

**The Ukraine crisis and media systems:
Comparison of UK and Russian media coverage**

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List of Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
E.g.	Example
EU	European Union
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
U.S.	United States of America
UK	United Kingdom
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Abstract

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The Ukraine crisis and media systems: Comparison of UK and Russian media coverage

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to examine the framing of the Ukraine crisis from 30 November 2013 to 28 February 2015 by the news media in Russia and the UK. Drawing upon the broader framework of media systems theory (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, 2012a; Vartanova, 2012), the thesis identifies and analyses how different media outlets from hybrid and liberal political regimes played a role in the reporting of the Ukraine crisis. The comparative analysis of the news coverage encompasses three news sectors from Russia and the UK that differ culturally, economically, and geopolitically: *RT*, *The Moscow Times*, and *Pravda.ru* from Russia and the *BBC*, *The Guardian*, and *Mail Online* from the UK.

The study poses four research questions. The first and main question explores the extent to which the Russian and British news media coverage of the Ukraine crisis supports or refutes current media systems theory. The second and third questions relate to the attention paid and the actual frames used by the different media outlets from Russia and the UK, respectively. The final question focuses on the difference (if any) between the framing of the crisis in Russia and the UK, thus feeding into the analysis in response to the main research question.

Following Godefroidt et al.'s (2016) methodological framework using generic, diagnostic and prognostic frames, the findings suggest that first, the Russian media dedicated more attention to the Ukraine crisis than the British media, reflecting the geopolitical interest of the Russian government. Second, both the Russian (*RT* and *Pravda.ru* in particular) and the British media tended to use a human-interest angle extensively in discussing the conflict, although in different light. While the former put forward the idea of humanitarianism, the latter stressed the importance of Ukraine's sovereignty. The media's articulations of humanitarian sentiments, however, revealed an overarching illiberal trend, by naturalising and justifying their host countries' involvements in the crisis. The manufacturing consent thesis (Herman & Chomsky, 1988) is useful in explaining the media performance in both the hybrid regime (Russia) and the liberal democracy (the UK). Finally, the study found *The Moscow Times* from Russia to be critical of the country's policy on Ukraine, thus supporting the Statist Commercialised model (Vartanova, 2012). On the other hand, the study, to some extent, refuted the Liberal model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). The level of journalistic professionalism could not be substantiated as high as the liberal model suggests to be, mainly due to a lack of in-depth analysis especially when discussing Russia and President Vladimir Putin. Despite the fact that the British media were more likely to explain the roots of and the possible solutions to the Ukraine crisis than the Russian media, the former overall were identified as delivering an anti-Russia hyperbole in their one-sided coverage of the Ukraine conflict.

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Introduction

Soon after the former Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich announced the suspension of the country's EU Association Agreement on 21 November 2013, the vulnerable equilibrium between Kyiv and Moscow was put in danger. This started with the 'Euromaidan' anti-government protests in Kyiv, followed by a series of conflicts between people within Ukraine, and between groups or even countries across Europe. This led to the establishment of Petro Poroshenko government (7 June 2014) after the collapse of the Yanukovich regime (21 February 2014), with an interim administration led by Olexander Turchynov in place between the two. Since then, Ukraine has been involved in a protracted war with Russia, marked by a competition between very different perspectives on the crisis.

There have been a number of interpretations and understandings of the root causes and ongoing development of the crisis, including debates in both academic and policy worlds. For example, some suggest that Russia's national economic and political ambitions are to blame (Haukkala, 2015; Malyarenko & Wolff, 2018); while others, such as Kuzmarov and Marciano (2018) argue that the US has initiated a political coup in Ukraine resulting in a 'civil war' between the new Kyiv regime and separatists in Eastern Ukraine. Ishchenko (2014) and Sakwa (2015) point to institutional weaknesses and socio-cultural controversies within the region leading to a 'civil war' in Eastern Ukraine between the new Kyiv and separatists' forces. Others see Ukraine as a battleground between regional economic blocs, with Putin seeking economic integration in the post-Soviet space to 'forestall the expansion of EU influence' (e.g., Rutland, 2015, p. 136). This view is shared by a recent study by Van der Pijl (2018) who looks at the crisis through a political-economic prism. He argues that the crisis is a consequence of 'the struggle of world-historical proportions

between two conflicting social orders: the neoliberal capitalism of the West' and the 'state-directed capitalism' of Russia (Van der Pijl, 2018, p. 3).

