed media and information sources that they must only utilize information and data they obtained "if it comes from official Russian sources" when compiling their materials and publications regarding the performance of the "special operation." We emphasize that reliable and current information is only available from official Russian news sources, Roskomnadzor said in its conclusion.

Roskomnadzor went on to say that it has begun to block Internet sites that hosted fraudulent information at the Prosecutor General's Office's request. Without any warnings or clarifications as to what specifically was to be regarded as inaccurate, these resources were prohibited. In order to evaluate the criminal liability of the owners of such media resources, Roskomnadzor stated that "materials on such cases" would be given to the Investigative Committee of Russia. Roskomnadzor only provided one particular example, which was the use of the terms "attack," "invasion," and/or "a declaration of war" in place of the phrase "special operation." It was also deemed illegal to spread information regarding the bombardment of Ukrainian cities, the deaths of citizens there as a result of "actions of the Russian Army," as well as "mass losses" of Russian military soldiers.

## 2.6 Frame Typology

**Specific and Generic Frames:**-Certain frames are pertinent to specific issues or events, which can then be labeled as issue-specific frames, while generic frames are identified in relation to different topics in various time and cultural contexts (De Vreese, 2005). "A high degree of issue sensitivity makes analysis that draws on issue-specific frames difficult to generalize, compare, and use as empirical evidence for theory building" (Berger, 2007), cited in Aster (2022). The issue-specific schemas are wonderfully detailed, but they do not allow us to examine patterns and test hypotheses across issues (Boydston et al., 2013).

According to Littlejohn and Foss (2009), there are two kinds of generic news frames: episodic frames and thematic frames. Episodic frame: real or specific events that are the result of actions by individuals, while the thematic one discusses public issues as abstract instances and puts responsibility on abstract society (Iyengar, 1991). Episodic framing depicts public issues in terms of concrete instances or specific events. Thematic framing, on the other hand, places public issues in some general or nonconcrete context and found that subjects shown episodic reports were less likely to consider society responsible for the event, and subjects shown thematic reports were less likely to consider individual accountability (Iyengar, 1991). Viewers of the thematic frames were

more likely to attribute the causes and solutions to governmental policies and other factors beyond the victim's control.

### **War-specific frames**

In this study, the researcher's concern was investigating the media frames that are employed by the BBC and RT in conducting their daily news reports on their official websites about the war between Russia and Ukraine. Thus, among types of media framing techniques, this study employed the one that has a particular focus and interest in the area of war news framing, called war-specific frames. Dimitrova and Stromback (2005) define a war-specific frame as a method used to develop several specific frames with regard to the coverage of the news story tone. While issue-specific frames allow for "great specificity and detail," generic frames offer a systematic platform for comparison across issues, frames, and topics (de Vreese, Peter, and Semetko 2001, 108). Accordingly, different war-specific frames are developed and coded under the following eight central organizing themes (Temesgen, 2021).

1. **Human interest frame:** emphasis on the human participants and involved parties in the course of events from both opposed parts.
2. **Responsibility frame:** emphasis on the parties and individuals who are considered responsible for a given scenario, issue, or event of war.
3. **Violence of war frame:** focuses on various destructions caused by the war.
4. **Anti-war protest frame:** emphasis on oppositions against the war that condemns one or both parts that can be taking a form of demonstration by the protesters against the war.
5. **Military conflict frame:** focusing on the military conflicts, troops, equipment, and the like.
6. **Advance frame:** emphasis on the progress and advancement of the war, captured places by the combatant parts, and the outcome of the war.
7. **Profile frame:** emphasis on the profiles of the two opponent parts, their officials as well as supporters.
8. **Civil war frame:** interprets the war regional conflict.

### **2.7 The inductive method**

Communication research employs inductive and deductive methods to identify frames in news. The deductive method is based on predefined frames, which are subsequently quantified in the

sample of analysis (Abraham, 2018). The inductive approach requires an open approach to the sample analysis to detect the frames it contains. There are no frames defined a priori, so that the identified frames will come exclusively from the sample, and not from frames used previously by other authors or from previous ideas proposed by researchers (Muniz, 2007; Abraham, 2018).

The use of an inductive approach is suggested for frames, starting from the idea that in the text we cannot find explicit frames but clues that lead to them (Abraham, 2018). These clues, called framing devices or reasoning devices, are terms, metaphors, examples, descriptions, arguments, and images; they can be implicit (Grop, 2007). According to Dekavalla (2016), frames in the news can be identified by the presence or absence of certain key words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments. An inductive frame analysis needs to be done before a list of frames can be drawn up (De'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010).

## **2.8 Theoretical Framework**

Communication scholars working at the nexus of media studies and political communication have studied framing for over 40 years, focusing much attention on social actors, which are called journalists, sources, advocates, and audiences, who make, use, seek, and share news (Dimitrova, 2018; Daniela, 2008). Reese (2007) stated that “framings value does not hinge on its potential as a unified research domain but as a provocative model that bridges parts of the field that need to be touched with each other”. In our view, knowledge of news framing has advanced in what only appears to be a fragmented fashion because the bridging model encourages scholars to draw on diverse theoretical perspectives and build conceptual definitions of “frame” and “framing” tailored to specific elements and mechanisms of the news framing process (D'Angelo & Shaw, 2009). Accordingly, as indicated in the first chapter, the general objective of this study is to explore how the BBC and RT media outlets are framing the ongoing war news between Russia and Ukraine in their daily news reports posted on their official websites. Thus, in order to achieve the objective of the research, using the guidance of an appropriate framing theory as a theoretical framework is mandatory.

### **2.8.1 Framing Theory**

We can better understand how people form their perceptions of reality and the crucial role that media outlets play in influencing those beliefs by employing the framing theory (Zamith, 2022).

Framing doesn't work in a void, it supplements altering the existing concepts for effective manipulations in conflicts through the process of mediatization (Thankachan & Thomas, 2021). A crucial implication of this perspective is that it is simply impossible for journalism to mirror reality. Journalists cannot potentially portray a realistic reality in their work if they are unable to adequately capture it due to their inherent flaws. Journalism, on the other hand, can only somewhat approximate reality. Even if journalists were able to faithfully reproduce reality, they would still only be able to depict a portion of it due to time and space constraints (Zamith, 2023). Goffman's (1974) framing theory posits that any event can be described in terms of a focus that includes a wide meaning or a narrow one. To frame means to organize one's individual experience. In his explication of the issue, Goffman (1974) likened this process to "stripping" the issue, which involves referring to any element of activity, including imaginary happenings seen from the perspective of those who are involved in them.

Weaving the human mind to explain the way we perceive reality is a difficult chore since social understanding is symbolic. Fundamental human existence is the sum of our beliefs, emotions, cognitions, and perceptions, which in daily life form our opinions, perceptions, debates, and discussions in the real world. This is how the capability of frames becomes an essential center of attraction, as it can play with our collective senses. The wide capability of frames is to enable the audience to focus attention on some areas in particular, which results in the creation of meanings within the intended circle. This ability of structures to later influence people's judgments and choices increases the success rate of frames, thereby using media frames as an essential element for the construction of social reality. "The framing of the public mind" (Castells, 2009) is today a well-developed field in media to shape ideologies, set agendas, fix propaganda, and form priming effects. Framing theory has been likened to agenda-setting theory, which dictates how news is selected and why (Smith & Higgins, 2013; Gardner, 2022). However, while agenda-setting theory decrees messages are conveyed to an audience, framing theory is more concerned with how the message is interpreted.

According to concepts from Entman's framing theory, Arowolo (2017) claims that without comparing the narratives, it is challenging to fully and accurately identify frames because many of the framing devices can seem like normal, unremarkable word and image choices. Gardner (2022) says it's crucial to comprehend this because news may significantly alter and shape our ideas.

People rely on news to completely grasp our world because the majority of people do not travel to combat zones. According to Entman's research, the media significantly contributes to what people think about their political preferences and evaluations, precisely by influencing what they think about (Gardner, 2022; Entman, 1989).

### **2.8.2 Agenda-setting theory**

The agenda-setting theory is a theory that discusses how the mass media set a particular issue as a public agenda. The public agenda is the main focus or prime issue that members of society or the public care about. This theory elaborates the connection in terms of relationships between the emphasis that the mass media places on an issue and the media audience or the public reaction or features to such matters (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009; Zehn, 2014).

Agenda-setting theory is considered an important theory not only in mass communication but also extends to other related social science studies such as political communication (Reese, 1991). Agenda-setting theory assumes that the mass media lacks the ability to set the public agenda, particularly on matters of opinion or attitude (Cohen, 1963). However, the mass media has a special approach to contributing to or influencing the audience's perceptions, values, focuses, and priorities. With such mass media influence, media audiences tend to form their own opinions or focus on the issues worth adding to their mental agendas (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009). The agenda-setting of the mass media can be derived from the public agenda. Agenda-setting can also be set up by government policy or by politicians. As identified by Rogers and Dearing (1988), there are three main agenda settings: (i) the public agenda, (ii) the media agenda, and (iii) the policy agenda. In Cohen's view, mainstream media agenda setting only tells media audiences what they should think about and not what to think (Zain, 2014).

According to the agenda-setting theory, news reports' topics can be predetermined by the media. As news stories about an incident continue to be published in the media, the perceived relevance of those reports will also rise with time. According to several studies, the media chose and accentuated certain issues to frame news events, signifying that the news's subject matter was not separate from social, political, and ideological concerns. As a result, the fact that RT and the BBC consistently report on news pertaining to the Russia-Ukraine War, particularly the development of wartime events, plays a crucial role in encouraging people to continuously pay attention to the war.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

The main intent of this study is to examine and analyze the world media news framing of the war between Russia and Ukraine by taking the news from the official websites of the BBC and RT as a study case. More specifically, it examines how the selected media outlets are framing the ongoing war news in their daily news coverage. Hence, in this chapter, the research design, research approach, sampling techniques, data sources, and data analysis procedures are discussed.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The main purpose of this study is to examine how media outlets (BBC and RT) are framing the Russia-Ukraine war in their daily news coverage. To carry out such a study, the researcher has found that an exploratory research design is preferable. Since the researcher employs an inductive approach, an exploratory research design is an appropriate and common mechanism for investigating issues using qualitative methods relying on secondary data. The concrete reason for this researcher to use this research design is the suitability of materializing an exploratory research design methodology to effectively undertake this study with relevance to the character and structure of the research objective and research questions that demand gathering data from various sources using qualitative methodology.

As indicated in the previous section, the objective of this research is to examine and analyze how the BBC and RT media outlets are framing the war between Russia and Ukraine in their daily news reports posted on their official websites. To realize the overall and specific objectives, research should answer research questions such as: how are the selected global media outlets portraying the war?, what are the dominant news frames they utilized?, and also what kinds of ethical issues they considered in their news reports. Therefore, in this regard, scholars also indicated that using qualitative techniques can help the researcher look at subtle framing effects in smaller data sets to further obtain a more naturalistic, appropriate, and general understanding of the issues under study. By using this method, it is possible to gain a better and deeper understanding of the textual

qualitative frame analysis technique by looking at the frames, expressions, and themes of the data regarding the issue under study.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

According to Rahman (2016), qualitative research is chosen because quantitative research fails to ascertain deeper underlying meanings and explanations. Furthermore, regarding the benefits of using the qualitative method, Wimmer and Dominick (2011) also stated that “meaning-making and interpretation have special advantages in enhancing a researcher’s depth of understanding of various phenomena under investigation”. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to use the qualitative approach as the number one research method in this study to achieve meaningful data to answer the research questions and attain the research objectives.

### **3.3 Data Sources**

The study was mainly reliant on secondary data sources. Secondary data include various documents: publications of governments, technical and trade journals, books, magazines, newspapers, and publications of various associations (Kothari, 2004). In this study, the researcher used secondary data, which includes online resources. All the news stories (52) were collected from the selected official media websites. For British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), news from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world> and for Russia Today (RT), news from <https://www.rt.com/> was accessed. The website is an interesting news source since it allows the reader to access a limitless amount of information without feeling exhausted (Dimitrova et al., 2005).

### **3.4 Research subjects and samples**

#### **3.4.1 The study subject**

The subjects that this study about is to explore are the well-known global media that are intervening to disclose the scenario of the war between Russia and Ukraine through broadcast war news reports for the international community. BBC and RT, among the worldwide media, are selected as probe subjects to be examined during this case study. The Russia-Ukraine war has been chosen as the topic for this study for several reasons: it has dominated the mass media and other news platforms, and it is (at the time this research is being conducted) currently ongoing and has a lot of significant effects on the rest of our world.

## **Why the BBC and RT?**

The first reason to pick BBC and RT as study subjects is their continuity with long-running news coverage of the critical time that started with the primary breakout of the war on February 24, 2022, during which the Russian armies first invaded eastern Ukraine up to now. Another reason for selecting the two international media as a study subject is because of their level of global distinction to be chosen by the world readership and their popularity, and their distinctive world views and representation. To grasp how information is spread worldwide, it is important to examine how Russia-Ukraine war-related issues are presented in the media of the West and Russia. Also, looking at the media of the West and non-West help researcher explore the hidden factors, beliefs, and influences that shape media systems.

They are prominent representatives of distinct voices in global media and produce their outputs for all global audiences. Furthermore, it is also difficult to be interested in the local media's news coverage, and we can't anticipate how unconditionally it will be covered by the news framing of the world media unless it's presented with intellectual research investigations. Therefore, rather than using local media, these global media are selected as study subjects because they help the researcher determine the international perspective of the study. Both media are useful in explaining and revealing broader insights into the media industry, and the politics-driven media industry and the illiberal tendency in the reporting of international war and conflict in that news framing constitute a vital soft power tool. RT is the state-sponsored soft power media and BBC is the publicly funded media; this difference is drawing a line between them.

### **3.4.2 Sampling Method**

Purposive sampling was utilized as the research methodology in this study. In selecting the countries, media outlets, news stories, and time frame of the study, the purposive sampling method is used. The researcher has conducted an in-depth study and studied pertinent news pieces in this equally representative sample. BBC World published a total of 92 news stories during the first month of the war (the study's timeframe), whereas RT, which was a Russian government-owned news media, published 68 news stories. The researcher has selected 26 news stories as a sample from both media outlets, which is 52 news stories selected purposefully for qualitative frame analysis.

The researcher believed that the 52 online news stories that were chosen as the sample were seen to be sufficient and enough to clearly show the general picture of framing tendencies of the media sources during the study period. To start this media framing case study through selected representative cases together with methodologies that may purposefully provide the intended research data, which helps the inquirer realize a deeper understanding of the study and phenomenon to answer the research questions and achieve its objectives, the researcher employed the purposive sampling method.

Scholars also indicated that researchers who tried to explore any area of interest using a multiple-case study research approach usually utilized the purposive sampling method to pick up multiple cases. For instance, purposive or judgmental sampling, according to Taherdoost (2016), is a method in which particular situations, people, or events are chosen on purpose in order to produce meaningful data that cannot be obtained from other possibilities. Therefore, by using the purposive sampling method, this study selected the BBC and RT as representative cases among the world media. And also, by using the purposive sampling method, the researcher selected 52 news stories from both media, believing that their importance was to provide meaningful data and help the researcher get a complete understanding of the issue at hand.

### **3.4.3 Sample Size and Unit of Analysis**

As mentioned above, by using purposive sampling methodology, 52 news stories were selected as the total sample size of the study from both media outlets. Thus, the units of data analysis that were thematically analyzed under this study were individual news stories released on the official news websites of the BBC and RT. The sample of these international news websites was selected based on three criteria: the/ international reputation of the news, audience reach, and online availability.

### **3.4.4 Sampling Procedures**

By using the purposive sampling method, the researcher picked up 52 news stories posted on the BBC and RT official websites from February 24, 2022, to March 24, 2022, as a complete sample size for the study. The researcher selected a sample of stories by searching for words or phrases such as Russia-Ukraine war, special military operation, Ukraine crisis, invasion of Russia, Russian force, and the like. Specifically, every news article written about the war on the RT website that contains a reference to the terms “special military operation” are taken as a default sample.

Whereas, the key term “invasion’ and ‘war” is taken as a default sample for the BBC. By using this mechanism, a total of 52 news stories were purposefully collected: 26 news stories from the BBC and 26 news stories from RT websites in equal proportion.

### **3.5 Method of Data Collection and Analysis**

The important data collected from the news stories of the selected media channels was categorized into different centrally organized topics and then separately analyzed. In order to induce the relevant data for the study, tools must be in place. In this case, frame analysis is the relevant method to collect and analyze significant data for the study. In order to understand how and why a noticeable frame is being presented in a news narrative, it is important to compare different news articles on the issue. Gardner argued in her study that, audiences often will have subconsciously accepted a narrative without realizing it had been framed, making the act of deciphering it somewhat complex (Gardner, 2022).

#### **3.5.1 Qualitative Frame Analysis (Textual Analysis)**

A growing area of communication research called media framing analysis focuses on how the media portrays a certain subject by calling attention to particular topics. The definition of qualitative frame analysis given by Connolly-Ahern & Broadway (2008) is as follows: "Qualitative frame analysis involves repeated and extensive engagement with a text and looks holistically at the issue to identify frames." This kind of frame analysis looks at the text's important phrases and metaphors to determine what was included in the frame and what was excluded (Connolly-Ahern & Broadway, 2008).

While content analysis primarily looks at the text that is manifested in news, it does not give the opportunity to look at what the text actually means in terms of socio-politics and other discourses (Mulatu, 2017). Textual analysis goes beyond the manifested text, while the latter solely concentrates on it. In other words, it focuses on the text's underlying ideological and cultural assumptions and is typically a sort of qualitative study that goes beyond the media's actual content (Fursich, 2009). A qualitative method involves interpreting meanings and other unobservable dimensions of communication. Qualitative inquiry is analytic and interpretive (Du Plooy, 1997; Linstorm & Marais, 2012). According to Wood (2004) “not all communication can be measured quantitatively” and “quantitative data cannot provide substantial insight into the texture and meaning of experiences”.

The study used frame analysis to analyze the sets of information from the selected media outlets. A comparative framing analysis is one of the simplest ways to find frames (Kuypers & Cooper, 2010; Entman, 1991). The study focused on qualitative frame analysis because of the nature of the research at hand, which dictates finding meaning in text rather than numbers. A number of framing analysis approaches in news frame studies can be run qualitatively, with a focus on the quality of news text discourse or the inductive approach (Samsudin, 2020).

### **3.5.2 Data Analysis Procedure**

The next stage was to analyze the news after selecting the samples for the textual analysis. The researcher referred to this textual analysis as conventional because there was no pre-established category to filter and analyze the news text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This is because the study did not rely on the predetermined categories when the researcher was analyzing the text. The study concentrated solely on the text language and tried to give it context-based significance. Furthermore, as was previously noted in the theoretical framework (framing theory), because the study used inductive and issue-specific methodologies, the analytical approach could easily fit with the textual analysis. Accordingly, the selected stories were examined inductively, without the use of predetermined classifications. This does not imply that there was no focus or direction given to the analyses. The researcher used the content that was read to analyze and build the framing.

The researcher thought about the framing role of the stories according to Entman (1993) and the message's deconstruction according to Kothari (2010). The researcher found it easier to read the text when considering how the frame worked and how the message was broken down. This procedure was carried out through reading. With Entman's and Kothari's frameworks as a backdrop, the primary themes and tones of the stories were examined. Names were only given to the primary themes and literary inclinations that were present in the majority of the stories. To help the conversation, examples from a few of the stories were also picked. Finally, three prominent frames were found in these processes from the selected news stories on the BBC and RT.

As a result of the researcher's reading and rereading about the background of the Russia-Ukraine root relationship and their sociopolitical conflict, the researcher was able to quickly determine the connotative and denotative interpretations of the texts, words, and phrases and draw conclusions about how the sociopolitical crisis escalated into a war of the nations. With the help of this tool, the researcher was able to determine how the news websites presented the accounts of nations

military conflicts, comprehend the possible meanings of the texts in particular, their latent meanings, and extrapolate what the stories had implied to the general audience and to the opponent. It was also able to predict the influences on the story-publication processes and the journalistic ethical issues taken and missed on the selected news websites.

### **3.5.3 Time Frame for Story Selection**

A time boundary from which the study's news samples were selected was scaled from February 24, 2022, up to March 24, 2022, which was the first month of the war. The main reason to select this time frame was due to the criticality of this month's moments in increasing instability, displacement, and chaos across the war fronts in grabbing the attention of the international media and audiences.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

As a researcher and a journalism and mass communication student, considering ethical values is vital in conducting this study. Being free from bias, plagiarism, and fabrication of data contributes to the validity and reliability of the study. The fact that the current study relies on secondary data sources and is interpreted qualitatively means that the researcher has taken care to avoid bias by spending a lot of time carefully analyzing the research's data using the direct quotation approach and keeping the ethical issues related.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction**

This comparative study is aimed at examining and comparing how the BBC and RT media outlets portrayed the Russia-Ukraine war. Through the process of examining the war news framing concerned with the study, the news article pieces, i.e., the headline, sub-headlines, and selected paragraphs of news articles from both media outlets within a given time frame, were analyzed. The analysis of this study concentrated on textual framing of the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war by taking RT and BBC as subject cases. The sample of news articles was retrieved from their official websites. The keywords used to search for relevant news articles are Russia-Ukraine war, RT news: Ukraine war, BBC news: Ukraine war, invasion of Russia, Russian force, Russia's special military operation, Ukraine crisis, and the like. The total sample of 52 consisted of 26 news articles from the BBC and 26 news articles from RT, which were analyzed accordingly.