These wide-ranging views on the Ukraine crisis reflect 'the fact that conflicts are also always struggles over representations' (Pantti, 2016, p. xiv). This emphasises the importance of examining what role was played by the media in reporting and constructing the crisis. This study aims to make a contribution specifically focusing on framing in the context of different types of political regimes and media systems. In doing so, the study acknowledges that media as mediators between policy-makers and the public may generate new realities in terms of meaning-making (Marshall & Kingsbury, 1996). The media are not only interested in reporting conflicts and sensationalised violence (Balabanova, 2007; Wolfsfeld, 2011), but are also vital to debate about conflict and crisis (Bennett et al., 2004), not least as politicians can use them to set agendas based on their own or proclaimed national interests (Gilboa et al., 2016).

Research Rationale

The Ukraine crisis is emblematic of the tendency for different media outlets to adopt distinct perspectives when covering war/conflict. It is argued that the conflicting sides have adopted and projected a diametrically opposed set of interpretations and frames on to what they consider to be 'facts'. The dominant narrative about the Ukraine crisis in Western media is that Ukraine as a state was undergoing a democratic revolution, which was crushed by an increasingly authoritarian and expansionist Russia led by its President, Vladimir Putin. In contrast, a prevailing view among certain non-Western media (e.g., *RT*) is that the West is aggressively advancing to the borders of Russia in an attempt to shore up

Western economic, political, and military hegemony. While this study does not examine effects on audiences, it is broadly accepted that the perceptions of conflict may be influenced by how the media interpret and report events taking place. As Thussu and Freedman (2003) state, the media in wartime are interpreted 'as battleground, the surface upon which war is imagined and executed' (pp. 4-5). This is demonstrated in the different words used to describe the combatants in media reports, e.g. 'Russian-backed separatists/rebels/insurgents' (often used by Western media) or 'self-defence forces' (the Russian media's preferred term). Such terminology can be connected to different framings which in turn have the potential to influence audience perceptions.

Why do such divergent perspectives persist in the context of a media environment characterised by abundant and frictionless flows of information across borders? Clearly media coverage can be understood as the product of a complex relationship between politics, economy, and culture, but to what extent is this influenced by media system and regime type? As Balabanova's study (2007) discovered, different types of media system between Bulgaria and the UK helped explain differences in the reporting of the 1999 Kosovo crisis. Thus, a key starting point is the importance for studies of framing to include media systems outside the usual Western democracies, especially if one considers that the media systems of the whole world have been undergoing significant and constant changes (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2019).

How do different media systems affect news coverage of international conflict in so-called liberal and 'hybrid' democracies? This study compares Russia and the UK to examine the different narratives of the Ukraine crisis. It uses framing as an approach, which has been empirically proven to be important in war reporting

as it highlights specific perspectives of ideas for news audiences (Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1991). By selecting these two countries the thesis explores the differences between news coverage of media outlets from hybrid and liberal regimes. Given the nature of the media systems of hybrid and liberal regimes demonstrated by Vartanova (2012) and Hallin and Mancini (2004) respectively, the media from these two countries could, therefore, be expected to generate opposing meanings and present different constructions of the crisis. As Dimitrova & Stromback (2008) suggest, if the media tend to reflect the governmental lines of their host country, the news coverage (of the Ukraine crisis) should be different in the two countries.