This study used framing theory and agenda-setting theory to analyze Russia-Ukraine war news released by BBC World and RT to identify which frames are used to describe the war and analyze it comparatively. The comparative study's comparative nature provides insights into how both media approached the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war and the way in which they framed the war. Thus, the study compares and examines the variations that exist between the two media outlets in setting out the events that took place during the war, particularly in the given time frame of this study.

#### **4.1 Subjects of the study**

The study concentrated on how the BBC and RT framed the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war. An equal proportion of samples were selected from both media outlets using purposive sampling for analysis. The units of study for this research were news reports from selected media within the given time frame of one month. The total sample of 52 consisted of 26 news articles from the BBC and 26 news articles from RT, which were analyzed under this chapter.

## **4.2 Portrayal of the Russia-Ukraine War by RT and BBC**

Starting on February 24, 2022, when the Russian military strike on Ukraine began, the conflict received extensive coverage in media outlets all around the world. NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the United Nations General Assembly (2022) called the invasion ‘a war of aggression against Ukraine’, while Vladimir Putin (President of Russia, 2022) called it ‘a special military operation’ to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine. The competition for media coverage emphasizes the value and power of framing in international politics. Accordingly, this particular situation emphasizes the importance of framing in reaching desired results since it shows how an aggressive act may be manipulated in order to be a different thing on a national and international level. The Russia-Ukraine war has been covered by the BBC extensively. It have stated on the Ukrainian people's courage and how this has led Russia to reflect on the nation's handling of the war. The UK intelligence's concerns of a "bloody and brutal" insurgency against Russian forces when they formally seize control of Ukrainian cities have also been covered by them. However, RT News has been charged of serving as a Kremlin propaganda tool. They've been charged with portraying Ukrainian bombardment of their own cities and Russian forces as liberators.

### **4.2.1 Conceptualization of the war**

The unfolding events has got a lot of attention on the Russia-Ukraine war of 2022. The BBC offers a thorough understanding guide to the in war Ukraine that includes maps, an overview of events, and analysis of the situation. Additionally, the BBC maintains a website tracking the battle with Russia that features maps and situation updates.

Framing in global mass media is crucial to comprehending the realities and dynamics of a conflict. By consuming the same facts about a conflict, journalists can construct narratives or frames that picture either war or a history of social inequality and political operations (Andersson, 2019). Of course, covering a war is always a challenge for journalists trying to present as truthful and impartial accounts of events as possible due to, for instance, lack of access to the battle zone, the propaganda efforts of all parties involved in a war, and money and time pressure (Dimitrova & Stromback, 2005). The Russia-Ukraine war has evolved into a major political and economic conflict between the West and Russia (Cordesman, 2022).

Russian and Western media narratives of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war differ considerably because of their media ecosystems and the extent of government control. According to Gardner (2022), given that the majority of the western world is not allied with Russia, it can be predicted that the media outlets in western countries would not be siding with Russia in their reporting. While the RT continually attempted to explain the invasion with different objectives, ranging from "defending Dombass" to "protecting Russia" to "liberating Ukraine," the general trend in the BBC was condemnation of the war.

In most cases, RT was critical of the West's involvement and Kyiv's military action, as well as constantly trying to justify President Putin's action as a necessary goal, using terms like 'protecting Russia', 'defending Dombas', and 'liberating Ukraine'. By framing the issue in this manner, Putin's military action in Ukraine is justified. Framing used by political elites through various news media shapes opinions as it can activate existing beliefs, feelings, and evaluations. Bruggemann (2014) suggests that if a journalist agrees with a certain event or view and does not investigate all sides, they are an actor in framing narratives.

It is well recognized that the journalistic norm of objectivity is often challenged by the specific national political, economic, and cultural contexts within which media operate. In terms of state control of the media and political discourse, the static commercialized model used to construct the Russian media system indicates a strong state-media interaction. And he stated that strong state intervention and journalists' self-censorship lead to a low level of journalistic professionalism. Through the analysis, it is considered that, in most RT news stories, President Putin's decision and his rhetoric are heard and taken dominantly. In doing so, Putin has the power to influence how the public feels about the situation in Ukraine and his involvement in it. Putin is defending Russia's activities in Ukraine by portraying them as essential, benevolent, and lawful.

#### **4.2.2 'War' versus 'Special Military Operation' frame**

Through the frame analysis of the sampled news articles, there are many differences in the portrayal of the attack in their news from the beginning. As the stories of Russia's military involvement broke on RT on February 24, 2022, they preferred to call the event a "special military operation" rather than a 'war' or an 'invasion' of Ukraine. The Russian state news media mostly follows Vladimir Putin's narrative, which he laid out in his address to the nation early on the first

day when he announced a “special military operation” to “demilitarize” Ukraine and protect citizens in the Donbas from what he claimed was a Ukrainian “genocide”.

In politics, framing is a powerful tool that can be used strategically (Goudimiak, 2016). It offers elites the unique opportunity to lead the masses toward a desired goal. Elites can essentially create a problem and offer a remedy for it by filtering information through a certain lens (Druckman, 2009).

Goudimiak (2016) stated that, no less important than his role as a decision-maker, Vladimir Putin's job as a messenger since 1999 has been that of the president or prime minister of Russia. He has extensive expertise working with both Russian and foreign media and frequently exploits this experience to Russia's advantage. Most apparently, acting as Moscow's chief spokesperson on a crucial issue enables President Putin the power to direct and adjust his message. Putin is thus able to define not only the content but also the style and tone of Russia's messaging (Goudimiak, 2016). Likewise, in the coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war of 2022, Putin's message and his intention behind the military attack dominated the Russian media, including RT. For instance, RT website news published on February 24, 2022 says:

***Putin announces “special military operation” in Donbass.** The special military operation is aimed at “the defense of” the newly recognized republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. The Russian president stated he wanted to “demilitarize” and “de-nazify” Ukraine (RT, February 24, 2022).*

The above RT news highlights on President Putin's announcement fully and dutifully reported the assertion that its goal was to “demilitarize” and denazify” Ukraine, which means it makes claims of moral justification for Russia's action. RT, in its news coverage, has also repeatedly indicated that Russia's actions have a legal basis by explaining the aim of the operation. Including RT, the use of the words ‘war’ or ‘invasion’ was prohibited in Russian media, whether on air, in print, online, on news sites, or social media platforms (Tebor, 2022).

Despite the fact that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the media are less restricted to official sources and also include alternative voices, official frames from the respective country's government and military are found to strongly influence media content (Roman et al., 2017; Bennett et al., 2016). Only descriptions of the conflict as a special military operation are permitted. The Russian government and its media use the phrase “special military operation,” deliberately avoiding the term war, to describe the situation in Ukraine, both in terms of forces used and possible escalation. Following

this restriction, the BBC suspended journalists work in Russia. A news story published on March 5, 2022 says:

*Ukraine war: BBC suspends its journalists' work in Russia. The BBC is temporarily suspending its journalists' work in Russia, in response to a new law which threatens to jail anyone Russia deems to have spread "fake" news on the armed forces. BBC Director-General Tim Davie said the legislation "appears to criminalize the process of independent journalism. The Kremlin objects to the conflict being called a war, instead calling it a "Special military operation" (BBC, March 5, 2022)*

The so-called indexing of official oppositions by the media leads to one-sided coverage, especially when the government frames are not regularly challenged by leading opposition politicians or by representatives from other institutions (Groshek, 2008). Consequently, the media tend to blame the opponents, falling short of reflecting different points of view from alternative sources (Hamelink, 2011).

On the other hand, the BBC framed an event as "the Ukraine war" and "the Russia invasion" in every one of their news headlines. The BBC rarely referred to the invasion as a 'special military operation' only as a reference or as quotes from Russian officials. The BBC viewed the announcement as a Russian propaganda claim that President Putin's declaration goals on February 24, 2022, were to "demilitarize and de-Nazify" Ukraine and not occupy it by force. The BBC's published website news headlines says:

*"Russia has launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, leaving millions of people fearing for their future" (BBC, February 24, 2022).*

According to the news headlines written above, the BBC used the war frame or armed conflict frame in their coverage of the incident and portrayed Russia as a nation that had illegally invaded its neighboring country and occupied Ukrainian territory. By doing so, the BBC was utilizing the frame to highlight how serious the situation is. The BBC accuses Russia's president of calling the largest invasion of Europe since World War II a "special military operation" rather than a full-scale conflict that has left more than 13 million people either as refugees overseas or internally displaced (BBC, 2022). The BBC called the conflict a "war" or "invasion" because it recognized Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and condemned Russia's aggression and violation

of international law. The BBC also aligned itself with the official positions of the UK, the US, NATO, and the EU, which supported Ukraine and imposed sanctions on Russia. The BBC's coverage focused on the human suffering, the diplomatic efforts, and the strategic implications of the conflict.

On the other side, the RT called the conflict a “special military operation” because it tries to justify Russia's intervention as a necessary response to protect the Russian-speaking population in eastern Ukraine, which faced discrimination and violence from the Ukrainian government. RT also accused the West of meddling in Ukraine's affairs, supporting neo-Nazi groups, and provoking a new Cold War. The RT's coverage focused on the military achievements, the historical claims, and the propaganda campaigns of the conflict. The choice of words by the BBC and RT can influence how their audiences perceive and understand the conflict. Words can evoke different emotions, associations, and interpretations. Words can also frame the conflict in certain ways, such as highlighting some aspects while ignoring others or presenting some actors as heroes while others as villains. Therefore, it is important for media consumers to be aware of the potential bias and agenda behind the words used by different media outlets.

#### **4.2.3 ‘Invasion’ versus ‘liberation’ frame**

The contemporary importance of media frames as a governing power and identity creators aim to exploit the media in order to encourage political goals by restructuring the perceived politics and conflicts in the minds of people. RT depicted a situation as a defensive effort to "liberate" Ukraine, concentrating a large portion of its coverage on the intended defense of the Donbas, which was seemingly being attacked by Kyiv.

Supposedly, consumers of RT news may have experienced the events as they were being told and developed a familiarity with the constructed reality that troops were trying to liberate lands from Ukraine on behalf of two Russian-backed breakaway states.

On the second day of the attack, news story headlines published on RT say:

*“Russia's defense ministry says, “Our aim is to protect people from Kiev's genocide; there are no threats to the civilians in Ukraine” (RT, February 25, 2022).*

In the RT news, stories mostly depend on President Putin's announcement, the ministry of defense, and other officials of the government. Strovsky (2015) stated that, to be honest, there is a global

phenomenon of media reliance on political forces. Because media are always entangled in the web of social and political relationships, analyzing politics seems to be an inevitable byproduct of the major information movements. Likely, including RT, an overwhelming number of the media in Russia is unable to criticize even regional governors in addition to the Russian president.

In contrary, BBC news report on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2022 says;

*“The Ukrainian capital Kyiv was under missile fire on Friday evening, with explosions reported near a power station and gunfire heard on the streets”. “President Volodymyr Zelensky urged Ukrainian to resist the Russia invasion” (BBC, February 25, 2022).*

*The invasion has killed at least 198 Ukrainians so far and UN says, more than 120,000 have fled the country in the past 48 hours” (BBC February 26, 2022).*

While RT is telling us about Russia’s military action in Ukraine as a measure taken to protect and free the pro-Russian people from Ukraine’s genocide, on the contrary, the BBC tells us about the brutality of Russia’s military force invading Ukraine. The story elaborates on the situation in Ukraine, particularly focusing on the invasion, using words like explosion, missile fire, and gunfire, which are repeatedly used by the BBC. And the BBC always follows up on the events taking place and explains that Ukrainians are resisting the invasion.

All frames that are used in conflict or war reporting do not carry equal weight. Frames are often utilized to manipulate politics, mobilize the public agenda, and exert control over them. The success of political communication is framed as an absolute and relative influence of control in conflict reporting (Thankachan and Thomas, 2021).

#### **4.2.4 War-oriented versus peace-oriented news framing**

War journalism is elite-oriented, violence-oriented, propaganda-oriented, and victory-oriented, with a winner and a loser in a dualistic approach in the zero-sum game (Ottosen and Ovrebo, 2016). War journalism contributes to risking an escalation of war, in which the media plays a role in the implementation of the propaganda war. War journalism could contribute to an escalation of war since conflicts are portrayed as a dual power game between winners and losers, are black and white, and lack context, which leads to psychological stimulation of conflicts (Ottosen and Ovrebo, 2016; Anderson, 2019).

Digital media has led to a more scattered and fragmented conflict environment where it is getting harder to tell who is fighting and who isn't, and where the lines between the real world and the virtual world are getting blurrier. The effects of these changes on our understanding of media objectivity as a concept and set of professional norms and ideals, truth, and how media relate to the public interest and ideas of democracy have significant implications for how we understand the role of the mainstream institutionalized media and its role in reporting on contemporary conflicts. The question at hand is whether the media actively contributes to growing violence and conflict perpetuation, or alternatively, whether it positively impacts conflict resolution and the decrease in acts of violence.

A BBC news story published on March 5, 2022, discussed the probability of Ukraine winning the war. The BBC elaborated on US Secretary Antony Blinken's speech on the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Some part of the news is as follows:

*Ukraine war: Ukraine can absolutely win against Russia - Blinken. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has told the BBC that he is convinced Ukraine can win its war with Russia. He could not say how long the conflict would last, but insisted that Ukraine's defeat was not inevitable. Mr. Blinken praised the "extraordinary resilience" of the Ukrainian people.*

*"If it's the intention of Moscow to try somehow to topple the government and install its own puppet regime, 45 million Ukrainians are going to reject that one way or the other," he said. The war has already not gone as Russian President Vladimir Putin might have planned, he added. Stiff resistance by Ukrainian forces continued to hamper Russian advances across the country on the ninth day of the invasion (BBC, March 5, 2022).*

Looking at the news, we can say that it's victory-oriented rather than solution-oriented. The news story is boldly focused on the Ukrainian forces bravery to have a stiff resistance against Russia's invasion and depicts Russia as a loser because Putin's plan didn't work. This kind of news frame can lead to conflict escalation into the worst war, which is an indication of war journalism. Instead of playing a media role as a peacebuilding tool and appealing for negotiation and peace talks on the stage for warring countries, framing win-win and lose-lose wars is unnecessary at all.

On the other hand, the RT news story published on February 27, 2022, discussed how Ukraine has stood firm to not surrender to Russia, which indicates the news is focused on a lose-lose and win-win frame.

*Ukraine vows not to surrender. The country will not “give up a single inch” of its territory, its foreign minister has said. Ukraine will not “capitulate” to Russia, foreign minister Dmitry Kuleba said on Sunday a head of negotiations between Moscow and Kiev. The two delegations are due to meet at an undisclosed location in Belarus, close to the borders of both countries.*

*“There is nothing bad in talks as such and, if the outcome of these talks will be peace and the end of war that should be welcomed. But I want to make it very clear: we will not surrender, we will not capitulate, we will not give up a single inch of our territory,” Kuleba said during a press conference in Kiev.*

*He said that Ukraine agreed to send a delegation to the border “to listen to what Russia wants to say” and to outline what Kiev thinks of “this war and Russia’s actions.” (RT, February 27, 2022).*

The news article says that Ukraine’s foreign minister, Dmitry Kuleba, said that Ukraine will not surrender or give up any of its territory to Russia and that Ukraine agreed to talk to Russia in Belarus to hear what Russia wants and to express its own views. The news article implies that Ukraine is determined to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity and that it is open to dialogue but not to concessions. The article does not mention the outcome or details of the meeting between Russia and Ukraine in Belarus. However, the details of the news report show that the meeting ended without any breakthroughs or agreements, and both sides accused each other of escalating the conflict and violating human rights. And also, the news concluded that, Russia demanded that Ukraine recognize its annexation of Crimea and withdraws from NATO, while Ukraine demanded that Russia withdraw its troops and weapons from Ukrainian territory and release all political prisoners.

### **4.3 Dominant frames**

The results of the analysis indicated that the military conflict frame, human interest frame and geopolitical conflict frame were the most frequently used frames in BBC, respectively. The

leading frames in RT were the justification frame, the attribution of responsibility and military aid frame. In both media, other war-related frames, like the diagnostic frame, profile frame, genocide frame, anti-war frame, and the advance frame also appeared in their news framing.

#### 4.3.1 Military conflict frame

Military conflict frame place emphasis on military action, focusing on troops, military tools, and related issues. Thus, by employing this frame, the BBC predominantly framed the situation ongoing in Ukraine as a war and the most critical political issue in Europe after the Second World War. Further, the BBC and other western media mostly narrated the scenario as a war that threatened global security and peace. In contrast, RT coverage was quite different from BBC coverage in that it never uses the words like: “war”, “invasion” or even “attack” instead, it calls it a “special military operation” to defend Donbass. Particularly in the first week of the attack, only the so-called “special military operation” is permitted in Russian media. The Russia-Ukraine War is a topic that the BBC covers regularly. Covering the growth of the combat conditions, particularly a battlefield incident, is crucial in encouraging the overall audience to remain interested in the war.

For instance, BBC report on February 24/2022 says:

***Russian forces attack from three sides.** Russia’s forces have launched a major assault on Ukraine, firing missiles on cities and military targets. An invasion by land, air, sea began after a pre-dawn TV addresses where Russian president Vladimir Putin demanded that Ukraine’s military lay down its arms (BBC, February 24, 2022).*

*The Ukrainian capital Kyiv has been under Russian missile fire, but remains in the hands of the government of President Volodymyr Zelensky (headline) (BBC, February 26, 2022).*

The above BBC news stories tell us the huge magnitude of Russia’s action on Ukraine from three directions and the disastrous war that caused much horrible destruction to the sovereign country of Ukraine. Phrases like “a large-scale military attack”, “launched a major assault”, and “an invasion by land, air, and sea began” are used in the above BBC news stories to define the scale of the military attack on Ukraine by Russian forces.

In the news stories, there are no statements of justification for Russia’s action, which implies that the situation is attacking a sovereign country without any legal justification. Likely, many

international organizations are condemning the actions of Russia and appealing for peace. For instance, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres told journalists on the first day of the war that “Russia’s operations inside the sovereign territory of Ukraine is on a scale that Europe has not seen in decades, in direct conflict with the United Nations Charter”. In addition, “it is wrong, it is against the Charter, it is unacceptable, but it is irreversible”, the UN Chief said.

A BBC news story published on February 28, 2022, discusses Putin’s announcement to use nuclear forces. The article clarifies that the announcement does not mean Russia intends to use the weapons, but rather than it is a way of signaling its deterrence capability and its willingness to defend its interests in Ukraine.

***Ukraine invasion: Putin puts Russia’s nuclear forces on ‘special alert’.** Vladimir Putin has ordered Russia’s military to put its deterrence forces, which include nuclear weapons, on “special alert”. He told defence chiefs it was because of “aggressive statements” by the West, amid widespread condemnation of his invasion of Ukraine. The announcement does not mean Russia intends to use the weapons. The US immediately condemned his decision, calling it an “unacceptable escalation”. Last week, Mr Putin had warned that “whoever tries to hinder us” in Ukraine would see consequences “you have never seen in your history”(BBC, March, 28, 2022).*

In the above news, the headline is sensationalized, as it implies that Russia is preparing to launch a nuclear attack. The headline could have been more accurate and less alarming. The news is one-sided, as it only presents the perspective of the West and Ukraine and does not include any quotes or statements from Russia or its allies. The article portrays Putin as an aggressor who is violating international law and norms, and the West as a defender of democracy and sovereignty. The article does not mention any of the reasons or motivations behind Russia’s intervention in Ukraine, such as its historical, cultural, and strategic ties with the region, its opposition to NATO expansion, or its perception of being threatened by Western sanctions and military presence. The situation in Ukraine has implications for regional and global security, stability, and cooperation, as well as for human rights, humanitarian aid, and democracy. The news also shows how nuclear weapons are still a factor in international relations, despite efforts to reduce their role and number.

On the other hand, the RT story published on February 27, 2022, is about the Putin's placing nuclear deterrent on the highest alert, with justification for his action that was explained in the news. Some of the news is written below.

***Putin places Russian nuclear deterrent on highest alert.** Putin has justified his military offensive against Ukraine by saying there was an urgent need to “demilitarize” the country to protect the newly-recognized Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics and to ensure that Russia would not be threatened by NATO from Ukrainian territory. Kiev has called the attack unprovoked and unjustified. On Sunday, Putin ordered Russia’s nuclear deterrent forces to be on highest alert, noting the “unfriendly actions” and “aggressive statements” against Moscow from Western nations (RT, February 27, 2022).*

In the above news, the justification for Putin's action to "demilitarize" Ukraine to protect Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republic was stated. However, this frame, which was not picked by the media, aimed to present the dispute in a positive light. Whether or not the actual situation on the ground required it, they were required to use the government's provided frames. This made it challenging and inconsistent to provide evidence to support these frames. The causes of the war, which had to fit these frames, made the issues obvious. Unfortunately, there is no tangible cause of the action, which rather manifests itself through causes ranging from the "liberation" of the Ukrainian people to the defense of Russia against NATO.

In another news story, RT covered the Belarusian leader's speech as a warning to the world that the sanctions against Russia may cause the third world war. The news says:

***Belarus' Lukashenko warns of WWII.** The Belarusian leader called on the west to show “restraint” when it comes to sanctions against Moscow. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has warned the West against imposing tough sanctions on Moscow, saying that such measures could push Russia into a “third world war.” “Now there is a lot of talk against the banking sector, gas, oil, SWIFT. It's worse than war. This is pushing Russia into a third world war,” Lukashenko said on Sunday, as quoted by local media. He added that a nuclear conflict could be the final outcome. “We need to be restrained here so as not to get into trouble, because nuclear war is the end of everything” he said (RT, February 27, 2022).*

The intention of the warning declared in the news is that it may affect the audience, particularly by making Ukrainians afraid of Russian forces. Furthermore, it warns that the ongoing military conflict may be escalating into the Third World War (WWIII). In effect, such news can cause the situation to escalate into a serious war and worsen the conflict. Apparently, they are on the verge of a disaster due to instability in politics, territorial disputes, ideological disagreements, weapons races, and worries about nuclear proliferation. Nuclear war poses serious moral and ethical problems that go to the heart of what we value most as human beings and as a global civilization, as well as what possible missteps may have brought us to this situation.

Another RT news story published on March 19, 2022, discusses how the Russian military destroyed a weapons plant close to the western Ukrainian city of Ivano-Frankivsk using its modern Kinzhal hypersonic missiles. According to the news, NATO-designated "Foxhound" MiG-31K supersonic interceptor aircraft are equipped with Kinzhal missiles. The weaponry is one of several hypersonic systems developed in recent years for the nation's military, including the Zircon (Tsirkon) missiles created for the navy and the Avangard glider that is mounted atop silo-based ICBMs. By flying at speeds of up to Mach 10 and constantly adjusting their trajectory while in flight, Kinzhal missiles are reported to be able to fly beyond any air defenses that are currently in existence. Ukraine insists that the Russian offensive was totally unprovoked and has refuted suggestions that it intended to use force to recover the two republics.

*Russia fires hypersonic missiles in Ukraine. Moscow has deployed Kinzhal missiles for the first time since the start of its military operation. The Russian military has said it used its state-of-the-art Kinzhal hypersonic missiles to destroy an arms depot near the city of Ivano-Frankivsk in western Ukraine. It targeted "a large underground depot of missiles and aerial munitions of the Ukrainian forces" in the village of Deliatyn, he added (RT, March 19, 2022).*

The headline of the above news article is sensationalized and misleading. It does not mention that the attack was on a civilian area, which could be considered a war crime. The content is biased and incomplete. It only presents the Russian perspective and does not include any sources or quotes from the Ukrainian side or independent observers. It also omits important details, such as the number of casualties, the damage to the infrastructure, and the international condemnation of the

attack. The article uses vague and euphemistic language, such as “state-of-the-art” and “military operation”, to justify and glorify Russia’s aggression. It also repeats unsubstantiated claims, such as that the Kinzhal missiles can overcome all existing air defense systems. The news did not adhere to the standards of journalism and serves as a propaganda tool for the Russian government.

*Ukraine war: 'Sky turned red' as missiles hit Lviv military base. Witnesses to a deadly Russian attack on a Ukrainian military base have told how "the sky turned red" as missiles struck the site near the Polish border. At least 35 people died in the strike on the Yavoriv training base, near a major crossing point into Poland used by refugees from the conflict. Russia fired around 30 cruise missiles at the base, outside the city of Lviv, early Sunday, the local governor said (BBC, March 13, 2022).*

The above BBC news headline was descriptive and factual, summarizing the main event and its location. It also used a quote from a witness to capture the impact of the attack. The content is informative and balanced, providing details about the attack, its casualties, its targets, and its context. The article uses multiple sources, such as local authorities, witnesses, videos, and official statements from both sides of the war. The article also acknowledges the uncertainty and difficulty of verifying some information, such as the number of foreign fighters at the base. The article uses neutral and objective language, avoiding opinionated or emotional expressions. Based on these criteria, I would rate this news article as reliable and unbiased. It observed the standards of journalism and provided credible and comprehensive information about the occurrence.

Generally, the BBC used a military conflict frame more than RT, focusing on the military aspects of the war, such as the tactics, weapons, and operations of both sides. It has used maps, graphics, and videos to illustrate the movements and clashes of the forces on the ground, as well as the aerial and naval attacks that have targeted strategic locations and infrastructure.

#### **4.3.2 Human interest frame**

The human interest frame highlights the particular stories of people and gives events, problems, and issues a human face and an emotional perspective (Temesgen, 2021). As a result, human interest stories can hold viewers' interest and persuade them to feel a sense of responsibility toward the subject. Because of rivalry in the news story market, media professionals are working harder to provide tales that grab the public's interest, according to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). A

human interest frame is a way of presenting a story that focuses on the personal experiences, emotions, and perspectives of the people involved rather than on the broader political, economic, or social aspects of the issue. A human interest frame can be used to cover war stories by highlighting the human costs and consequences of the conflict, such as the suffering of civilians, the bravery of soldiers, the heroism of aid workers, or the resilience of survivors. A human interest frame can also be used to elicit sympathy, empathy, or compassion from the audience or to appeal to their moral values and emotions.

The human interest frame was the first dominant frame used by the BBC during the coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war. The BBC used human faces to show the suffering of people caused by the ongoing conflict. A heart-touching stories particularly focused on refugees, titled “For Ukraine’s internal refugees, an uncertain future ahead”, “there is no safe place anymore” and “they are being put into mass grave,” could be referred to as some of the news stories that grab the audience’s attention.

*Refugees rush to borders to flee Russia’s war. Refugee’s agencies fear up to five million of Ukrainians could try to flee across the border as Russia’s war intensifies and casualties mount (BBC, February 25, 2022).*

Using words such as ‘refugee’, ‘fleeing’, ‘wounded’, ‘evacuated’ and humanitarian to create sympathy for Ukrainians is the way BBC adopted the human interest frame to create a narrative of human interests. Such a news narration could describe an individual’s feelings, thoughts, and experiences to develop sympathy and provide help for those in need. Another heart-touching BBC story published on March 14, 2022, is the following:

*Mass graves in Ukraine: Battered cities are digging makeshift burial sites. The Russian bombardment of some places in Ukraine is so intense that towns and cities are being forced to unceremoniously bury dozens of civilian victims in mass graves. Nowhere is this grim reality of war more apparent than in Mariupol, a key port city devastated by constant shelling, where several burial sites have been hastily dug in the past two weeks. “We can’t bury civilian (the victims) in private graves, as those are outside the city and the perimeter*

*is controlled by Russian troops,” Mariupol’s deputy mayor Serhiy Orlov told BBC by phone (BBC, March 14, 2022).*

The news article seems to shock and sadden the audience by showing them the horrific reality of war, especially the indiscriminate killing of civilians and the disrespect for their dignity. In detail, the article used words such as “mass graves”, “battered”, “unceremoniously”, “devastated”, and “grim” to emphasize the brutality and tragedy of the situation. The news also tried to humanize and personalize the story by quoting a local official, Serhiy Orlov, who explains the difficulties and dangers of burying the victims in private graves. The news also mentioned the name of the city, Mariupol, which is a key port city and a strategic target for both sides. The article gave a sense of the scale and intensity of the conflict by stating that several burial sites have been dug in the past two weeks. However, the article does not provided much detail or context on the causes and consequences of the war, nor does it mention any sources or evidence to support the claims made by Orlov. And also, it does not present any alternative or opposing views on the situation, such as from the Russian side or from independent observers. The article clearly took a pro-Ukrainian stance and blamed Russia for the bombardment and the blockade of the city.

Another BBC news story published on March 20, 2022, discussed the plight of children in Mariupol, Ukraine, who are bearing the brunt of the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine.

***In Mariupol, children bear the brunt of Vladimir Putin’s war.** In his hospital bed, little Artem stares into space, He clutches a small yellow toy tractor but says nothing as specialist nurses monitor his condition. The Russian shell that blasted shrapnel into his belly also badly wounded his parents and grandparents as they tried to flee Mariupol. He is a victim of Putin’s war and he’s not yet three years old (BBC, March 20, 2022).*

The news article described the situation in Mariupol as a humanitarian disaster and a war crime. According to the details of the news, Russian shelling has injured hundreds of Ukrainian citizens and damaged or destroyed an estimated 90% of the city's structures. While covering such emotional stories, BBC News revealed the victims of the war and showed sympathy for their suffering. However, it is understandable that sometimes the media has a bias against some groups, which goes against the balance and fairness of the principles of journalism. Likewise, the analysis

shows that the BBC is only concentrated on victimizing Ukrainians rather than looking at both sides of a conflicting country because, after all, there are two countries involved in this war.

*Mother and son squeezed in the building's dark rooms, corridors and halls with dozens of other families. Some women, Kate said, carried babies that were just four or five months old (BBC, March 17, 2022).*

The news used a human interest frame because it focuses on the personal experiences and emotions of the mother and son rather than the causes or consequences of the war or disaster. The sentence uses descriptive language, such as “dark”, “squeezed”, and “carried”, to create a vivid image of their plight. The detail of the news also implies the contrast between their normal lives and their current circumstances, as well as the vulnerability and resilience of the women and children. The purpose of the news is to raise awareness and empathy for the people who are affected by the war or disaster. The sentence appeals to the readers’ emotions and values, rather than their logic or reason, to make them care about the story. The sentence also aims to humanize and individualize the victims by showing them as ordinary people with families and hopes.

The BBC had also covered the concern of humanitarian organizations involvement in the war through the human interest frame to indicate how the Russian military force is causing trouble in Ukraine’s civilian lives as well as in the country’s infrastructure. For instance;

*Global human rights group Amnesty International said it was Russia, not Ukraine that was showing "a blatant disregard for civilian lives". The charity said that Mr. Putin's claim of precise strikes on military targets was false, and Russia was "using ballistic missiles and other explosive weapons with wide area effects in densely populated areas". Strikes have hit hospitals, among other targets that Amnesty said "can constitute war crimes" (BBC, February 25, 2022).*

*Mariupol, a key port city in the south-east of Ukraine is facing a humanitarian crisis after nearly two weeks of continuous Russian shelling, with food, water, and medicine running out, and communication to the outside world all but cut off (BBC, 14 March, 2022).*

Through the analysis, looking at the BBC website news headlines, they all mentioned the victims of the bombings, such as innocent women, children, and homes, as well as the magnitude of

airstrikes carried out by the Russian troops and their recognition as acts of aggression. The continual usage of the phrase "Russian aggression" demonstrates how the long-running conflict between Russia and Ukraine evolved into present-day warfare. The news employed emotive language to express the airstrikes' action and establishes the reader's expectations for what they should learn from reading the news article: that Russia's aggression is brutally destructive and that the airstrikes' action is an illegal invasion crime.

After Russia's military action on Ukraine was revealed through different mass media, RT also started to call the action an invasion after the first week of the war.

*UN reveals 'phenomenal' Ukraine refugees numbers. More than one million people have left the country since the Russian invasion last week. More than 1.2 million people have fled Ukraine after Russia attacked on February 24, according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). More than half of them (53.7%) fled to Poland, while others sought shelter in Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia, and Romania, among other places.*

*Russia insists that it was forced to attack its neighbor in order to defend the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DPR and LPR), which broke away from Ukraine shortly after the 2014 coup in Kiev. Moscow also said it was seeking the "demilitarization and denazification" of the country. Meanwhile, Ukraine said the attack was entirely unprovoked and appealed to the international community for help (RT, March 5, 2022).*

The above news story cited the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) as the source of the data on the number and destination of the refugees. The story also briefly summarized the positions of Russia and Ukraine on the reasons and motives behind the attack. The story used a descriptive and factual tone without expressing any opinions or judgments on the situation. The story relies on the authority and credibility of the UNHCR as the main source of information and does not include any quotes or perspectives from other actors or stakeholders. The story provides some basic and relevant information on the scale and scope of the refugee crisis, such as the total number of refugees, the percentage of those who fled to Poland, and the names of other countries that received refugees. However, the story does not provide any details or context on the conditions and challenges faced by the refugees, such as their legal status, their access to services and protection, their intentions and plans, or their vulnerabilities and needs.

The RT news story published on March 11, 2022, was about President Zelensky warning Russia about humanitarian corridors and maybe facing them too. The news article is about the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War, which started in 2014 and escalated in 2022 when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In the news, we can see that RT wrote an issue using a two-sided message, which means the story was presented as both warring countries and criticism of the humanitarian crisis. The news says:

***Russians may soon need humanitarian corridors themselves, Zelensky warns.** Ukrainian president says Moscow's offensive have provoked the wrath of the world. Moscow's action in Ukraine will be met with such a strong international response that the Russians may end up needing Humanitarian corridors themselves, Zelensky has said.*

*Moscow insists, however, that it is the Ukrainians who are thwarting the evacuation of civilians from besieged cities. Russia's President Vladimir Putin has accused militias of preventing people from leaving so as to use them as a human shield (RT, March 11, 2022).*

The news article quoted the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, who warns that Russia's offensive will provoke the wrath of the world and that the Russians may end up needing humanitarian corridors themselves. The article also cites Russian President Vladimir Putin, who accuses the Ukrainian militias of preventing civilians from leaving the besieged cities and using them as human shields. And also, it presents two opposing views on the situation in Ukraine, one from the Ukrainian side and one from the Russian side. This could be seen as an attempt to provide a balanced perspective or as a way of highlighting the contradictions and disagreements between the two parties. However, the news article uses strong and emotive language, such as "wrath", "thwarting", "besieged", and "human shield". This could be seen as a way of conveying the severity and urgency of the conflict or as a way of influencing the reader's emotions and opinions.

Another RT news story was about the difficulties faced by aid agencies in delivering humanitarian assistance to the people trapped in Ukrainian cities that are surrounded by Russian forces.

***Aid convoys struggling to reach 'encircled' Ukrainian cities, UN claims.** Blocking cities is "unacceptable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century", an official with the World food programme has said. The aid agencies are struggling to reach civilians in Ukrainian cities blocked by the*

*Russian military, Jakob Kern, an emergence coordinator with the United Nations World food programme (WFP) said on Saturday (RT, March 11,2022).*

The news article aims to raise awareness and sympathy for the plight of the civilians in the besieged cities, who are facing food shortages, a lack of basic services, and constant shelling. The article uses words such as “trapped”, “ringed”, “blocked”, and “besieged” to emphasize their isolation and vulnerability. The article also tries to highlight the role and efforts of the aid agencies, especially the WFP, in providing lifesaving relief to the affected communities.

Generally, the stories evaluated revealed that both media outlets used human interest frames. However, the BBC used this frame more than RT to depict the humanitarian disaster and human deaths caused by the war. Due to the BBC's extensive global reach, the problems that Ukrainian people experienced were covered and transmitted practically everywhere in the world. Particularly, by employing a human interest frame, putting a human face or an emotional outlook on a problem, and representing the news to keep the audience's attention.

Intensively, the BBC worked to provoke sympathy for Ukrainians everywhere, notably in western nations. As a result, the sympathy felt by westerners for Ukrainians increased pressure on their governments and indirectly encouraged some international organizations and some western governments to contribute additional aid to Ukraine. Additionally, this style of frame was employed to put pressure on both fighting parties to create a "humanitarian corridor." Personal narratives have a great deal of potential to engage and influence media audiences.

Generally, BBC news has been covering the Russia-Ukraine war of 2022 extensively, with reports from the front lines, analysis of the political and military situation, and interviews with experts and civilians. By employing a human interest frame, BBC News has highlighted the plight of the millions of people affected by the war, especially those living in conflict zones or displaced by the violence. It has reported on the shortages of food, water, medicine, and shelter, as well as the psychological trauma and human rights violations. And on the other hand, RT News also reported on the successes and achievements of Russia’s military operations and the failures and weaknesses of Ukraine and its allies. RT News used sources from Russian officials, pro-Russian separatists, experts, and civilians to support its narrative.

### 4.3.3 Geopolitical conflict frame

A geopolitical conflict frame is a way of analyzing conflicts based on geographic, economic, and political interests, identifying causes, actors, stakes, strategies, and potential outcomes. The BBC used this frame more than RT. The Russian-Ukrainian War is a very complex political problem since its basis is a subject that may give rise to competing interests. It is difficult to determine which of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy should be held accountable for starting and continuing the war due to the conflicting nature of the ongoing dispute. Abdi (2023) stated that the ongoing conflict in Ukraine is largely attributed to the supremacy battle between Russia and the US in pursuit of their distinctive military, economic, and diplomatic interests. The war is thus politically instigated as a fight for a global superpower. The US and Russia have been experiencing tumultuous relationships as great powers, which has resulted in the witnessing of various events that have subsequently influenced their actions in the ongoing war in Ukraine. The primary goal for such great powers is survival, considering that these nations are maximally committed to maintaining their domestic political order, autonomy, and territorial integrity. It is a clear demonstration through Russia's integration with the EU and the US's involvement with EU and NATO enlargement that states operate like rational actors with utmost awareness of their respective environments. With this awareness, states are constantly thinking strategically pertaining to how they can enhance their survival within the international sphere.

From the beginning of the war, the BBC provided a guide to understanding how the war started and unfolded on its first day and what the implications are for regional and global politics. BBC News, published on February 24, 2022, presents the quotes of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who claims that the military operation's objective was to defend the people in the breakaway areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, which are controlled by pro-Russian separatists. Putin also accuses Ukraine of being run by neo-Nazis and the US and its allies of ignoring Russia's demands to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO and offer Moscow security guarantees. However, the article also presents the views of Kyiv and its Western allies, who reject Putin's claims as absurd and point out that Ukraine is a nation with growing democratic institutions, unlike an authoritarian Russia. They also accuse Russia of violating Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as international law and human rights.

*Mr. Putin said the military operation's objective was to defend the people in the breakaway areas. Kyiv and its Western allies have repeatedly rejected as absurd Mr. Putin's claims that Ukraine was being run by neo-Nazis, instead pointing out that Ukraine was now a nation with growing democratic institutions, unlike an authoritarian Russia. Fears of a Russian attack have been rising for months. Mr. Putin has repeatedly accused the US and its allies of ignoring Russia's demands to prevent Ukraine from joining the NATO military alliance and offer Moscow security guarantees (BBC, February 24, 2022).*

In detail, the article provided some background information on the conflict, which started in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea, a peninsula in the south of Ukraine, and supported armed rebels in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. The conflict has been frozen for years, with a ceasefire agreement signed in 2015 but frequently violated by both sides. The news article also mentions the recent fears of a Russian attack, which have been rising for months due to the buildup of Russian troops and weapons near the Ukrainian border and the increasing frequency of drone strikes and cyberattacks on Ukrainian targets. The article is an example of a balanced and informative news report that covers the main facts and perspectives of the ongoing war in Ukraine. It uses reliable sources and evidence to support its claims and provides context and analysis for the readers. It also uses clear and concise language that is easy to understand and follow.

On the other hand, the RT News article published on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, tried to justify the Russian invasion of Ukraine and portray it as a humanitarian intervention. The article used a geopolitical frame of the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war that relies on the arguments that Russia is acting in self-defense and in response to NATO's aggression and expansion towards its borders.

***EU accuses Russia of 'geopolitical terrorism'.** Charles Michel warned Vladimir Putin's actions have put international order and democracy "under attack". European Council President Charles Michel launched a blistering tirade against Russia in a speech to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) on Tuesday, accusing Moscow of engaging in "geopolitical terrorism" by invading Ukraine.*

*"The rules-based international order, democracy, human dignities are also under attack. This is geopolitical terrorism, pure and simple," Michel declared, accusing Russia of violating international law with the military activity in its neighboring country.*

*Addressing the European Parliament after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky spoke via video to MEPs, Michel acknowledged that, while Ukraine's application to join the EU is "symbolic," it is "going to be difficult" to achieve... (RT, March 1, 2022).*

The news claims that Russia is protecting the rights and interests of the Russian-speaking population in eastern and southern Ukraine, who are allegedly oppressed and discriminated against by the Ukrainian government. The news cites the examples of the 2014 referendum in Crimea, which resulted in its annexation by Russia, and the ongoing conflict in Donbas, where pro-Russian separatists have declared independence from Kyiv. Additionally, the news detail discussed that Russia is fulfilling its international obligations and responsibilities as a guarantor of peace and security in Europe and the world. The news argues that Russia is acting in accordance with the UN Charter, which allows for the use of force in cases of self-defense or with the authorization of the Security Council. The news also claims that Russia is cooperating with other countries and organizations, such as China, India, Iran, Turkey, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, to resolve the crisis diplomatically and prevent a global war.