The originality of this study rests with its contribution to the critical scrutiny of media coverage of war/conflict. Although there are already several (comparative) studies on media coverage of the Ukraine crisis from different countries across the globe (e.g., Ojala & Pantti, 2017; Boyd-Barrett, 2017a; Szostok, Gluszek-Szafraniec, & Guzek, 2016; Lichtenstein & Esau, 2016; Nelson, 2019), none of these has both provided the scale of the current study and focused on the specific parties of Russia and the UK. The main research questions are as follows:

1. To what extent and in what ways does the coverage of the Ukraine crisis in Russia and the UK support or refute media systems theory?
2. To what extent have the selected Russian and British media paid attention to the Ukraine crisis between 30 November 2013 and 28 February 2015?
3. What news frames are adopted in the mediated Ukraine crisis coverage?
4. What are the differences between the Russian and British media that characterise the narrative of the Ukraine crisis?

Original Contribution

Taken together, this study aims to connect the micro-structure of the way in which the different narratives of the Ukraine crisis between Russia and the UK contribute to the daily productions of news, with the macro-context of the broader structure of the media systems of hybrid and liberal regimes. This connection will contribute to knowledge in media studies, offering an in-depth analysis of cross-section of news media that constitute an important component of the public sphere, in the domain of global conflict reporting. It demonstrates the benefits of comparative studies (e.g., Hallin & Mancini, 2004, 2012a) by scrutinising one hybrid – Russian and one liberal – British news media. The incorporation of non-Western media therefore goes beyond the U.S. context that has been studied extensively, thus echoing the need to de-Westernise media research (Curran & Park, 2000) in the field of war reporting in particular. The choice of six media outlets – *The Moscow Times*, *RT*, *Pravda.ru*, *The Guardian*, the *BBC*, *Mail Online* – is the cornerstone for the field of Russian and British war reporting as well as for the comparative study on other subjects.

Thus, the thesis contributes to understandings of the ways in which media outlets under hybrid and liberal regimes contributed to and shaped news coverage of the Ukraine crisis. The manufacturing consent thesis (Herman & Chomsky, 1988) is expected to be evident in the Russian media coverage of the Ukraine conflict due to the media landscape of the country (Vartanova, 2012). The specific way in which the Russian media manufactured the consensus will be uncovered in this study. This is important as it contributes to the very limited existing scholarship on the English-language presence of the Russian news media especially in the field of media and conflict. Empirical study on Russian media's war reporting has only attracted

attention in recent years (e.g., Heywood, 2014; Szostok et al., 2016; Roman et al., 2017; Nygren et al., 2018; Fengler et al., 2018; Lichtenstein et al., 2018), the majority of which specifically look at the Ukraine crisis. These studies, however, focus on Russian-language media outlets that serve only the Russophone population. Although recent research (e.g., Nelson, 2019) pays increasing attention to the English-language media outlet – *RT* in particular in the context of war/conflict, they are exclusive of the media from different political ends in Russia. Therefore, these studies on war reporting in Russia cannot be seen as inclusive or representative of the country's media system.

The British media, in contrast, are expected to be more liberal in the reporting of the Ukraine crisis. In accordance with Hallin and Mancini's (2004) model, the media are at least striving to play watchdog roles by holding power accountable. Thus, the British media is anticipated to be possibly critical of the national foreign policy on Ukraine. The study explores the way in which the British media framed the crisis and assesses this in relation to the manufacturing consent thesis (Herman & Chomsky, 1988) and the CNN effect theory (Robinson, 2002; Carruthers, 2011; Wheeler, 2000; Shaw, 1996).

The findings shed light on the applicability of theories on media and conflict, and on media systems theory. As Bloemraad (2013) suggests research can benefit from a comparative approach that is capable of cultivating 'concept-building' (p. 29). As suggested above, the manufacturing consent thesis may be applied to explain the case (the Ukraine crisis) in one country (Russia), but may not be necessarily applicable in another (the UK). This allows the researcher to elaborate on how and why such differences exist by looking at the nature of media systems of Russia and the UK. Thus, the thesis ultimately examines the extent to which news coverage of

the Ukraine crisis fits in the existing literature on media systems in hybrid and liberal regimes, proposed by Vartanova (2012) and Hallin and Mancini (2004).