Russia has deployed thousands of troops, tanks, artillery, missiles, drones, and warplanes along the borders of Ukraine, creating a serious threat of escalation and provocation. It has also conducted cyber-attacks, disinformation campaigns, and political assassinations against Ukraine and its allies. These actions have been denounced by NATO and other countries as aggressive and destabilizing. Russia has ignored or rejected numerous proposals and initiatives to de-escalate the situation and engage in dialogue with Ukraine and its partners, and it has demanded that NATO renounce its open-door policy for new members, especially Ukraine and Georgia, and that it withdraw its forces and infrastructure from Eastern Europe. Russia has also insisted that Ukraine grant autonomy and veto power to the separatist regions, which would undermine its constitutional order and territorial integrity. This RT News article is an example of how media can be used as a tool of propaganda and manipulation in times of war. It is important to critically evaluate the sources and frames of information that we consume, especially when they involve complex and controversial issues.

BBC News used a geopolitical frame, which is a way of presenting the world as divided into competing regions, nations, or blocs that have different interests, values, and ideologies. The

headline and the lead paragraph state the main argument of the article, which is that Putin's invasion of Ukraine has redrawn the world and ended the post-Cold War era.

*Ukraine war: Putin has redrawn the world - but not the way he wanted. Vladimir's Putin's invasion of Ukraine has changed the world. We are living in new and more dangerous times - the post-Cold War era that began with the fall of the Berlin Wall is over (BBC, March 19, 2022).*

In the details, the news used words like “invasion”, “changed”, “dangerous”, and “over” to convey a sense of threat and urgency and used a personal narrative to contrast the current situation with the historical moment of 1989, when the author witnessed the fall of Communism and the reunification of Europe. The article used words like “new”, “whole”, “exhilarating”, and “dizzying” to describe the positive emotions and expectations of that time.

Considering that the crisis in Ukraine did arise due to Ukrainians starting to question the pro-Russian regime and Ukraine's unitary national identity, the actions by Russia and the US have not demonstrated any commitment towards securing the disturbances between pro-Russian and pro-Western citizens, serving to perpetuate the factors linked to the cause of the war. From a Russian perspective, the underlying reasons for its actions resulting in the ongoing crisis in Ukraine have been aligned with the goal of continuing to exercise control over its sovereignty over the Black Sea fleet. The goal is tailored towards helping expand Russian maritime power eastward so that it can have increased military, economic, and diplomatic influence globally to challenge US superpower status. Conversely, from the US perspective, its actions in Ukraine are majorly aligned with seeking to maintain its influence and dominance in Europe in order to hinder any potential external threats, especially those posed by Russia. Therefore, the ongoing war in Ukraine has clearly developed into a geopolitical struggle for power between the US and Russia, as their divergent incentives and interests continue to fuel the conflict, necessitating the involvement of IGOs to help address the crisis.

Despite historical disputes between Russia and Ukraine in the areas of diplomacy, the economy, and the military, the current situation in Ukraine is said to have been greatly sparked by a rivalry between Russia and the United States. Because certain countries have more authority, dominance,

and influence than others in the international system, the conflict is being choreographed by this imbalance. The security dilemma worsens when a nation gains more power and other governments feel threatened. Worsening the problem is a state's ambition to increase its security and strength through rearmament and invasion, which compels other governments to respond with comparable offensive actions even if they don't want to (Hunter, 2022). By making both the United States and Russia feel threatened by the expansion of NATO and the European Union, respectively, the power imbalance is causing the Russia-Ukraine war to predominate. The United States has continued to provide Ukraine with significant political, financial, and military support even as Russia continues to benefit from the support of other nations like China (Abdi, 2023).

Multiple severe geostrategic consequences have resulted from the Ukrainian conflict. Beyond the more apparent casualties, displaced people, and infrastructure destruction in Ukraine, the war has had a negative influence on a number of sectors of the world economy. Additionally, the battle between Russia and Ukraine in 2022 has the possibility of bringing about a "New Cold War" that would put the dominant West against the rising modernist powers China and Russia, with most of the rest of the globe caught in the middle (Abrams, 2022). In order to safeguard their individual economic and strategic interests, the governments of many regional powers, including India, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, Turkey, and Indonesia, have remained largely neutral and rejected denouncing Russia for the invasion of Ukraine (Depetris and Menon, 2022).

The vote results in the UN General Assembly on March 2, 2022, which demanded that Russia cease its offensive in Ukraine, provided evidence of this phenomenon (United Nations, 2022). Despite the resolution receiving strong support from many Western nations, 40 nations, primarily from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, either publicly opposed it or refused to back it because of their reliance on Russian oil, weaponry, and other geostrategic factors (Adeoye, 2022).

The RT news article published on March 20, 2022, is about the alleged use of psychological operations (psyop) by the UK government to influence public opinion in Russia and Ukraine regarding the conflict in Ukraine. The article claims that the UK has created a new unit called the Government Information Cell (GIC) that operates between the Ministry of Defense and the Foreign Office and that it is buying ads on Russian social media platforms to spread London's perspective on the situation.

*Cold War-style UK psyop unit targets Russians – media. The Government Information Cell is reportedly reaching Russian social media users to show the UK’s view of the conflict in Ukraine. Britain is utilizing its new so-called counter-disinformation unit to buy ads on Russian social media to disseminate London’s view on the conflict in Ukraine, the Telegraph claimed on Saturday. The Government Information Cell (GIC) is operated between the Ministry of Defense and the Foreign Office, the first such unit since the end of the Cold War. The social media platform mentioned in the article has refuted reports that it showed British government ads... (RT, March 20, 2022.*

The above RT news seems to have a negative and critical tone towards the UK government and its alleged psyop activities. The article uses words and phrases such as “so-called counter-disinformation unit”, “target”, and “reaching the devices of people who would never have thought to seek out the view of the British Government” to imply that the UK is engaging in deceptive and manipulative practices. The article also suggested that the UK is interfering in the internal affairs of Russia and Ukraine and that it is trying to gain an advantage in the geopolitical rivalry with Russia. The purpose of the news article may be to discredit the UK’s position on the conflict in Ukraine and to create doubt and distrust among the readers. The article presents some facts, such as the existence of the GIC, its staff size, and its main audiences. However, these facts are not verified by any official or independent sources, and they may be based on speculation or misinformation. The news also presents some opinions, such as the UK’s motive for using psyop, the effectiveness of its strategy, and the reaction of Russian social media users. These opinions are not supported by any evidence or analysis, and they may reflect the bias or agenda of the author or the website.

Rutland (2015), in some narratives that frame the Ukraine war as a conflict between Russia and the West, portrays it as a geopolitical conflict. The geopolitical narrative holds that the war in Ukraine is the result of ongoing disagreements between Russia and Western powers over the political and military alliances of nations that were once socialist and Soviet states. Creating a counter-pole to a unipolar Europe (dominated by the European Union) and a unipolar world (dominated by the United States) has been Russia's response to the eastward expansion of both the European Union and NATO in Ukraine (Haukkala, 2015; Sakwa, 2015) to protect its military and economic interests. BBC News has also framed the war as a major geopolitical conflict that

threatens the stability and security of Europe and beyond. It has explored the motivations and interests of the main actors involved, such as Russia, Ukraine, NATO, and the US, and how their actions and reactions have shaped the course and outcome of the war.

Nowadays, the most popular theories about the origins of the Russo-Ukrainian War are political realism, geopolitics, or the concept of a collision of civilizations. The conflict is often interpreted as a conflict of opposing ideologies (the Second Cold War), as Russia's attempt to defend its place among the great powers and challenge the unipolar world, or as Ukraine's desire to get rid of its dependent position on Russia and protect its European "civilizational choice" (see Mearsheimer 2014; Mearsheimer 2022; Brusylovska 2022; Safranchuk, 2022; Merry, 2016).

Kumankov (2022) stated, According to structural realism, the main analysis of the war focuses on the power and threats present as well as the West's accountability for pressuring Russia into attacking Ukraine. The moral justification for the conflict was a crucial political and rhetorical instrument utilized by Putin and his immediate circle. The confrontation with Ukraine was defined as moral and value-based by the Russian leadership. Their supporters are willing to accept this narrative. It was implied that Russian soldiers were highly moral fighters endowed with numerous virtues who always fought fairly. In this situation, those backing the Ukrainian military that is fighting back against the invasion could be branded as Nazi criminals or accused of being deceived by their government. The Russian military cannot commit war crimes when facing such an adversary. Because of this, the myth that Russian forces only attack military objectives and objects, making them all valid targets, including the Nazis, who are by definition acceptable targets, was repeated by both officials and propagandists with such success. This justification plan was created in order to give credence to deciding to attack Ukraine (Kumankov, 2022).

#### **4.3.4 Justification Frame**

A common narrative that public leaders employ to defend their actions or policies is the justification frame. A justification frame consists of two basic components: a denial of the contribution of one's own activities to a situation and an assertion that the behavior or traits of the other person constitute a threat that requires a reaction. The justification frame is an effective tool for persuasion and manipulation because it can affect how people view and assess a situation and what they believe to be acceptable or unacceptable behaviors (Burch, 2022). In this instance, the Russian government is providing a rationale for its military assault against Ukraine.

*Putin announces 'special operation' in Donbass. The special military operation is aimed at "the defense of" the newly recognized republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. Russian President Vladimir Putin has announced that he ordered his country's military to conduct a special operation in the Donbass region after the leaders of the breakaway republics asked Moscow for military assistance in response to what they claim is an increase in "Ukrainian aggression." (RT, February 24, 2022).*

This news article is an example of a justification frame, which is a common narrative used by public officials to justify their actions or policies. In this case, RT used a justification frame to explain the purpose of the invasion, as it is a so-called special military operation that the Russian government is using to defend the Donbass region. The news stated that Putin ordered a special military operation in the Donbass after the leaders of the breakaway republics of Donetsk and Lugansk asked Moscow for military assistance, implying that Russia is acting in response to a legitimate request from its allies. The news article also stated that the operation is aimed at “the defense of” the newly recognized republics, implying that they are facing an increase in “Ukrainian aggression”, which is a threat to their security and autonomy.

There are several histories of defending and denouncing violence that are culturally diverse. Robinson and Antonov examine Russian views on the justification for war throughout history and in the present using an interdisciplinary approach (moral theory and law) (Brock et al., 2021). The authors mention sovereignty's centrality and contradictions as the primary rule in Russian war discourse in doing so. They contend that following the fall of the Soviet Union, political leaders have tended to take a realist stance and frame war in terms of security as opposed to justice. In opposition to Western goals, Russia asserts that it would preserve international law and its fundamental principle of sovereignty.

*Russia reveals strike targets in Ukraine. Ukrainian military facilities are being hit by Russian precision weapons, the Defense Ministry has claimed. The Russian Defense Ministry has claimed that the armed forces are attacking Ukrainian military facilities as part of an ongoing operation in the country. Precision weapons are being used against military infrastructure, air defense sites, military airfields and aircraft, a statement quoted by RIA Novosti said. The military has asserted that Russia is not attacking Ukrainian cities,*

*contrary to claims from other sources. Ukrainian civilians are not under threat, the statement said (RT, February 24, 2022).*

According to the news article, Russia is not bombing Ukrainian cities or civilians but rather targeting Ukrainian military infrastructure with precision weapons. Other reports, however, which indicate that Russia has launched several missile strikes across Ukraine, striking Kyiv and other cities, demolishing buildings, starting fires, and killing and injuring civilians, refute this assertion. No independent or reliable media outlets or organizations have objectively confirmed or backed up this claim. The electrical grid in Ukraine was also a target of the attacks, which have left millions of people without electricity. The context of the situation in Ukraine, including the Russian invasion of the nation, the annexation of Crimea, the breach of the Minsk agreements, and the worldwide condemnation of Russia's actions, is not mentioned in the article. These arguments lead me to conclude that this news story is biased, unreliable, and deceptive. It leaves out or distorts essential details while only presenting one side of the story.

According to the RT new story published on March 13, 2022, Russia has requested that Ukraine formally declare itself a neutral nation that would never join NATO, suggesting that Ukraine's possible membership in the organization poses a threat to Russia's security and interests.

*“...Russia has now demanded that Ukraine officially declare itself a neutral country that will never join the US-led NATO military bloc. Kiev insists the Russian offensive was completely unprovoked and has denied claims it was planning to retake the two republics by force...” (RT, March 13, 2022).*

The news report claims that Russia rejects the assertion that its offensive was unprovoked and that Ukraine intended to use force to recover the two breakaway republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, implying that Ukraine's actions or intentions are hostile and illegitimate. According to RT News, by presenting its use of force as necessary and justified, Russia is attempting to place the blame and responsibility for its actions on Ukraine. This news story may be used to enhance war support at home, avoid criticism from abroad, and threaten Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Alternative frameworks that focus on the violations of human rights, international law, and the destabilizing consequences of the war on the region and the world, however, could also pose a threat to this narrative.

Using the justification frame, Russia is trying to portray its use of force as necessary and legitimate while shifting the blame and responsibility to Ukraine. This RT news narrative may serve to rally domestic support for the war, deflect international criticism, and undermine Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, this narrative may also be challenged by alternative frames that emphasize human rights violations, violations of international law, and the destabilizing effects of the war on the region and the world. A justification frame typically holds the problem definition, causal attribution, moral assessment, and treatment recommendation (Burch, 2022). Take a look at the following RT news article.

*The decision comes days after Moscow recognized the independence of the Donetsk and Lugansk breakaway republics in the Donbass, alleging Kiev had not lived up to its obligations under the Minsk agreements struck in 2014 and 2015 to resolve conflict between separatists and the Ukrainian government. Officials later authorized what they described as a "peacekeeping operation" in the region. Western leaders for months had predicted a looming incursion, claiming Russia has amassed troops near its border with Ukraine and in neighboring Belarus, where Moscow has conducted joint drills in recent weeks.*

*Russia has so far denied plans for an attack, however, and maintains its actions in the Donbass will be defensive in nature. The US and its European partners have already imposed sanctions on a series of Russian financial institutions, officials and lawmakers following the recognition of the break-away states, vowing to bring more penalties should Moscow "further invade" Ukraine (RT, February 24, 2022).*

The above news article also employed the justification frame to define the issue of the crisis in the Donbass region between separatists and the Ukrainian government, which jeopardizes the safety and stability of Russia and its allies. And also, the news discussed the Kiev's failure to uphold its duties under the Minsk agreements, which were meant to end the conflict peacefully and grant independence to the breakaway republics, as the cause of the conflict. It interpreted the action as Moscow's acceptance of the Donetsk and Lugansk republics' independence, which is presented as a justifiable and essential response to safeguard the rights and interests of the local populace. When a "peacekeeping operation" in the Donbass is authorized, it is reported as a defensive or

humanitarian action to stop more bloodshed and violence. By placing the blame and responsibility on Ukraine, the justification frame is used to justify and validate Russia's activities in the Donbass.

Additionally, it seeks to downplay or reject any criticism or resistance in order to win over the domestic and foreign audience's compassion and support. Russian forces invaded Ukraine with the intention of defining a particular military operation as forced, essential, and inevitable (Kumankov, 2022). In order to save the Russian-speaking community in the Donbas region from the alleged genocide and aggression by the Ukrainian government, RT News has been using the justification frame to portray Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a peacekeeping mission.

To sum up, public officials frequently utilize the justification frame as part of a narrative to defend the use of deadly force by law enforcement or other state actors. The justification frame can be viewed as a means of protecting the state's legitimacy and power.

#### **4.3.5 Attribution of Responsibility Frame**

This frame is found when news articles emphasize the parties and individuals who are considered responsible for a given scenario, issue, or event of war. In a frame that presents an issue or problem in such a way, there is an attribution of responsibility for its causes or solutions to either the government or an individual or group (Mulatu, 2017). Mulatu also pointed out two main elements under this category of frame, namely, urging narrative and blaming others. This news frame is predominantly used by RT rather than the BBC.

##### **4.3.5.1 Urging narratives**

Mulatu (2017) urges that a story narrates the case so as to give advice, or a guide, to the readers to do something in relation to the conflicts. The stories, either directly or indirectly, persuade readers to be parts of the solution or not to be parts of the cause (Mulatu, 2017).

The BBC news story published on February 25, 2022, was about the President Volodymyr Zelensky message, called to the European countries and to the citizens of the country, which means the President called for European countries collaboration and citizens' help to fight against the Russian invasion. The call for volunteers who want to stand for resistance with no combat experience has been seen queuing to join the Ukrainian defense, as expressed in the story. Some portions of the news story are written as follows:

*Defiant Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has argued European countries to do more to help as he argued his citizens to halt Russia's invasion. The second day of fighting saw tanks enter the capital, Kyiv, for the first time. Ukrainian officials said they have handed out 18,000 guns to volunteers, as well as issuing instructions on how to make petrol bombs (BBC, 25 February, 2022).*

Likewise, RT reported on February 26, 2022, that the headline “Zelensky calls for urgent decision on Ukraine’s EU membership” calls for EU members and Ukrainian official to urgently join EU to bring effective resistance against the invasion. Some of the story is as follows:

*Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has called an urgent decision on EU membership for his country, saying “the crucial moment has come”. On Saturday morning, the third day of Russia’s attack on Ukraine, Zelensky said he had discussed “further effective assistance and heroic fight of the Ukrainians for their free future” with the president of the European Council, Charles Michel (RT, February 26, 2022).*

Another RT news story published on March 5/2022 is about Russia’s declaration of temporary ceasefire and the story calls for residents of Mariupol city in Ukraine, so they can leave the surrounded city. Here are some parts of the story.

*Russia declares temporary ceasefire in Ukraine. The Russian defense ministry has declared a temporary ceasefire in Ukraine so people can leave an encircled city. The Russian Ministry of Defense has said it is halting its offensive at 10am local time on Saturday so residents can leave the encircled Azov Sea port city of Mariupol, around 110km (68 miles) from Donetsk. Russia recognizes the city as part of the Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR). However, it has been controlled by Ukraine since 2014 (RT, March 5, 2022).*

#### **4.3.5.2 Blaming the others**

During the coverage of the war, by blaming others, one is giving the responsibility for the wrongdoings in relation to something, as well as the cause of the war, to the other individual or other country. Who is blamed? And why are they blamed? are going to be discussed with examples below. During the war between Russia and Ukraine, both the BBC and RT used the frame of blaming the others. Among the sampled stories from both selected media outlets, most of the RT

stories blame Ukraine, NATO, and western countries for the cause of the current war, saying “aggression” and “unfriendly action” against Moscow.

For instance, the RT news story published on February 24, 2022, explains that the current difficulty is the result of Kiev’s failure to talk about ending eastern Ukraine’s conflict before the military operation. The story tells us that Russia demands to protect the Donbass people from Kiev’s aggression. In addition, Russia blames Ukraine, saying that Ukraine abandoned diplomacy, and so this pushed Russia to take military action against Ukraine, the news explained. See the news below.

***Russian military attack on Ukraine: how we got there.** Moscow says the current situation is the result of years of failed talks to end the bloodshed in eastern Ukraine after the 2014 coup in Kiev. Russian began striking military targets in Ukraine early on Thursday morning, days after recognizing the independence of the two breakaway republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. Moscow insists it is protecting the people of the Donbass from Kiev’s aggression, and that it was forced to resort to military means after Ukraine abandoned diplomacy in its civil conflict in the east (RT, February 24, 2022).*

The other RT news story published on February 28, 2022, was about President Putin’s blame on the West, calling them “empires of lies” because of the massive sanctions on Moscow. The news story elaborated on the sanctions taken because of Russia’s military attack on Ukraine.

***Putin slams West’s ‘empire of lies’.** Russia’s president has criticized the West as the country faces a new massive wave of sanctions. Russian president Putin has called the west an “empire of lies,” responding to a new wave of sanctions that have hit the country over its military attack on neighboring Ukraine (RT, February 28,2022).*

The other news story intended to blame NATO was also published by RT on March 4, 2022. It discussed the creation of a no-fly zone in Ukraine, which made them angry at NATO for establishing the refusal because of the ongoing war. Take a look at the following news:

***NATO will pay for its weakness, Kiev says.** Ukraine’s casualties will be on the US-led bloc’s hands due to its refusal to create a no-fly zone, the country’s president has said. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky lashed out at the NATO alliance on Friday,*

*berating the block for its refusal to establish a no-fly zone over the country amid the ongoing Russian offensive that hit Ukraine last week (RT, March 4, 2022).*

RT continuously laid responsibility on the West, the Ukrainian government, and NATO. Russia does not want Ukraine to join NATO; it seems that Moscow is afraid of the West, assuming that they will hurt the country by leaning on its neighbor, Ukraine. The RT news story published on March 19, 2022, tells us about the intentions of Russia.

***Zelensky aide blames conflict with Russia on ex-President.** Ingraining NATO aspirations in the country's constitution is among the causes of the conflict, a presidential aide has claimed. An adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, Alexey Arestovich, said on Saturday that former president Petro Poroshenko is partly responsible for the ongoing conflict with Russia. The official pointed the finger at Poroshenko's decision to write NATO aspirations into the country's constitution.*

*Russia has now demanded that Ukraine officially declare itself a neutral country that will never join the US-led NATO military alliance. Kiev says the Russian offensive was completely unprovoked and has denied claims it was planning to retake the two rebellious republics by force (RT, March 19, 2022).*

According to a news article, an adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, Alexey Arestovich, has claimed that former president Petro Poroshenko is partly responsible for the ongoing war with Russia. Russia has demanded that Ukraine officially declare itself as a neutral country that will never join the US-led NATO alliance. Ukraine, on the other hand, says that the Russian offensive was completely unprovoked and has denied statements that it was planning to retake the two republics by force.

Regarding the claim that former president Petro Poroshenko is partly responsible for the ongoing conflict with Russia due to his decision to write NATO aspirations into the country's constitution, it's important to note that this is just one perspective on the issue. There are many factors that have contributed to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and it's important to consider all of them when analyzing the situation. It's also important to consider the credibility of the source making the claim. Alexey Arestovich is an adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, and his

comments should be considered in the context of his position and potential biases. In summary, when analyzing news articles, it's important to approach them with a critical eye and consider multiple sources and perspectives to get a more complete picture of the situation.

***Russia accuses 'Ukrainian nationalists' of shelling residential areas.** The attack resulted in civilian casualties, Moscow claims. Moscow has said that Ukraine used multiple rocket launchers to shell residential blocks in the town of Starobelsk, roughly 100km (62 miles) north of Lugansk on Saturday morning. The reported incident occurred during the fight between Ukrainian troops and the forces of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DPR and LPR) backed by the Russian military. Ukraine controlled the town prior to the dramatic flare-up this week, and it is unclear who is controlling it now. According to a statement from the Russian Defense Ministry, the attack by "Ukrainian nationalists" took place around 10.30am local time. Buildings were damaged and caught fire, the ministry said, adding that there were civilian casualties, without specifying how many... (RT, February 26, 2022).*

This news article claims that Ukraine used multiple rocket launchers to shell residential blocks in the town of Starobelsk, which resulted in civilian casualties. The article also accuses "Ukrainian nationalists" of being responsible for the attack without providing any evidence or explanation. This term is often used by RT and other pro-Russian media to label the Ukrainian government and its supporters as "fascists" or "extremists" who are hostile to the Russian-speaking population in eastern Ukraine. The article does not mention the context of the conflict in Ukraine, such as the Russian invasion of the country, the annexation of Crimea, the violation of the Minsk agreements, and the international condemnation of Russia's aggression. Based on these points, I would say that this news article is biased, unreliable, and misleading. It presents only one side of the story and omits or distorts important facts. It also uses provocative language and labels to demonize the Ukrainian side and justify the Russian actions.

Generally, RT News portrays Russia as a victim of Western aggression and interference and as the target of a global conspiracy to undermine its sovereignty and security. RT News emphasized the suffering and losses of the Russian people and military and blamed the West for escalating the conflict and violating human rights.

#### 4.3.6 Military Aid Frame

Military aid frame emphasis on the aid that is used to support a nation's defense efforts or to help a developing nation keep control of its own territory. Military assistance is given to many nations to aid in combat operations. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, academics are pointing out how military aid is a tool for power projection and influence in the era of great power competition. Several powerful nations are eschewing direct combat in favor of the low-risk task of advising, assisting, and equipping a military partner or ally to pursue specific goals and national interests (William and Matissek, 2020).

The analysis indicates that RT framed the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war regarding military aid for Ukraine as a provocative and establishing move by the US and its allies that would escalate the war and threaten Russia's security. And eventually, it can worsen the current conflict in Ukraine. According to RT, Russia was acting in self-defense and with peaceful intentions, while Ukraine was violating the Russia agreements and pursuing a military solution.

*Zelensky pleads for jets or no-fly zone. US law makers call for more military assistance to Kiev following a meeting with a Ukrainian president. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky demanded that the US help provide either fighter jets or a no-fly zone during a virtual meeting with American lawmakers on Saturday as Russia's military action in Ukraine continues. Several senators involved in the meeting confirmed that Zelensky requested planes or a no-fly zone to be enforced in Ukraine against Russian aircraft (RT, March 6, 2022).*

*Russia issues convoy warning to West. The 'mindless' handover of weapons to Kiev makes them 'legitimate targets', Moscow said. Supplying Ukraine with Western arms only serves to worsen the ongoing conflict between Moscow and Kiev, Russian Deputy Foreign minister Sergey Ryabkov said on Saturday, warning that Russian forces could potentially targets such deliveries*

*We have warned the US that pumping up Ukraine with arms from several nations orchestrated by Washington is not just a dangerous move but something that makes these arms convoys legitimate targets, Ryabkov told Russia's channel one. He did not elaborate on when and where Russia might target the convoys. Ryabkov also warned that the*

*“mindless handover” of “dangerous arms” like portable air-defense and anti-tank missiles poses a threat to Western nations themselves (RT, March 12, 2022).*

According to the RT news story written above, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov issued a warning, saying that arming Kiev with Western weapons would only escalate the ongoing conflict between Moscow and Kiev and that their "mindless" transfer of weapons to them makes them "legitimate targets." In addition, Ryabkov cautioned that Western countries themselves are at risk due to the "mindless handover" of "dangerous arms" such as anti-tank and portable air defense missiles. It is crucial to remember that this is a significant problem with potentially dire repercussions. But it's also critical to take into account the information's source and the context in which it was provided.

***Declassified papers reveal extent of US military aid to Ukraine-media.** Washington has gone to great lengths to prepare Kiev “to wage a hybrid war against Russia,” a major US news outlet has said (RT, March 5, 2022).*

*Kiev has blasted Russia’s operation as a totally unprovoked aggression and approached the US and its allies for aid. President Volodymyr Zelensky has requested military aircraft that Ukrainian pilots can fly, as well as other weapons. Western nations have collectively condemned Moscow’s military action has slapped Russia with unprecedented sanctions and has promised generous military aid to Ukraine. The US alone authorized a shipment of \$350 million in military aid to Ukraine last month. Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia also promised weapons to Kiev, including anti-tank missiles and self-propelled howitzers (RT, March 12, 2022).*

The above RT news articles present a one-sided view of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, portraying Russia as a victim of Western aggression and Ukraine as a puppet of the US and its allies. According to the report, Russia is to blame for Ukraine's widespread civilian casualties and human rights violations, which include torturing captured Ukrainian soldiers. Both the right to self-defense and the right to look to other countries for security and stability are guaranteed to Ukraine. In order to prevent additional aggression and put pressure on Moscow to uphold international law and norms, the US and its allies have placed sanctions on Russia. The US has

been hesitant to give Ukraine deadly weaponry out of concern that doing so will escalate the conflict and anger Russia.

The news article used biased and inflammatory language, such as “totally unprovoked aggression”, to describe Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, implying that Ukraine or the West did something to justify it. “Mindless handover” and “dangerous arms” to describe Western arms supplies to Ukraine imply that they are reckless and irresponsible. “Legitimate targets”, to describe Western arms convoys, imply that Russia has the right to attack them. “Unprecedented sanctions” to describe Western measures against Russia implies that they are excessive and unfair.

A BBC news story published on March 5, 2022, was about Volodymyr Zelensky, the president of Ukraine, who has criticized NATO leaders for their failure to put in place a no-fly zone surrounding the nation, which he says has given Russia "a green light" to continue its attacks on towns and villages.

***War in Ukraine: Zelensky slams NATO over rejection of no-fly zone.** Ukraine’s president has attacked NATO leaders over their refusal to implement a no-fly zone around the country. In a fiery speech, Volodymyr Zelensky said the West's reluctance to intervene had given Russia "a green light" to continue bombarding towns and villages.*

*NATO has argued that a no-fly zone will result in confrontation with Moscow. And Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, said on Saturday that any such move would be seen "as participation in an armed conflict by that country". Referring to sanctions imposed on Russia by the West, the Russian leader said they were "akin to a declaration of war, but thank God it has not come to that". In his speech from Kyiv, Mr Zelensky said he disagreed that direct action could "provoke Russia's direct aggression against NATO".*

*On Friday, Nato's secretary-general, Jens Stoltenberg, warned that the introduction of a no-fly zone could lead to a "full-fledged war in Europe involving many more countries and causing much more human suffering" (BBC, March 5, 2022).*

On the other hand, Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, has warned that any such action would be considered "participation in an armed conflict by that country." NATO has claimed that a no-fly zone would lead to conflict with Moscow. On the other hand, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg cautioned that the implementation of a no-fly zone may result in a "full-fledged war

in Europe involving many more countries and causing much more human suffering." These statements make it quite apparent that Ukraine and NATO hold opposing views on establishing a no-fly zone. NATO is worried that it may intensify the conflict and add to the suffering of civilians; while Ukraine feels it would help defend its residents from Russian attacks as Russia continues its invasion of Ukraine, the tension remains tight.

RT has used to frame the conflict by emphasizing the military aid that Ukraine has received from the US and other Western countries while downplaying or ignoring the military aid that Russia has provided to its proxies in Donbass. RT has also tried to portray the military aid to Ukraine as a provocation and a threat to Russia's security and sovereignty, while presenting the Russian intervention as a legitimate and necessary response to protect the people of Donbass.

In addition to the dominant frames used by both media outlets under study, there were also other frames detected during the analysis. They are the profile frame, the violence of war frame, the genocide frame, the anti-war frame, the advance frame, and the diagnosis frame, which were discussed as follows:

#### **4.3.7 Profile Frame**

This frame places emphasis on the profiles of the two opponent parts, their officials, as well as their supporters. Regarding this, both the BBC and RT used this frame while narrating the background history of the war and the biographies of the two opposing force leaders. Through the analysis of selected news stories, unlike RT, the BBC more often referred to Ukraine's Zelensky, the USA's Biden, and Russia's Putin in the headlines of news. The following are some BBC news stories that focused on the leaders of conflicting countries:

*Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky: the comedian president who is rising to the moment. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky, a comedian who had no experience of politics when elected less than three years ago, has suddenly emerged a convincing war leader. He has rallied the nation with his addresses and video selfies and given voice to Ukrainian anger and defiance of Russian aggression. While Russian President Vladimir Putin has appeared increasingly erratic - accusing Ukraine of "genocide" in the breakaway Donetsk and Luhansk republics, and talking of the need to "de-Nazify" the country - President*

*Zelensky, from a Russian-speaking Jewish family, has remained dignified, resolute and articulate (BBC, February 26, 2022).*

This news article is a positive portrayal of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who is facing a war with Russia that started on February 24, 2022. It praises Zelensky for his speeches, his courage, his dignity, and his leadership. In the details of the news, the article contrasts Zelensky with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is depicted as erratic, aggressive, and isolated. The article also cites some opinions from Ukrainian journalists and experts who support Zelensky and his role in uniting the nation. The article is based on some factual information, such as the dates and events of the war, the background of Zelensky and Putin, and the statements made by both leaders. However, the article also contains some subjective interpretations and evaluations that reflect the author's perspective and bias. For example, the article uses words like "convincing", "articulate", "erratic", "genocide", and "iron curtain" to describe the actions and attitudes of the two presidents. These words are not neutral or objective, but rather convey a certain tone and attitude towards the situation.

The article does not provide any statistics or surveys to show how popular or unpopular Zelensky is among the Ukrainian people. The article also does not mention any challenges or criticisms that Zelensky may face or receive from his opponents or allies. The article also does not mention how Zelensky is balancing his relations with other countries that are involved in or affected by the war, such as the US, the EU, Turkey, or China. The news article only focused on the positive aspects of Zelensky's performance and personality without acknowledging any potential weaknesses or drawbacks. In conclusion, the news article is a favorable depiction of Zelensky as a comedian president who is rising to the occasion in a war with Russia.

*"A defiant Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has argued European countries to do more to help as he argued to his citizens to halt Russia's invasion" (BBC, February 24, 2022).*

*Leader under siege "it may be a David versus Goliath struggle, but it is one that has thrown the figure of President Volodymyr Zelensky into the lightime. Zelensky's arrival on the political scene was the case of life imitating art. But it is life that is at stake here, now his country is under attack and the capital under siege. Tested like never before, the*

*Ukrainian commander-in-chief has appeared to strike all the right notes, as you can read in his profile of the 44-year-old leader here” (BBC, February 26, 2022).*

The above news article highlighted Zelensky’s defiance, courage, and popularity as he urges European countries to do more to help Ukraine and appeals to his citizens to resist Russia’s invasion. The news article also mentioned Zelensky’s background as a comedian who became president after playing one on TV. The news implied that Zelensky is a heroic and charismatic leader who is facing a formidable enemy. However, the article also contains some subjective interpretations and evaluations that reflect the author’s perspective and bias. For example, the article used words like “defiant”, “argued”, “under siege”, “David versus Goliath”, and “tested like never before” to describe the situation and the role of Zelensky. These words are not neutral or objective but rather convey a certain tone and attitude towards the conflict.

In conclusion, the article is a favorable depiction of Zelensky as a comedian president who is rising to the occasion in a war with Russia. The article used some facts to support its claims, but also uses some subjective language and selective sources to present a biased view of the situation. Generally, in the above BBC news stories, the BBC used a profile frame to glorify and show the commitment of Ukraine’s leader, President Zelensky, by using the word “defiant” and the phrase “David versus Goliath struggle”. By looking at these news stories, one can understand that BBC stories seem to encourage and motivate Ukrainians to stand firm with the defiant leader, Mr. Zelensky.

Another news story published on the BBC website using a profile frame was about President Putin and how western agents demand to know his mindset. The news elaborated all about the president and western agent’s intention to understand his need, which may help them avoid the escalation of the conflict that worries them.

***Western agents seek to get inside Putin’s head.** Russia’s leader Vladimir Putin is trapped in a closed world of his own making, Western spies believe. And that worries them. For years they have sought to get inside Mr. Putin’s mind, to better understand his intentions. With Russia’s troops seemingly bogged down in Ukraine, the need to do so has become all the more necessary as they try to work out how he will react under pressure. Understanding his state of mind will be vital to avoid escalating the crisis into even more dangerous territory (BBC, March 20, 2022).*

The news article used a profile frame to focus on the personality and mindset of Russia's leader Vladimir Putin, who is seen as the main actor in the war in Ukraine. The news article suggests that Mr. Putin is trapped in a closed world of his own making, which means that he has a distorted view of reality and is isolated from alternative perspectives and feedback. The news article implies that this makes him unpredictable and irrational, as he may act based on his emotions, beliefs, and biases rather than on facts and logic. The news article also implies that this poses a challenge and a risk for Western spies, who are trying to get inside Mr. Putin's head to better understand his intentions and anticipate his moves. The article implies that understanding his state of mind is vital to avoid escalating the crisis into even more dangerous territory, as he may react under pressure in ways that could threaten regional and global stability. The news used a profile frame to portray President Putin as a complex and mysterious figure, who is both powerful and vulnerable, and who may have a significant impact on the outcome of the conflict.

On the other hand, the RT story published on March 6, 2022, predicted and gave hints about what would happen if Zelensky were to be killed. RT used the profile frame by taking and hinting about the Ukrainian leader's future destiny and his country's survival as a government. Take a look at the following news:

*US hints at what would happen were Zelensky to be killed. Washington confirms "continuity of government plans exist for Ukraine. Secretary of the state Anthony Blinken said on Sunday that the Ukrainian government has "plans in place" to ensure the "continuity of government" should President Volodymyr Zelensky be killed. Zelensky insists he is still in Kiev, but western officials have already reportedly planned to set him up as a leader in exile (RT, March 6, 2022).*

The article was a negative portrayal of the situation in Ukraine, where President Volodymyr Zelensky is facing a war with Russia that started on February 24, 2022. The article suggests that Zelensky is in danger of being killed or forced to flee the country, and that the US and its allies have only offered him limited support and assistance. The article also implies that Russia has been advancing rapidly and successfully through Ukraine, capturing or besieging several cities. The article paints a bleak and hopeless picture of the future of Ukraine and its sovereignty.

The article is based on some factual information, such as the date and events of the war, the background of Zelensky and Putin, and the statements made by both leaders. However, the article

also contains some subjective interpretations and evaluations that reflect the author's perspective and bias. For example, the article uses words like "hints", "encircled", "extricate", "brainstormed", "mooted", and "insurgency" to describe the actions and attitudes of the US and its allies. These words are not neutral or objective but rather convey a certain tone and attitude towards the conflict. The article uses some facts to support its claims, but also uses some subjective language and selective sources to present a biased view of the situation.

#### **4.3.8 Violence of the War Frame**

The violence of war frame focuses on various destructions as well as the human cost of the war, including statements about the aftermath of bombings and injury/casualty totals (Dimitrova & Stromvack, 2005). In the current case, RT and BBC media utilized the violence of the war frame during the coverage of the situation, like damages and destructions caused by the Russia-Ukraine war of 2022. Civilian and physical infrastructure damages from the bombing and ground fighting had been conveyed through this frame. Mostly, the damages of a military attack by Russia on civilians in Ukraine had been reported via violence of war by the BBC. Compared to RT, the BBC offered more thorough coverage of the air strike on Ukrainian military targets and also briefly covered the impact of the airstrikes on infrastructure. For instance, the BBC news story published on February 26, 2022, was about civilians and soldiers' deaths, as asserted in the UN report:

*The Ukrainian capital Kyiv has been under Russian missile fire, but remains in the hands of the government of President Volodymyr Zelensky. The invasion has killed at least 198 Ukrainians so far and the UN says more than 120,000 have fled the country in the past 48 hours. Ukraine said 137 people - civilians and soldiers - have been killed, while Russia has not admitted any deaths on its side (BBC, February 26, 2022).*

According to the above news, Kyiv has come under Russian missile bombardment but is still under Ukrainian control. The article includes some information on the deaths and evictions brought on by the invasion. According to the details of the news, the international community is worried about the humanitarian catastrophe and that Ukraine is experiencing greater losses and damages than Russia. The news article is based on some true data, including the time and circumstances of the war, Zelensky and Putin's backgrounds, and pronouncements by the UN and the Ukrainian government. However, it also includes some arbitrary readings and assessments that reveal the author's bias.

As well, the damages caused by the Russian army were also covered by RT.

*Dozens killed and injured in Russian strikes on military base, Kiev says. More than 30 missiles were launched overnight, according to the local military administration. At least 35 people were killed and more than 130 injured during overnight shelling at a military training ground outside the western city of Lvov, the head of the regional military administration Maxim Kozitsky has claimed (RT, March 13, 2022).*

The above news article is an example of the violence of war frame, which is a way of presenting the war as a violent and destructive conflict that causes death and suffering. The headline and the lead paragraph emphasize the number of casualties and the source of the attack, using words like “killed”, “injured”, and “strikes”. The article quoted the head of the regional military administration, which uses emotive and patriotic language to describe the situation, such as “we lost more heroes”, “the shelling of the peacekeeping and security center”, and “the occupiers fired”. The article does not provide any context or background information about the reasons or motives behind the attack, nor does it include any alternative perspectives or voices from the Russian side.

*‘Up to 180 foreign mercenaries’ dead in Ukraine after precision strike- Moscow. Local authorities earlier reported that 35 people had been killed during the overnight shelling of a military base. An air strike on Ukrainian military training facilities in the early hours of Sunday has resulted in the liquidation of “up to 180 foreign mercenaries,” the Russian Ministry of Defense has announced (RT, March 13, 2022).*

The above news implies that Russia is targeting and eliminating foreign involvement in Ukraine and that the conflict is intensifying and expanding. The article is based on some factual information, such as the date and events of the war, the background of Ukraine and Russia, and the statements made by Russian and Ukrainian officials. However, the details of the news story contain some subjective interpretations and evaluations that reflect the author’s perspective and bias. For example, the article used words like “liquidation”, “high-precision”, “occupiers”, “propaganda”, and “unprovoked” to describe the situation and the role of Russia and Ukraine. These words are not neutral or objective but rather convey a certain tone and attitude towards the conflict. The article is a favorable depiction of the situation in Lviv, where a military training

ground was hit by Russian missiles overnight. The article used some facts to support its claims, but also used some subjective language and selective sources to present a biased view of the situation.

***Russian military releases footage of helicopter on Ukrainian convoy.** More than 1,100 Ukrainian tanks and APC's have been destroyed since the start of the offensive, according to Moscow. The Russian defense ministry published a video of its Ka-52 'Alligator' attack helicopter hitting and eliminating a convoy of Ukrainian military's armored vehicles (RT, March 12, 2022).*

***Russia destroys aircraft repair plant near western city of Lviv.** Russian missiles have hit an aircraft repair plant near Lviv in western Ukraine, a city that has become a safe haven for people fleeing the war. Emergency vehicles raced to the site of the strike, just 6km (four miles) from the city Centre, after three loud explosions were heard early on Friday (BBC, March 18, 2022).*

The above BBC news is also an example of the violence of the war frame, which portrays the war as a brutal and deadly conflict that causes harm and destruction. The headline and the lead paragraph highlight the target and the impact of the attack, using words like “destroys”, “hits”, and “strikes”. The article provided details about the timing and location of the attack, using phrases like “early on Friday” and “near Lviv in western Ukraine”. The news article contrasted the city of Lviv as a “safe haven” for people fleeing the war with the site of the strike, which is very close to the city center, implying a sense of threat and insecurity. The article does not provide any context or background information about the reasons or motives behind the attack, nor does it include any alternative perspectives or voices from the Russian side.