In addition, the study uncovers the potentially buried news about the Ukraine crisis among media outlets in a comparative way. The comparison includes both quantitative and qualitative analysis aiming to examine both commonality and difference. It thus adds to our existing understandings of the Ukraine crisis, as there have arguably been two dominant and conflicting interpretations of the crisis. The audiences who often read news from British mainstream media are usually informed that Russia's political and economic aggression had led to the Ukraine conflict. On the other hand, the audiences who generally rely on news sources from Russia may see the role of the West played in the Ukraine crisis as being at question as well. Is there any other understanding or facts apart from these two? This empirical study explores this in detail.

Finally, the study contributes to the theoretical development of the adopted methodological framework consisting of generic, diagnostic and prognostic frames. Since the study uses the already defined frames from other researchers (Godefroidt et al., 2016) in their comparative study on the Syrian conflict, this provides an opportunity to also scrutinise whether or not these frames apply to other international conflicts such as the Ukraine crisis.

Structure of the Thesis

The introduction presents the research aims, research rationale, and the research questions. The chapter also sets out the overall structure of the thesis. The remaining chapters therefore examine the difference between the Russian and British

news coverage during the Ukraine crisis, thus comparing media systems of hybrid and liberal regimes, as follows:

Chapter one focuses on the relationship between media and conflict by critically examining first media's role within democracies in general and second within the context of mediated conflict. The first part of this chapter discusses the normative frameworks of media within democracy, underlining main functions as suggested by McNair (2011) and McCombs and Shaw (1972). The key functions are generally viewed as a classic liberal model deriving from the U.S. and the UK. However, the democratisation process in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, has been seen to remain fragile in many of the newcomers that are conceptualised as hybrid regimes. In this context, many (e.g., Mihelj & Downey, 2012) draw attention to identifying and comparing the diverse media systems in the region. The second part of the chapter, therefore, follows a theoretical discussion of media systems models developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004, 2012a), Dobek-Ostrowska (2015, 2019), and Vartanova (2012). Importantly, a general understanding of the nature of the Russian political system – a hybrid regime (Hale, 2010; Sukosd, 2018) – is first discussed in order for the Statist Commercialised model (Vartanova, 2012) to be comprehensively contextualised. The following parts of the chapter then critically examine the role of the media in the specific context of war and conflict. They firstly address the issues of media's role during wartime from a political economy perspective – the Manufacturing Consent thesis (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). They secondly discuss the power of the media – the CNN Effect thesis, along with critical discussions in relation to different contextual factors discovered in relevant empirical studies (Entman, 2004; Robinson, 2002; Gowing, 1994; Jakobsen,

1996; 2000; Livingston, 1997; Balabanova, 2007; Parry, 2010, 2011; Hawkins, 2008; 2011; Yarchi, Wolfsfeld, Sheaffer, & Shenhav, 2013).

Chapter two explores the nature of the Russian and the British media and connects their characteristic features with the media systems models outlined in Chapter one, in particular the Statist Commercialised model and the Liberal model.

Chapter three introduces the case study – the Ukraine crisis, by providing an overview of the crisis development from 30 November 2013 to 28 February 2015, incorporating the different foreign policies of Russia and the UK in relation to it, thus offering a context for the subsequent analysis.

Chapter four discusses the mixed methodology that is adopted in this thesis and presents its rationale. It also outlines the design of the study including the selection of media outlets, time periods, and keywords. The methodology uses both quantitative and qualitative analysis to investigate and answer the key research questions.

Chapter five presents the data from the analysis of the Russian media (*RT*, *The Moscow Times*, and *Pravda.ru*) coverage of the Ukraine crisis (n=3,622). This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section is aimed at answering the second research section – examining the attention paid to the Ukraine crisis by the selected Russian media i.e. the quantitative part of the study. The second section focuses on the third research question in relation to the actual frames used in the mediated Ukraine crisis by the Russian media i.e. the qualitative dimension of the analysis. The set of frames that are being uncovered are presented chronologically alongside examples.