#### **4.3.9 Genocide frame**

The Genocide Frame is an exceptional frame used by RT to blame the Ukrainian government, saying there were more than eight years of genocide in Kiev and that Russia started a military operation to stop them and liberate the Donbas people. In this approach to the news frame, Russia and Russian soldiers are displayed in contexts that represent safety and military expertise, while Ukraine is frequently depicted in contexts of fascist symbols and brutality. According to Vladimir Putin, president of Russia, the goal of the war in Ukraine is to “demilitarize and denazify” the

Ukrainian government. In the Donbas, where the Ukrainian army has been battling separatists backed by Russia since 2014, he alleges that the Ukrainian government has been committing genocide against the Russian-speaking people.

*Moscow launched what it called a “special operation” in Ukraine last Thursday, saying that it was needed to stop the “genocide” in the Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk, which broke away from Kiev in 2014. According to the Russian side, the aim of the operation is to “denazify” and “demilitarize” the Ukrainian government, not to occupy the neighboring country. Kiev has denied Moscow's justification for the incursion, claiming that an unprovoked war has been waged against it and rallying for international support (RT, March 5, 2022).*

The news substantiated Russian government statements of “genocide” of Russian speakers in the east, besides blaming Ukraine for the currently ongoing tragedy in the country. Contrary to this, a BBC news story published on February 25, 2022, asserted President Putin’s blaming in his speech about President Zelensky and Ukraine’s government system. However, the story presented Putin’s claims as baseless accusations. In some parts, the news is as follows:

*(...Repeating an often-used baseless allegation that Mr. Zelensky-a Jewish man is a “neo-Nazi”, Mr. Putin also labelled the Ukrainian leadership as terrorists and drug dealers. He accused Ukraine of installing missiles and other heavy weaponry in civilian buildings, using residents as human shields, which he said was based on advice from foreign particularly from US advisers...) (BBC, February 25, 2022).*

By representing the channels through which political communication can successfully change attitudes that result in shared opinions, framing goes beyond simple persuasion. Over 800,000 people were killed during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, which may be directly attributed to the devastating and potent precursor and the avoidable effect of media framing (Thankachan & Thomas, 2021).

#### **4.3.10 Anti-war frame**

An anti-war frame is a way of understanding and interpreting a news story based on the negative consequences and costs of war, such as human suffering, environmental damage, economic losses, and moral dilemmas. An anti-war frame can help to raise awareness and empathy for the victims

of war, as well as to question the legitimacy and necessity of the use of force. It highlights the alternatives and solutions to war, such as diplomacy, dialogue, and cooperation.

Both BBC and RT news have used anti-war frames in their coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war, but with different emphases and perspectives. BBC news has focused more on the human rights violations, civilian casualties, and humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian intervention in Ukraine, as well as the international efforts to resolve the conflict peacefully

*Thousands detained at anti-war protest across Russia. The largest demonstrations were held on Moscow and St. Petersburg, as thousands of arrests were made across the country. Thousands of protesters took to the streets of Russian cities on Sunday to demonstrate against Moscow's ongoing military offensive in Ukraine. The fact that the protests were unauthorized resulted in thousands of arrests, the interior ministry said. The protesters were hardly carrying any placards banners, instead chanting "no to war" and "Ukraine is not our enemy" the protest followed some calls posted on the internet, including by the associates of jailed opposition figure Alexey Navalny. None of the protests had been agreed with the city authorities, as required by Russian law (RT, March 6, 2022).*

The news article appeared to be accurate in reporting the main events and numbers of the protests. However, it does not provide any sources or references to support its claims. It also does not mention any details about the organizers or the participants of the protests, such as their names, affiliations, or motivations. Therefore, the article could be improved by providing more evidence and context for its statements. Additionally, the article appears to be biased in favor of the protesters and against the Russian government. It used words and phrases such as "unauthorized", "resulted in thousands of arrests", "no to war", and "Ukraine is not our enemy" to imply that the protesters are peaceful and legitimate, while the government is oppressive and aggressive. It did not include any quotes or opinions from government officials or supporters, or any counter-arguments or criticisms of the protests. Therefore, the article could be more balanced by presenting both sides of the issue and acknowledging the complexity and controversy of the situation.

On the other hand, the BBC covered the anti-war protesters issue as well. The news article reports on the widespread anti-war protests that took place in Russia and other countries on Sunday, March 5, 2022, in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine that began on February 24, 2022.

*Protesters across Russia see thousands detained. More than 4,300 people were detained at anti-war protests across Russia on Sunday, rights groups and Russian authorities' say. Some 1,700 people were detained in Moscow alone, RIA news agency reports, citing the interior ministry. The OVD-Info rights group says detentions took place in 53 cities. Although protests have become increasingly restricted in recent years, numerous rallies have taken place across Russia since the invasion. In the last 11 days, more than 10,000 people have been detained at protests, OVD-Info says. "The screws are being fully tightened - essentially we are witnessing military censorship," Maria Kuznetsova, OVD-Info's spokeswoman, told Reuters news agency from Tbilisi in Georgia. "We are seeing rather big protests today - even in Siberian cities, where we only rarely saw such numbers of arrests." (BBC, March 6, 2022).*

The protests' reasons and motivations behind them were covered in the news, along with the responses of the Russian government and its allies. The demonstrators are opposed to the war and the restrictions imposed by the Russian government, according to Maria Kuznetsova, OVD-Info's spokeswoman, who is quoted in the news piece. It further notes that Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, has defended the invasion by arguing that it is necessary to save the Russian minority in Ukraine from neo-Nazis. It is considerable that the news article is based on factual information from reliable sources, such as rights groups and news agencies. It used direct quotes from a spokesperson of OVD-Info to provide a perspective from the protesters' side. It also provided some background information on the war and its causes. However, similar to RT News above, the news article did not include any voices or opinions from the Russian government or its supporters, nor did it explore the possible consequences or implications of the protests for the war or the diplomatic relations between Russia and other countries.

#### **4.3.11 Advance frame**

Advance frame place emphasis on the war's advancement, the battlefields that the opposing forces were able to capture, and the outcome the war. By employing an advance frame, both the BBC and RT presented both sides of the war between Russian and Ukrainian forces fighting each other. Both media used this type of news frame to cover stories related to the progress or advancement of the war, captured cities, battlefield outcomes, and their implications. Stories that used the advance frame focused on the advancement of the Russian government forces to capture Ukrainian

cities as well as the Ukrainian defense forces. RT covered a major advancement of the Russian government forces.

***Putin could expand military activities into a 'NATO countries,' top EU diplomats claims.*** *The ongoing conflict in Ukraine risks spilling elsewhere, including into an unspecified 'NATO countries,' Josep Borrell has claimed. Europe is struggling between its desire to "support" Ukraine amid the ongoing Russian offensive and its fear that the war could spill over into other countries, the EU's foreign-policy chief Josep Borrell told CNN. "Everyone is trying to strike a difficult balance. On the one hand, we are trying to support Ukraine and, on the other hand, we are trying to prevent a bigger war," he said (RT, March 12, 2022).*

The news article claimed that Europe is struggling between its desire to support Ukraine and its fears of a bigger war. This seems exaggerated. Europe is divided and conflicted over its stance on the crisis, with some countries calling for dialogue and diplomacy and others pushing for sanctions and military aid to Ukraine.

On the other hand, the BBC website published news regarding the missile, saying Russia's military has claimed to have used a hypersonic ballistic missile called Kinzhal, or Dagger, to destroy a large underground arms depot in Western Ukraine.

***Russia claims first use of hypersonic Kinzhal missile in Ukraine.*** *Russia's military has fired a hypersonic ballistic missile and destroyed a big underground arms depot in Western Ukraine, the defense ministry in Moscow has said. If confirmed it would be Russia's first use in this war of the Kinzhal, or Dagger, ballistic missile launched from the air, most likely by a MiG-31 warplane... (BBC, March 19, 2022).*

According to the above news, Russia claimed the first use of a hypersonic Kinzhal missile in Ukraine. The details of the news reported that Russia's military has fired a hypersonic ballistic missile and destroyed a big underground arms depot in western Ukraine, according to the defense ministry in Moscow. The news claimed that if confirmed, it would be Russia's first use in this war of the Kinzhal, or Dagger, ballistic missile launched from the air, most likely by a MiG-31 warplane. The news article explained what hypersonic missiles are, how they work, and why they

are considered a strategic advantage by President Vladimir Putin, who has repeatedly highlighted Russia's investment in them. The news also provided some context and background information on the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, which started in February 2022 when Russia invaded parts of eastern Ukraine.

In detail, the news article cited various sources, such as Russian officials, Ukrainian officials, international experts, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to present different perspectives and opinions on the situation and the implications of the missile strike. The news included a video of what Russia claims to be its missile strike on the arms depot in Deliatyn, a village in south-western Ukraine only 100km from the border with Romania.

#### **4.3.12 Diagnosis Frame**

The diagnosis frame places emphasis on the reason the events happened. It discusses the reasons that led to the war. As discussed in the literature review, many say that the Russia-Ukraine war was the result of the complex political situation between the West and Russia for a decade. Predominantly, RT's news headlines in its news stories always referred to Putin's announcement and used quotes from him. It is considerable that RT used the President's speech, putting in quotes, and at the end of the news, it puts Ukraine's view on the issue, which means RT has taken impartiality into account.

For instance, the RT news story published on March 5, 2022, discussed the reason why Russia's government is invading Ukraine.

*Putin explains why Ukraine attacks went beyond Donbass. The Russian leader claims Moscow wanted to prevent the west from helping "nationalists". Russian president Vladimir Putin said on Saturday that he chose to attack Ukraine beyond the borders of the Donetsk and Lugansk people's Republics (DPR and LPR) to prevent the West from "endlessly" supplying "nationalists and radicals" with various resources, such as weapons and money.*

*He added that the Russian forces were "practically done" destroying Ukrainian military sites, such as air defenses and weapons depots.*

*The president stated that he had ordered Russian troops to invade Ukraine last week in order to neutralize the "real threat" coming from Kiev and NATO. Moscow has long*

*protested the Western military infrastructure along its borders and Ukraine's aspirations to join the US-led bloc (RT, March 5, 2022).*

*"...Circumstances require us to take decisive and immediate action," the order reads. "The People's Republics of Donbass turned to Russia with a request for help. In this regard, in accordance with Article 51, part 7 of the UN Charter, with the sanction of the Federation Council and in pursuance of the friendship treaties ratified by the Federal Assembly and mutual assistance with the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, I have decided to conduct a special military operation," Putin stated..." (RT, February 24, 2022).*

In the above RT news stories, the reason for Russia's invasion of Ukraine was addressed following President Putin's announcement. The news report suggests that the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DPR and LPR), which have agreements of friendship and mutual aid with Russia, are legal and recognized states. The DPR and LPR are self-proclaimed entities that are not recognized by any UN member state except Russia. They are usually regarded as rebels supported by Russia who have been at war with the Ukrainian government since 2014. The legal justification for Russia's action is cited in the article as being Article 51 of the UN Charter. Article 51 states that "nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations".

However, there is no proof that Ukraine or any other state launched an armed strike against Russia or its supporters. Russia, on the other hand, has been charged with violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine by annexing Crimea in 2014 and aiding the insurgents in Donbas. The fact that the international community has loudly denounced Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a blatant act of aggression and a danger to regional and international security is not mentioned in the text. Numerous nations and organizations have voiced support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and called for an immediate end to hostilities and a peaceful resolution of the crisis. These groups include the UN Security Council, the European Union, NATO, and many others.

#### 4.4 Ethical issues in the war news framing

Applying moral and ethical standards to the collection, editing, and dissemination of news and information are the practice of ethical journalism. The goals of ethical journalism include seeking the truth, upholding others' rights and dignity, the public interest, and taking responsibility for one's own conduct (Smith, 2022). Outlets must exercise proper skepticism away from the front lines; neither the Russian military nor the Ukrainian government should be trusted as reliable sources. They should either independently verify the information they offer or carefully qualify it. Not to compare the two only, but many countries employ strategic disinformation during times of war, and it is the responsibility of unbiased journalists to distinguish fact from fiction and propaganda.

Regarding the issue at hand, the analysis findings indicated that RT's coverage of the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war fell short of ethical journalism standards in numerous instances. To serve the objectives of the Russian government, RT, for instance, did not seek the truth but rather twisted it. It also used selective and misleading sources, made up data, and presented opinions as facts. Additionally, RT supported alternative narratives and conspiracy theories that ran counter to the facts and opinions of other media sources and experts.

RT deliberately supported Russia and its acts while demonizing Ukraine and its Western supporters. Additionally, it misled its audience by playing on their emotions and concerns in order to forward Russia's agenda. Likewise, RT compromised the privacy of battle participants and put them at unnecessary risk of injury. Also, RT's editorial rules and practices lacked openness and independence and served as a mouthpiece for the Russian government. RT News did not prioritize and respect the public interest but rather endangered it by inciting hatred, violence, and division among people. RT intentionally demonized Ukraine and its Western allies and glorified Russia and its actions. Additionally, it confused its audience by playing on their emotions and concerns in order to forward Russia's agenda. And also, RT compromised the privacy of battle participants and put them at unnecessary risk of injury. RT served as a platform for the Russian government and lacked openness and independence in its editorial policies and practices.

*Putin explains why Ukraine attacks went beyond Donbass. The Russian leader claims Moscow wanted to prevent the west from helping “nationalists”. Russian president Vladimir Putin said on Saturday that he chose to attack Ukraine beyond the borders of the*

*Donetsk and Lugansk people's Republics (DPR and LPR) to prevent the West from "endlessly" supplying "nationalists and radicals" with various resources, such as weapons and money.*

*He added that the Russian forces were "practically done" destroying Ukrainian military sites, such as air defenses and weapons depots.*

*The president stated that he had ordered Russian troops to invade Ukraine last week in order to neutralize the "real threat" coming from Kiev and NATO. Moscow has long protested the Western military infrastructure along its borders and Ukraine's aspirations to join the US-led bloc (RT, March 5, 2022).*

The above news article emphasizes the disagreement and clash between different parties, such as Russia, Ukraine, NATO, and the West. It used words like "attack", "prevent", "destroy", "threat", and "protest" to highlight the tension and hostility. The news article assigns blame or credit for the situation to certain actors, such as Putin, Kiev, and NATO. It used words like "chose", "wanted", "ordered", "neutralize", and "aspirations" to indicate who is responsible for the actions and outcomes. And also, the news appeals to the patriotic sentiments and interests of a nation or group, such as Russia or the DPR and LPR.

The news used words like "Moscow", "Russian leader", "Russian forces", and "Russian troops" to emphasize the national identity and sovereignty of Russia. And considerably, the news article has a right-leaning political bias, meaning that it favors the conservative or traditional views and values of Russia over those of Ukraine or the West. The news article is an example of propaganda, which is a form of communication that aims to influence or manipulate the opinions or emotions of an audience, often by using selective or distorted information, emotional appeals, or false or misleading claims. Propaganda can be used for various purposes, such as promoting a political agenda, creating a positive or negative image of a person or a group, or justifying an action or a policy. The news article frames the issue as a binary choice between Russia and the West and portrays Putin as a rational and decisive leader who acts in the best interests of his country and people, while depicting the Ukrainian side as irrational and aggressive, driven by nationalism and radicalism.

The BBC informed and educated the global audience and policy-makers, as well as exposed the implications and consequences of the war for regional and global security, stability, and collaboration. Additionally, the BBC, by covering the human rights abuses and humanitarian catastrophe brought on by the war, as well as the privacy and safety of those engaged in the conflict, supported the rights and dignity of others.

*Russia claims first use of hypersonic Kinzhal missile in Ukraine. Russia's military has fired a hypersonic ballistic missile and destroyed a big underground arms depot in Western Ukraine, the defense ministry in Moscow has said. If confirmed it would be Russia's first use in this war of the Kinzhal, or Dagger, ballistic missile launched from the air, most likely by a MiG-31 warplane... (BBC, March 19, 2022).*

According to the ethics of journalism, the above news article was written from a neutral and objective point of view, as it does not express any bias or favoritism towards either side of the conflict. It used factual and verifiable information, such as official statements, statistics, and eyewitness accounts, to support its claims and arguments. The news article was informative and comprehensive, as it covered the main aspects of the event, such as who, what, when, where, why, and how. It also provides relevant and updated information on the broader context and background of the war, such as the history, causes, consequences, and challenges of the conflict. The article is balanced and fair, as it gives equal space and attention to both sides of the story. It acknowledges the uncertainty and controversy surrounding the missile strike, as it uses words like “claims”, “if confirmed”, and “questionable” to indicate that there may be different or conflicting versions of the truth.

The BBC uncovered the misinformation and propaganda coming from Russia and its allies by verifying and analyzing the facts and evidence from many sources. In an effort to reach a worldwide audience and decision-makers, the BBC emphasized the effects of the war on local and global security, stability, and cooperation. Based on the above situations, we can say that the BBC's reporting on the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022 is biased either in favor of Ukraine or against Russia based on these considerations. However, when compared to RT News, the BBC's news coverage is relatively fair and impartial because it adheres to the ethical journalism standards of seeking the truth, defending the rights and dignity of others, and respecting the public interest.

Looking at the choice of words and tone, the BBC tends to use neutral and factual language, such as “invasion”, “offensive”, “conflict”, “crisis”, etc. RT, on the other hand, used more emotive and biased language, such as “special military operation”, “terror”, “occupiers, etc. The BBC also reports on the human toll and the international response to the war, while RT focuses more on the military actions from the Russian perspective. Regarding the selection and presentation of sources, the BBC cites a variety of sources, such as NATO, UK, US, Ukrainian, and UN officials, as well as independent analysts and experts. RT relies mostly on Russian sources, such as the Russian Defense Ministry, the Russian Foreign Ministry, and pro-Russian politicians and commentators. The BBC also provided links to its sources, while RT didn’t. Some news outlets, particularly government-affiliated media organizations, are not always invulnerable to the political pressures of the governments of the countries they operate in while covering conflicts and this is true of both authoritarian and liberal democratic nations.

The RT news story published on March 4, 2022, is about the new laws that Russia has enacted to criminalize the distribution of “disinformation” about the Russian army and the call for anti-Russian sanctions, especially in relation to the war in Ukraine. The article claims that the laws are aimed at protecting the truth and the reputation of the Russian armed forces and at countering the alleged information war launched by the US and its social networks. The article also reports on the harsh penalties that could be imposed on those who violate the laws, such as fines and imprisonment.

*Russia criminalizes ‘disinformation’ about army. Moscow has also accused Washington of launching an information war over the conflict in Ukraine. Russian lawmakers have approved legislation that could see people put behind bars for up to 15 years if found guilty of peddling so-called false information about the actions of the army, amid Moscow’s military operation in Ukraine. On Friday, the lower chamber of Russia’s parliament voted to introduce the law to heavily penalize citizens spreading fake allegations against the country’s armed forces.*

*The chairman of the State Duma, Vyacheslav Volodin, weighed in on the move, insisting that it is needed “to protect our soldiers, officers, in order to protect the truth.”*

*“Literally by tomorrow, this law will force punishment – and very tough punishment – on those who lied and made statements which discredited our armed forces,” he asserted. Defaming the Russian army could result in a fine of almost \$13,500, or three years in jail. An offender could spend up to 15 years behind bars for intentionally spreading ‘fake’ information that causes significant damage to national security, under revisions to the existing law... (RT, March 4, 2022).*

The news article did not cite any other sources or evidence to support its claims, except for some quotes from Volodin, the chairman of the State Duma. It does not mention any other perspectives or opinions that could challenge or verify its assertions. And also, the news article seems to have a neutral and factual tone, as it mainly reports on the details and rationale of the new laws. However, the article may also have a subtle and implicit purpose of endorsing or justifying the new laws, as it does not question or criticize their legitimacy, necessity, or impact. The article may also have a hidden agenda of supporting or promoting Russia’s position on the war in Ukraine, as it does not acknowledge or address any of the criticisms or accusations that Russia has faced from the international community for its invasion of Ukraine. In conclusion, this news article is a low-quality source that provides a limited and incomplete view of Russia’s new laws on disinformation about the army and sanctions. It lacks credibility, evidence, and analysis.

The mainstream Western media and politicians adopted an overtly anti-Russian stance after the Western nations recognized and supported the new Ukrainian government. This affected the way information was presented in favor of the prospective new Ukrainian agenda and, as a result, was reflected in public opinion. The law, which President Vladimir Putin signed on March 4, 2022, makes it illegal to spread "fake" information about the Russian military services and carries a maximum 15-year jail sentence. The Russian government is in charge of defining what is meant by "fake". Given that the Kremlin wants to use the term "special military operation," it might be against the law to refer to the conflict in Ukraine as a war. Because the measure "appears to criminalize the process of independent journalism," the BBC declared that it would temporarily cease the work of its journalists and staff in Russia. Regarding the restriction, the BBC published news that says:

*War in Ukraine: BBC suspends its journalists' work in Russia. The BBC is temporarily suspending its journalists' work in Russia, in response to a new law which threatens to jail anyone Russia deems to have spread "fake" news on the armed forces.*

*BBC Director-General Tim Davie said the legislation "appears to criminalize the process of independent journalism". The Kremlin objects to the conflict being called a war, instead calling it a "special military operation". BBC News in Russian will still be produced from outside the country.*

*Access to BBC websites had already been restricted in Russia. News outlets Deutsche Welle, Meduza and Radio Liberty also had their services limited, Russia's state-owned news agency RIA said. Responding to the legislation passed by the Russian authorities, BBC Director-General Tim Davie said: "It leaves us no other option than to temporarily suspend the work of all BBC News journalists and their support staff within the Russian Federation while we assess the full implications of this unwelcome development" Our BBC News service in Russian will continue to operate from outside Russia (BBC, March 5, 2022).*

The news claimed that the BBC News service in Russia will continue to be produced outside of Russia. Before the measure was passed, Russia already had censored access to BBC websites and other international news sources. International organizations and human rights organizations have harshly denounced the measure as an attempt to silence independent voices and a breach of press freedom. This also indicates that the law also comes amid rising tensions between Russia and Ukraine, which began in 2022, as well as between Western nations. After all, the news media must function in an environment that supports press freedom in order to deliver honest and objective reporting (United Nations, 2016). Additionally, the degree to which news organizations can effectively manage and reduce their biases, particularly when covering divisive issues and topics, strongly affects their capacity to provide the news to their consumers objectively (Klein, 2020).

Regarding the issue, the EU Council banned RT and Sputnik on February 27, 2022, in reaction to Russia's aggressive and unlawful military actions against Ukraine. The Council unveiled additional restraints. By means of these actions, the EU wanted to immediately halt Sputnik's and RT/Russia Today's broadcasting activities in the EU, or directed at the EU, until the aggression against Ukraine is stopped, as well as the Russian Federation and its affiliated outlets stop conducting

disinformation and information manipulation campaigns against the EU and its member states (European Council, 2022).

The Council stated that Sputnik and Russia Today (RT) are crucial and vital in advancing and supporting the military action against Ukraine and the instability of its neighboring nations. They are permanently under the direct or indirect control of the authorities of the Russian Federation. In order to advance its policy of destabilizing its neighboring nations, the EU, and its member states, the Russian Federation has engaged in a systematic, global campaign of disinformation, information manipulation, and factual distortion (European Council, 2022). The Council condemned the Russian Federation, saying it has engaged in ongoing, concerted misinformation and information manipulation efforts directed at the EU and nearby civil society members, gravely misrepresenting and manipulating facts, in order to defend and promote its armed aggression against Ukraine.

To sum up, the BBC covered a wide range of topics related to the war, such as the history, politics, economics, diplomacy, humanitarian situation, and cyber warfare, whereas RT covered mainly the military aspects of the war, such as the battles, the weapons, the casualties, and the air defenses. The BBC has given more attention to the Ukrainian side of the story, while RT has given more attention to the Russian side of the story. Based on these aspects, it can be said that the BBC has a more balanced and objective approach to reporting on the Russia-Ukraine war of 2022 than RT, because RT has a more pro-Russian and propagandistic approach to reporting on the war.

#### **4.5 Discussion of the findings**

The news media play a vital role in informing the audience about the war events, and they outline to a large extent the opinions of the audience about the war events. Victory in the war cannot be achieved solely on the battlefield; it also requires media support to justify the war and persuade the population of the country that committed an invasion that it is justified (Chernov, 2023). It is also needed to influence the international community to accept the discourse of the events offered by warring sides. International affairs are about a matter of ‘whose story wins’ (Ronfeldt and Arquilla, 2001); at issue is power and control in the formation of media-politics alliances and in the legitimization of military action (Roselle et al., 2014). By playing a watchdog role, the media is required to keep the government and lawmakers accountable (McNair, 2011). However, it can

be argued that political and financial priorities have turned the media into a manipulative force, giving private and political interests the upper hand and allowing them to infiltrate the public sphere, where citizens are better understood as news consumers than democratic participants (Kellner, 2000).

The study's first research question aimed to compare how BBC News and RT News portrayed the war between Russia and Ukraine. Based on the research question, the analysis result shows that, in line with their differing political and ideological stances, BBC News and RT News evaluated the war in different ways. According to BBC News, Russia invaded Ukraine illegally and aggressively, violating its sovereignty and resulting in violations of human rights, civilian casualties, and a humanitarian disaster. BBC News demanded worldwide involvement and support for Ukraine while applauding Ukraine's resistance and resilience and denouncing Russia's cruelty and deceit.

However, RT News weighed the conflict as a special military operation by Russia to protect its security concerns and historical ties to Crimea and eastern Ukraine. RT News criticized the violence and corruption in Ukraine, complimented Russia's bravery and is likely to, and assigned the blame for the country's illegal coup and interference by the West to Ukraine. The media framing theory, which posits that media outlets choose, stress, interpret, and evaluate key aspects of reality to construct a particular narrative of events that matches their interests, can help to explain these divergent assessments of the war (Entman, 1993). According to media framing theory, media organizations can promote particular values, attitudes, or behaviors through the employment of frames to influence public opinion and policy decisions on particular problems (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In this instance, in line with its editorial policy, political slant, and intended readership, BBC News promoted a pro-Ukrainian viewpoint by emphasizing the illegality, aggression, and violations of human rights of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Additionally, BBC News aroused international support for Ukraine by framing arguments that emphasized universal ideals like democracy, human rights, peace, and justice. RT News, on the other hand, promoted a pro-Russian viewpoint that was consistent with its editorial policy, political orientation, and target audience by using frames that explained, rationalized, and defended Russia's

activities in Ukraine. In order to mobilize domestic support for Russia, RT News also employed frames that emphasized national ideals like sovereignty, identity, security, and history.

The agenda-setting theory, which postulates that media sources choose some subjects or themes as more salient or significant than others by giving them greater coverage or prominence, can also help to explain these varied perceptions of the war (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). According to the agenda-setting theory, media organizations can influence public opinion or policy-making on particular themes or issues by giving them a particular tone or viewpoint (McCombs et al., 1997). In this instance, by providing the war with greater coverage or prominence than RT News, BBC News established an agenda that presented it as a moral outrage and a threat to international law and order. Additionally, BBC News presented Russia's involvement in the conflict by using terms like 'invasion,' 'violation,' 'abuse,' 'brutality,' 'deception,' etc. However, by providing it with less attention or prominence than BBC News, RT News established an agenda that presented the conflict as a moral obligation and a defense of national sovereignty and identity. On the other hand, RT News also presented Russia's involvement in the conflict by employing terms like 'operation,' 'defense,' 'interest,' 'tie,' 'courage,' 'determination,' etc.

The second research question aimed to identify what dominant frames BBC News and RT News used to describe and interpret the war between Russia and Ukraine. The investigation showed that, in keeping with their differing political and ideological stances, RT News and BBC News presented the war in various ways. BBC News presented Russia as an unlawful and aggressive invader that violated Ukraine's sovereignty and resulted in fatalities, injuries, and displacement by emphasizing the war's human interest, military conflict, and geopolitical conflict aspects. On the other hand, RT News used frames that emphasized the justification, the attribution of responsibility, and the military aid aspects of the war and portrayed Russia as a defender of its security interests and historical ties with Crimea and eastern Ukraine. RT News also portrayed Ukraine as a failed state, a puppet of the West, and a threat to regional stability. These different frames used by BBC News and RT News can be explained by media framing theory, which suggests that media outlets use frames to select, emphasize, interpret, and evaluate certain aspects of reality to construct a particular version of events that suits their interests (Entman, 1993).

According to media framing theory, media organizations can promote particular values, attitudes, or behaviors through the employment of frames to sway public opinion and policy decisions on particular problems (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In this instance, BBC News employed frames that emphasized the tragedies of the Ukrainian people, Russia's deceit, and the impact of the conflict on international cooperation and security. Additionally, BBC News employed frameworks that upheld principles like justice, democracy, human rights, and peace. On the other hand, RT News used frames that highlighted the duty of Russia, the responsibility of Ukraine and the West, and the military aid that countries provided to Ukraine.

The agenda-setting theory, which postulates that media outlets choose some issues or topics as more salient or significant than others by providing them more attention or prominence, can also be used to explain these various frames utilized by BBC News and RT News (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In this instance, by providing them with greater coverage or importance than RT News, BBC News established an agenda that concentrated on the military conflict, the geopolitical conflict, and the human interest aspects of the war. Additionally, BBC News framed these features in a negative light by use terms like 'aggression,' 'threat,' 'death,' 'injury,' 'displacement,' 'violation,' etc. On the other hand, RT News set an agenda that focused on the justification, the attribution of responsibility, and the military aid aspects of the war by giving them less coverage or prominence than BBC News. RT News additionally presented these features in a positive tone by utilizing terms like 'defense,' 'interest,' 'tie,' 'operation,' 'aid,' 'benefit,' etc.

The third research question aimed to evaluate how balanced and objective BBC News and RT News were in their coverage of the war between Russia and Ukraine. The BBC news and the RT news framed the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war differently, considering journalism ethics. Journalism ethics are the principles and standards that guide journalists to report the truth, minimize harm, act independently, and be accountable. The analysis revealed that, relatively, BBC News was more balanced and objective than RT News, but still showed some bias in favor of Ukraine. BBC News was more balanced and objective than RT News in terms of its sources.

The RT news violated the principle of reporting the truth by providing distorted and biased information, using selective and questionable sources, and ignoring or denying errors and mistakes. The BBC news followed the principle of minimizing harm by respecting the dignity and

privacy of the victims, avoiding sensationalism and graphic images, and protecting the identity and safety of vulnerable sources. The BBC news also showed empathy and compassion for the suffering of the civilians and sought to raise awareness of the humanitarian crisis caused by the war. On the other hand, The RT news showed hostility towards the civilians affected by the war and sought to downplay or deny the humanitarian crisis caused by the war. The BBC news relatively followed the principle of acting independently by maintaining editorial autonomy and integrity, avoiding conflicts of interest or undue influence, and disclosing any affiliations or sponsorships. Contrary to RT, the BBC news also showed professionalism and impartiality in their coverage of the war and tried to present diverse perspectives and opinions.

The RT news violated the principle of acting independently by serving as a propaganda tool for the Russian government, accepting or promoting conflicts of interest or undue influence, and misleading any affiliations or sponsorships. Compared to BBC, RT news also showed bias and partiality in their coverage of the war and tried to suppress or discredit alternative perspectives and opinions. Mostly, RT news stories were reliant on President Putin's narration about the war. Journalists themselves are often elites and/or reliant upon elites as sources, and it affects the production and reproduction of social reality (Giltin, 1980; Tuchman, 1978; Curran & Gibson, 2019). These differences in framing the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war by BBC news and RT news have ethical implications for journalism practice, public opinion, policy-making, peace-building, etc. The difference in framing of the war between Russia and Ukraine across news agencies demonstrates the fact that the reality news consumers digest is very much a socially constructed creation and is the effect of purposeful selections made by journalists and media companies as well as efforts from political elites to shape public stories to fit their own policy goals.

To sum up, comparative news frame analysis is a method of studying how different news outlets present or interpret the same event or issue in their stories. News frames can influence how the audience understands and evaluates the event or issue. In the study, the researcher compared the news frames used by BBC and RT, two different news outlets from the UK and Russia, in their coverage of the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war. The war was widely condemned by the international community as a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The results of the analysis showed that BBC and RT used different news frames in their coverage of the war, reflecting their different journalistic roles and perspectives.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Introduction**

The study's major findings, conclusion, recommendations, and implications for future studies are presented in this chapter briefly.

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

This research aimed to compare and analyze how two global news outlets, the BBC and RT World, framed the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, which started in 2022 after Russia invaded Ukraine's eastern regions. The research used a qualitative approach, combining qualitative frame analysis (textual analysis) to examine the news articles published by both outlets from February 24 to March 24, 2022.

This study employed media framing and agenda-setting theories as frameworks to analyze the salient and war-specific frames used in selected media outlets and how these frames reflect the reality of the war and the perspectives of the warring nations and their allies. Framing theory and agenda-setting theory are also applied to measure the ethical performance of selected media outlets. To conduct the study, a total of 52 news articles published in the first month of the war on their official website were selected for analysis. The news stories, including headlines from both media outlets, were analyzed qualitatively. A qualitative frame analysis was used to answer the research questions.

The framing of the Russia-Ukraine war of 2022 by BBC and RT news is a complex and controversial topic, as both media outlets have different perspectives, biases, and agendas. Both BBC and RT news cover the main events and developments of the war, such as the Russian invasion, the Ukrainian resistance, the international reactions, and the humanitarian consequences. They also provide some background information and analysis on the causes and implications of the conflict. However, these similarities do not mean that BBC and RT news have the same tone, style, ideology, or agenda in their framing of the war. There are also significant differences

between them in terms of their focus, emphasis, interpretation, and evaluation of the events and actors involved in the conflict. These differences reflect their different editorial policies, political orientations, and target audiences.

According to the analysis, there were significant differences in the news coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war between the BBC and RT; the following conclusions were made based on the three research questions:

- ❖ BBC News framed the war as an illegal and aggressive invasion by Russia that violated Ukraine's sovereignty and caused human rights abuses, civilian casualties, and a humanitarian crisis, whereas RT News framed the war as a special military operation by Russia that defended its security interests and historical ties with Crimea and eastern Ukraine and blamed Ukraine's illegitimate coup and Western interference for the conflict. The evaluation of the war by BBC News and RT News was based on their moral and political perspectives. BBC News evaluated the war as a moral outrage and a threat to international law and order, praised Ukraine's resistance and resilience, and condemned Russia's brutality and deception, whereas RT News evaluated the war as a moral duty and a defense of national sovereignty and identity, praised Russia's courage and determination, and condemned Ukraine's violence and corruption.
- ❖ BBC News used frames that emphasized the human interest, the military conflict, and the geopolitical conflict aspects of the war and portrayed Russia as an illegal and aggressive invader that violated Ukraine's sovereignty and caused deaths, injuries, and displacements, whereas RT News used frames that emphasized the justification, the attribution of responsibility, and the military aid aspects of the war and portrayed Russia as a defender of its security interests and historical ties with Crimea and eastern Ukraine and blamed Ukraine, NATO, and the West for the conflict.
- ❖ BBC News was more balanced and objective than RT News, but still showed some bias in favor of Ukraine. BBC News used frames that highlighted the tragedy of Ukraine, the deception of Russia, and the effects of the war on global security and cooperation. RT News used frames that highlighted the justification of Russia, the terror of Ukraine, and the interference of the West. The analysis showed that there was a difference in the choice of words and tone between BBC News and RT News, based on their degree of neutrality and factuality.

BBC News used neutral and factual language, such as “invasion”, “offensive”, “conflict”, “crisis”, etc. RT News used emotive and biased language, such as “special military operation”, “terror”, “occupiers”, “spy ring”, etc.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this framing study, the researcher offers some recommendations for both media outlets under the study.

### **Recommendations to both news media organizations and their professionals**

The researcher suggests media organizations respect victims' rights and avoid spreading propaganda, misinformation, or hate speech in war reporting. They should promote dialogue and understanding among parties, avoid taking sides, and adopt a more balanced, nuanced, and critical approach. This will help prevent escalation of conflict and promote peace among stakeholders.

### **Recommendations to the BBC News Organization and its journalists**

- ❖ The BBC shall frame the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war more ethically, involving diverse sources like Russian officials, experts, journalists, and civilians, rather than relying solely on Ukrainian officials or pro-Western sources.
- ❖ And also, it's fair to present different perspectives and opinions on the war, including those of the Russian government, the NATO allies, the EU members, and the UN Security Council, as well as those of the Ukrainian opposition and civil society, rather than promoting only Ukraine's narrative.
- ❖ The BBC shall uphold professional standards and ethical principles of journalism, avoiding serving as a political tool for the Ukrainian government or promoting its interests.

### **Recommendations to the RT News Organization**

- ❖ The possible ways that RT shall frame the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war in a more balanced and ethical manner, recognizing that Russia's military intervention in Ukraine was an act of aggression and a violation of international law and sovereignty, rather than a “special military operation” or a “peacekeeping mission”.

- ❖ It was mandatory to report the facts and evidence of the war, such as the number of casualties, the extent of damage, the humanitarian situation, and the diplomatic efforts, without distortion, omission, or fabrication.
- ❖ RT News shall offer diverse and credible information from Ukrainian officials, experts, journalists, and civilians, as well as independent and international observers, to avoid promoting only Russia's narrative or propaganda. It should also present different perspectives on the war, avoiding misinformation like Ukraine's infiltration by Nazis or West plotting.

Generally, to adhere to the professional standards and ethical principles of journalism, such as accuracy, fairness, independence, objectivity, impartiality, respect for others, and public accountability, rather than serving as a mouthpiece for the Russian government or a tool for its political interests.

### **Implications for Future Study**

The researcher recommends future studies take into account the photos and videos included with the textual news items of this study in order for its findings to be comprehensive in every aspect of disseminated news. As important as the topics covered in the headlines and sub-headlines and in the spoken discourse are the visual images that appeal to the viewer's eyes in television news. Short stories weren't the only way that the BBC and RT framed the war. Special programs, videos, panel discussions, news features, speeches, official interviews, news commentary, etc. have been made regarding the war, but the researcher didn't consider these to be limited by the study's scope. To get thoughts, convictions, or viewpoints and a better understanding of how the war is framed, all of these program formats are just as crucial as the news in this study. The investigation and use of additional conceptual frameworks in media and communication studies need the attention of researchers. It would be fair to investigate how other global media, both western and non-western, such as CNN, Press TV, CCTV, etc., behave. However, it is more crucial to combine the textual frame study with an audience analysis study to comprehend how viewers react in order to determine the real effect of framing the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

## References

- Abdi, N. (2020). Russia - Ukraine War: The impact of the continuing Russia-Ukraine war on intergovernmental organizations. Bachelor's thesis, University of Linnaeus.
- Abraham, A. (2018). A Comparative Framing Analysis of President Trump's 72<sup>nd</sup> United Nations General Assembly Speech: Aljazeera, CNN and Fox news in Focus. MA thesis: Addis Ababa University.
- Alcaro, R. (2015). West-Russia Relations in Light of the Ukraine Crisis. IAI Books, Press Centre Nuova Cultura Rome.
- Andersson, S. (2019). Putting Peace in the Frame: Alternative US Media Framing of the War in Syria. Sodertorn University
- Arowolo, O. (2017). Understanding Framing Theory. Retrieved on July 12, 2022 from: (PDF) understanding framing theory (researchgate.net)
- Atiner (2022). Russia-Ukraine War of 2022: A Quantitative Analysis of War Reporting Framing by American New York Post, China's Global Times and South African Citizen Newspapers. Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications.
- Babu, M. & Rao, T. (2017). Framing Analysis of Protest against War by World Newspapers: A Content Analysis. International Journal of Management and Social Sciences Research (IJMSSR), 63-75.
- Basilaia, E. (2009). Framing the 2008 war in Georgia in Resonance, Izvestia, and the New York Times. Retrieved from Master's thesis, San Jose State University.: from [http://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd\\_theses/3733](http://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/3733).
- BBC Press Office. (2003, April 11). More people turn to the BBC for news of war in Iraq. from [http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2003/04\\_april/11/iraq\\_audiences.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2003/04_april/11/iraq_audiences.shtml)
- Berger, D. (2009). Constructing crime, framing disaster: Routines of criminalization and crisis in hurricane Katrina. Retrieved from: <https://pun.sagepub.com/content/11/4/49>

- Bruggemann, M. (2014). Between Frame Setting and Frame Sending: How Journalists Contribute to News Frames. *Communication Theory*, 24(1), 61-82. doi: 10.1111/comt.12027
- Carruthers, S. (2000). *The Media at War: Communication and Conflict in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan
- Castells, M.(2009). *Communication Power*. Published in the United States by Oxford University Press Inc., New York (1<sup>st</sup> ed)
- Chernov, G. (2023). The Russian – Ukrainian War: Persistence of Frames and the Media Issue-Cycles. *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications* 2023, 9: 1-13  
<https://doi.org/10.30958/ajmmc.X-Y-Z>
- Cordesman, A. (2022). *The Longer-Term Impact of the Ukraine Conflict and the Growing*. CSIS. Retrieved September 2 2022 from <https://www.csis.org/analysis/longer-term-impactukraine-conflict-and-growing-importance-civil-side-war>.
- Daniela, D. (2008). *A Tale of Two Wars: Framing Analysis of Online News Sites in Coalition Countries and the Arab World during the Iraq War*. Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK: Publisher: Taylor & Francis.
- David, J. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and mixed Methods approaches*. Fifth edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- D'Angelo P. & SHaw D. (2018). Journalism as Framing. In Tim P. Vos,Ed. *Journalism* (Vol. 19, pp. 205-234).
- D'Angelo, P., & Kuypers., J. (2009). *Doing News Framing Analysis* (1st ed.). Taylor & Francis.
- Delwaide, J. (2022). Roots Of Russia's War In Ukraine by Elizabeth A. Wood,William E. Pomeranz, E. Wayne Merry and Maxim Trudolyubov. Vol. 35, No. 1/4, *The Battle For Ukrainian: A Comparative Perspective* (2017-2018), 550-553.
- De Vreese, C. (2005). News framing: Theory and typology. *Information design journal document design*, 13(1), 51-62.

- Dimitrova. (2018). Beyond Framing: A Forum for Framing Researchers: comparative news framing analysis. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. [sagepub.com/journals-permissions](http://sagepub.com/journals-permissions) DOI: 10.1177/1077699018825004 <http://journals.sagepub.com/home/jmq> (1-19)
- Dimitrova, D. (2006). Episodic Frames Dominate Early Coverage Of Iraq War in the NYTimes.com. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 27(4), 79-83.
- Dimitrova, V. & Stromback J. (2015). Mission accomplished? Framing of the Iraq War in the Elite Newspapers in Sweden and the United States. *The international journal for communication studies*. london, thousand oaks & new delhi 0016-5492 VOL 67(5): 399–417 DOI: 10.1177/0016549205056050
- Druckman, N. (2001). On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame? *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (Nov., 2001), pp. 1041-1066 Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Southern Political Science Association
- Entman, R.(1991). Framing US Coverage of international News: Contrast in Narratives of KAL and Iran Air Incidents. *Journal of Communication*, 6 – 27.
- European Council (2022). EU imposes sanctions on state-owned outlets RT/Russia Today and Sputnik's broadcasting in the EU. Press office: General Secretariat of the Council
- Farhi, P. (2022). RT was Russia's answer to CNN. Now its pro-Putin spin on Ukraine is sparking new outrage. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/media/2022/02/26/rt-america-putin-ukraine/>
- Fisher, O. (2023). Media Objectivity and Bias in Western Coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict. Master's dissertation. Media and Communication Studies: Sodertorn University
- Galtung, J. (2003). Pioneer of Peace Research. DOI 10.1007/978-3-642-32481-9 Springer Heidelberg New York Dordrecht London (Vol. 5).
- Gardner O. (2022). Comparing coverage of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict in the BBC, The Guardian, Al Jazeera & the New York Times Online news press, with Reference to framing theory: Feb-April 2022, Coventry University.

- Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making & unmaking of the New left*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: an essay on the organization of experience*. New York: The Maple press, York, Pennsylvania.
- Goudimiak, I. (2016). *Justifying War in Ukraine: An Analysis of Speeches, Excerpts and Interviews by Vladimir Putin* (Master's thesis, Duquesne University). Retrieved from <http://dsc.duq.edu/etd/114>
- Groshek, J. (2008) Coverage of the pre-Iraq war debate as a case study of frame indexing. *Media, War & Conflict* 1(3): 315–338.
- Imamgaiazova, D. (2016). *News framing in different languages versions of state-owned international media: a case of Russian & English versions in RT & Radio liberty*, Stockholm's University.
- Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Janssen, C. (2010). *A Framing Analysis of Weblogs and Online Newspapers*. Master's Theses. San Jose State University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.jc9f-mscx>.
- Gessen, K. (2022) "Was it Inevitable? A Short History of Russia's War on Ukraine," *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/11/was-it-inevitable-a-shorthistory-of-russias-war-on-ukraine> (accessed 12 August 2022).
- Kellner, D. (2000). *New Media and New Literacies: Reconstructing Education for the New Millennium*. Retrieved from <https://pages.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/essays/newmedianewliteracies.pdf>
- Kothari, C. (2004). *Research Methodology, methods and techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International (P) Ltd., publishers.
- Kothari, C. (2010). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*, Mumbai: New Age International publishers.

- Kuypers, A. & Cooper, D. (2005). A Comparative Framing Analysis of Embedded and Behind-the-Lines Reporting on the 2003 Iraq War. pp. 1-10.
- Kyngas, H. (2008). The Qualitative Content Analysis Process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. p 107-115.
- Leary-Forrey, E. (2022). Media Framing of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine. *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, Vol.13, No. 1
- Linstrom, M.& Marias, W. (2012). *Qualitative news frame analysis: A methodology*, MA at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein.
- Littlejohn, S. & Foss, K. (2009). *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*. California:SAGE publications Inc.
- Liu, Z. (2020) 'The Ukraine crisis and media systems: Comparison of UK and Russian media coverage'. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17638/03071360>.
- Liu, Z. (2022). News framing of the Euromaidan protests in the hybrid regime and the liberal democracy: Comparison of Russian and UK news media. *Media, War & Conflict*: 1-20
- Mearsheimer, J. (2014). Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin. *Foreign Affairs*, 93(5), 77-89.
- Mearsheimer, J. (2022). Why the West is principally responsible for the Ukrainian crisis; Russia and Ukraine. *The Economist*, March 11. <https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2022/03/11/johnmearsheimer-on-why-the-west-is-principally-responsible-for-theukrainian-crisis>
- Mulatu, A. (2017). *Why Silence? Reporting Internal Conflict in Ethiopian Newspapers*. Doctoral Thesis Submitted for The Degree of Ph.D. Faculty of Humanities - Department of Media and Communication. University of Oslo.
- NATO. (2022, February 24). Statement by the North Atlantic Council on Russia's attack on Ukraine. NATO. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_192404.html](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_192404.html)

- Nelson, S. (2019): How RT frames conflict: a comparative analysis, *Russian Journal of Communication*, DOI: 10.1080/19409419.2019.1608846
- Nguyen, N. (2023). War or peace journalism: How international news agencies framed the initial stages of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Thesis. Kansas State University Manhattan, Kansas.
- Ottosen, R., & Ovrebo, S. (2016). Who's to Blame for the Chaos in Syria?. *Worldwide Perspectives*, 63. 63-80.
- Pavlik, V. (2022). The Russian War in Ukraine and the Implications for the News Media. *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications* 2022, 8: 1-17  
<https://doi.org/10.30958/ajmmc.X-Y-Z>
- Pifer, S. (2009). Crisis between Ukraine and Russia. Council on Foreign Relations: United States of America.
- Rahman, M. (2016). The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches and Methods in Language “Testing and Assessment” Research: A Literature Review. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(1), 102. doi: 10.5539/jel.v6n1p102
- Reese, D. (2009). Finding Frames in a Web of Culture: The Case of the War on Terror. ” in P. D’Angelo and J. Kuypers (eds.) *Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical, Theoretical, and Normative Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2009).
- Reese, D. (2008). Media production and content. In W. Donsbach (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Communication* (pp. 2982-2994). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Roman, N., Wanta, W. & Buniak, I. (2017). Information wars: Eastern Ukraine military conflict coverage in the Russian, Ukrainian and U.S. newscasts. [sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav](http://sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav) DOI:10.1177/1748048516682138  
[journals.sagepub.com/home/gaz](http://journals.sagepub.com/home/gaz) (1-22)
- Roskomnadzor, (2022). [online] [www.rkn.gov.ru](http://www.rkn.gov.ru). Available at: <https://rkn.gov.ru/news/rsoc/news74084.htm>

- Rutland, P. (2015). An Unnecessary War: The Geopolitical Roots of the Ukraine Crisis. <https://www.e-ir.info/2015/04/09/an-unnecessary-war-the-geopolitical-roots-of-the-ukraine-crisis/>
- Sakwa, R. (2015). The death of Europe? Continental fates after Ukraine. *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*. 91: 3 (2015) 553–579
- Samsudin, D. (2020). Understanding the Models of Framing Analyses Approaches in Media Framing Studies. Universitas Islam Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia.
- Scheufele, B. (2004). Framing-effects approach: A theoretical and methodological critique. *Communications*, 29, 401–428.
- Scheufele, D. & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 9-20
- Strovsky, D. (2015). The Russian Media Coverage of the ‘Ukrainian Issue’: the Priorities of Informing. Retrieved from Redfame Publishing: URL: <http://smc.redfame.com>
- Taherdoost, H. (2016). Sampling Methods in Research Methodology; How to Choose a Sampling Technique for Research. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management(IJARM)*,5,18-27. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3205035>
- Tebor, C. (2022). Russia increases censorship with new law: 15 years in jail for calling Ukraine invasion a ‘war’. (online) USA TODAY. Available at: <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/world/ukraine/2022/03/08/russia-free-speechpress-criminalization-misinformation/9433112002/>.
- Temesgen, E. (2021). Global Media Coverage of the War between Federal Government and Tigray Armed Forces: The Case of BBC and Reuters. A Thesis Submitted to the School of Journalism and Communication: Addis Ababa University
- Thankachan, K. & Thomas, PE. (2021). Media framing and its effects on conflict: A thematic approach to framing as a means of control. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Studies* 2021; 3(4): 06-13

- Tsygankov, A. (2015). Vladimir Putin's last stand: the sources of Russia's Ukraine policy, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 31:4, 279-303, DOI: 10.1080/1060586X.2015.1005903
- Vartanova, E. (2012). *The Russian Media Model in the Context of Post-Soviet Dynamics*. In Hallin, D., Mancini, P. (Eds.). *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*. Cambridge University Press.
- Vrba, P. (2022). *The framing of the war in Ukraine in the U.S. media*. master's thesis, Masaryk University.
- Watanabe, K (2017). *Measuring Bias in International News: A Large-scale Analysis of News Agency Coverage of the Ukraine Crisis: A thesis submitted to the Department of Methodology of the London School of Economics and Political Science for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy*
- Wimmer. D. &Dominick R. (2011). *Mass media research, (9<sup>th</sup> ed): An Introduction*. Boston. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning during the official war period.
- Wubishet, F. (2016). *Framing ISIS in Global Mainstream media: A comparative content Analysis of Television news from AJE and CNN (published master's thesis)* Addis Ababa University.
- Zain, N. (2014). *Agenda-setting theory. (Published thesis)*International Islamic University od Malaysia.
- Zamith,R.(2022).FramingTheory:retrievedfrom:[https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Communication/Journalism\\_and\\_Mass\\_Communication/The\\_American\\_Journalism\\_Handbook\\_Concepts\\_Issues\\_and\\_Skills\\_\(Zamith\)/02%3A\\_Media\\_Effects/2.02%3A\\_Framing\\_Theory](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Communication/Journalism_and_Mass_Communication/The_American_Journalism_Handbook_Concepts_Issues_and_Skills_(Zamith)/02%3A_Media_Effects/2.02%3A_Framing_Theory)
- Zheng. N (2023). *The content Analysis of BBC Live news Reports on the Russia-Ukraine war*. Macau, University of Science and Technology.

## Appendix A

To clearly understand how the Russia-Ukraine war has been framed by the BBC and RT, the study needs to search for words like Russia-Ukraine war, Ukraine crisis, invasion of Russia, and Russian force on both media's official websites. Website news that doesn't address Russia-Ukraine war has been disqualified. In order to answer the researches questions and maintain consistency and reliability, operational definitions have been established.

### 1, Codes of Analysis

**Code-book (see in Kempf, 2005, Galtung, 2006, and Anderson, 2019).**

**1. Conceptualization of the war:** are escalation-oriented journalism depicted in a way that supports war and military logic? Are de-escalated-oriented journalism used that attempts for diplomatic resolutions and questions to war and military reasoning?

**2. Evaluation of the war parties rights and intentions:** is propaganda journalism, which evaluates the rights and intentions of the war parties in a hostile way used? Is peace journalism, which strives to portray a balanced evaluation of the interests of both parties used?

**3. Appraisal of war parties actions:** is propaganda used that evaluates the war parties actions through antagonistic confrontation or is de-escalated-oriented used which keeps a journalistic critical distance to both of them and emphasizes on the probabilities of cooperation?

**4. Emotional participation of the war:** is war journalism and propaganda used, which cases negative emotions as distrust of the enemy or is peace journalism that tries to reduce the audiences emotional stress by focusing on reconciliation? Is propaganda giving confidence that the can be won used or is de-escalation-oriented journalism used, which aimed at the price that must be paid for a military victory?

**5. Social identification and personal entanglement:** is partial identification with one's own side and renounce depicted or is there an urge for a peaceful conflict resolution, aiming at mutual engagement with peaceful alternatives?

**6. Two sided messages:** is there criticism against its own side is turned towards the other side?

**7. Double bind communication:** is rhetoric brought up aiming at fear, hope or contradictory messages?

**8. People-oriented versus elite-oriented:** are voices given only to elite or are peoples voices heard?

**9. Truth versus propaganda-oriented:** are propaganda on all sides exposed or not? Are propaganda or propaganda-like statements on all sides exposed or not?

**10. Solution-oriented versus victory-oriented:** are solutions to war given or not?

**Appendix B**  
**Coding sheet**

Name of the news media \_\_\_\_\_

Date of website news publication (date/month/year) \_\_\_\_\_

Website title of the news \_\_\_\_\_

**Analytical category**

**Types of frame the news media used**

- Human interest frame \_\_\_\_\_
- Justification frame \_\_\_\_\_
- Attribution of responsibility frame \_\_\_\_\_
- Military conflict frame \_\_\_\_\_
- Profile frame \_\_\_\_\_
- Violence of war frame \_\_\_\_\_
- Genocide frame \_\_\_\_\_
- Anti-war frame \_\_\_\_\_
- Advance frame \_\_\_\_\_
- Diagnosis frame \_\_\_\_\_
- Military aid frame \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### BBC News website links

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60503037>
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60527346>
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60541882>
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60791471>
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60697521>
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60729206>
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60728208>
8. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60814913>
9. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59667938>
10. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60504334>
11. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60513807>
12. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60617365>
13. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60741338>
14. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60640204>
15. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60547473>
16. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60601235>
17. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60492860>
18. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60585603>
19. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60756993>
20. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60513632>
21. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60767454>
22. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60776929>
23. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60629175>
24. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60806151>
25. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60617365>
26. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60807134>

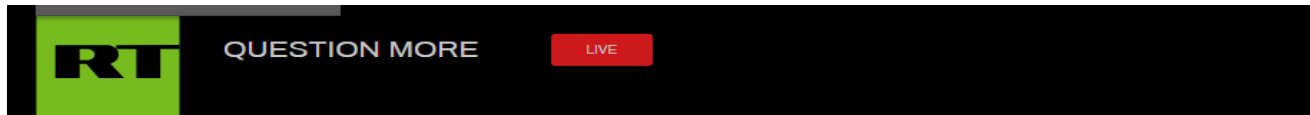
## Appendix D

### RT news website links

1. <https://www.rt.com/russia/551714-zelensky-ukraine-corridors-eu/>
2. <https://www.rt.com/russia/550692-zelensky-calls-eu-decision/>
3. <https://www.rt.com/russia/550493-ukraine-donbass-military-operation-prehistory/>
4. <https://www.rt.com/news/551377-zelensky-killed-backup-plan/>
5. <https://www.rt.com/russia/551806-ivov-shelling-russia-casualties/>
6. <https://www.rt.com/russia/551826-airstrike-ukraine-foreign-mercenaries/>
7. <https://www.rt.com/russia/551754-ukraine-helicopter-strike-drones/>
8. <https://www.rt.com/russia/550888-putin-wests-empire-lies/>
9. <https://www.rt.com/news/551377-zelensky-killed-backup-plan/>
10. <https://www.rt.com/russia/551376-russia-protest-ukraine-military-operation/>
11. <https://www.rt.com/russia/551314-putin-explains-ukraine-tactic/>
12. <https://www.rt.com/news/551291-us-military-aid-ukraine/>
13. <https://www.rt.com/russia/551276-ukraine-un-refugee-number/>
14. <https://www.rt.com/russia/550772-ukraine-russia-meeting-capitulation/>
15. <https://www.rt.com/russia/551257-zelensky-ukraine-nato-weakness/>
16. <https://www.rt.com/russia/551269-russia-declares-ceasefire-ukraine/>
17. <https://www.rt.com/russia/550766-belarus-war-russia-sanctions/>
18. <https://www.rt.com/russia/550408-special-operation-putin-donbass/>
19. <https://www.rt.com/russia/552284-kinzhal-hypersonic-missile-ukraine/>
20. <https://www.rt.com/russia/552302-ukraine-un-aid-convoys/>
21. <https://www.rt.com/russia/551765-western-weapons-convoys-ukraine-target/>
22. <https://www.rt.com/news/551781-putin-nato-ukraine-war/>
23. <https://www.rt.com/news/551332-zelensky-congress-planes-no-fly-zone/>
24. <https://www.rt.com/news/552336-uk-counter-disinformation-social-media/>
25. <https://www.rt.com/russia/551223-state-duma-criminalizes-disinformation-army/>
26. <https://www.rt.com/russia/550419-mod-strike-targets-ukraine/>

## Appendix E

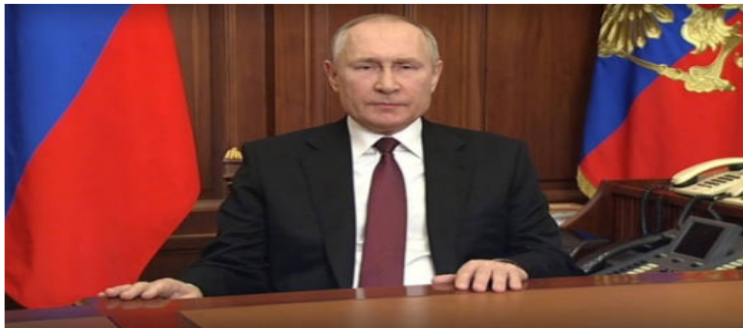
### Screenshot of RT news stories



24 Feb, 2022 02:54 / [Home](#) / [Russia & FSU](#)

# Putin announces 'special operation' in Donbass

The special military operation is aimed at "the defense of" the newly recognized republics of Donetsk and Lugansk



Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks during a national address in which he announced a "special military operation" in the Donbass region, February 24, 2022. © RIA Novosti / screenshot

Russian President Vladimir Putin has announced that he ordered his country's military to conduct a special operation in the Donbass region after the leaders of the breakaway republics asked Moscow for military assistance in response to what they claim is an increase in "Ukrainian aggression."

*"Circumstances require us to take decisive and immediate action," the order reads. "The People's Republics of Donbass turned to Russia with a request for help. In this regard, in accordance with Article 51, part 7 of the UN Charter, with the sanction of the Federation Council and in pursuance of the friendship treaties ratified by the Federal*

*Assembly and mutual assistance with the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, I have decided to conduct a special military operation," Putin stated.*

At the same time, in an address to the public, the Russian president said he wanted to "demilitarize" and "de-Nazify" Ukraine. According to him, "we have no plans to occupy Ukrainian territory." Within moments of the speech, a series of explosions were reported in cities across Ukraine, with CNN, CBC and a number of Ukrainian media outlets reporting a blast in the capital, Kiev.

In a statement, US President Joe Biden said that "the prayers of the world are with the people of Ukraine tonight as they suffer an unprovoked and unjustified attack by the Russian military forces."

The decision comes days after Moscow recognized the independence of the Donetsk and Lugansk breakaway republics in the Donbass, alleging Kiev had not lived up to its obligations under the Minsk agreements struck in 2014 and 2015 to resolve conflict between separatists and the Ukrainian government.

Officials later authorized what they described as a "peacekeeping operation" in the region. Western leaders for months had predicted a looming incursion, claiming Russia has amassed troops near its border with Ukraine and in neighboring Belarus, where Moscow has conducted joint drills in recent weeks.

Russia has so far denied plans for an attack, however, and maintains its actions in the Donbass will be defensive in nature. The US and its European partners have already imposed sanctions on a series of Russian financial institutions, officials and lawmakers following the recognition of the break-away states, vowing to bring more penalties should Moscow "further invade" Ukraine.

## Appendix F

### Screenshot of BBC news story

**BBC**  Sign in | Home | News | Sport | Reel | Worklife | Travel

**NEWS**

Home | War in Ukraine | Climate | Video | World | UK | Business | Tech | Science | Entertainment & Arts

World | Africa | Asia | Australia | Europe | Latin America | Middle East | US & Canada

# Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky: The comedian president who is rising to the moment

🕒 26 February 2022



| Zelensky's defiant response to invasion... in 100 seconds

**By Stephen Mulvey**

BBC News

**Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, a comedian who had no experience of politics when elected less than three years ago, has suddenly emerged as a convincing war leader.**

He has rallied the nation with his addresses and video selfies and given voice to Ukrainian anger and defiance of Russian aggression.

While Russian President Vladimir Putin has appeared increasingly erratic - accusing Ukraine of "genocide" in the breakaway Donetsk and Luhansk republics, and talking of the need to "de-Nazify" the country - President Zelensky, from a Russian-speaking Jewish family, has remained dignified, resolute and articulate.

These pronouncements have revealed a side that many critics - including a large chunk of the intelligentsia - had not seen coming.