Chapter six presents the data from the analysis of the British media (the *BBC*, *The Guardian*, and *Mail Online*) coverage of the Ukraine crisis (n=1,910). The

chapter mirrors the structure of Chapter five: it begins by looking at the attention paid to the Ukraine crisis by the selected British media, thus measuring the quantity of reporting. The second part of this chapter scrutinises the use of generic, diagnostic and prognostic frames respectively.

Chapter seven offers a qualitative comparison of the findings from Chapter five and Chapter six. The analysis brings together the quantitative findings from the previous two chapters with the qualitative elements. Following the presentation structure from the previous chapter, the press attention, the use of generic, diagnostic and prognostic frames are presented in order. This answers the fourth research question about identifying the difference (if any) between the Russian and British media that characterise the narrative of the Ukraine crisis.

Chapter eight offers an analytical comparative discussion based upon the revealed in Chapter seven features of the media coverage. It is split into two sections. First, the implications and reflections on theories of media and conflict discussed in Chapter one are drawn from the results and analyses. Second, the chapter discusses the overall findings in relation to the case study, thus answering the main research question (RQ1): The extent and the particular ways in which the news coverage of the Ukraine crisis support or refute Vartanova (2012) and Hallin and Mancini's (2004) statist commercialised and liberal models.

The conclusion draws together the case study findings in order to reach conclusions both about the nature of the media reporting of the Ukraine crisis in UK and Russia and the nature of modelling. It also sets out the limitations of this study and suggests directions for future research.

Chapter 1

Media Systems and War Coverage

1.1 Introduction

The centrality of media in liberal democratic societies is undisputed (McNair, 2011). Their key roles include informing and educating about everyday issues, thus offering a platform for public debate ('public sphere' and 'public opinion'), as well as for the advocacy of political views. Importantly, the media are expected to hold politicians accountable by playing the role of the 'watchdog' or 'Fourth estate' (McNair, 2011). According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), agenda-setting is another significant function where the media highlight and place major events on the agenda. As Cohen (1963) explains the agenda-setting role is not necessarily telling people 'what to think', but 'what to think about' (p. 13). This concept has been linked closely to framing theory, which McCombs (1996) calls a second level of agenda-setting (McCombs et al., 1997, p. 200). As some scholars (Entman, 1993; Bennett, 1994; De Vreese, 2005; D'Haenens, 2005; Reese, 2001) acknowledge, the media interpret events and facilitate particular perceptions of said events in the public sphere; while Bennett et al. (2007) even argue that 'narratives matter more than material reality' to policymakers (as cited in Miller et al., 2017, p. 310). McNair (2011) adds that it is impossible by any means to consider the media coverage as neutral. This is due to the fact that ideological and partisan, or other forms of slant such as unwitting bias and propaganda are embedded in the media (McQuail, 1992); although some researchers (e.g., Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Miller et al., 2017) directly highlight the way media are manipulated by the economic and political elites, who thus protect their privileges. International conflicts have often stimulated

the contentious debate in relation to whether or not the media are autonomous from the government when covering crises. This is due to both the direct or indirect restrictions on the press from the powerful as well as media's own preparedness to self-censor in specific circumstances. For example, Harris (1983) argues that during the Falklands War in 1982, the British media were greatly reliant upon military hosts as there were access clauses and (un)official censorship restrictions coming from British Ministry of Defence. Williams (1992) discusses the journalistic performance during the Vietnam War and suggests that there was an increasing self-censorship during the wartime. But official censorship was in fact expected by many of the journalists as they were 'uncomfortable with taking the responsibility for what they wrote' (as cited in Harrop, 2008, p. 27). These studies exemplify that conflicts pose challenges to the normative journalistic practice.

This is further exacerbated by the specific national political, economic, and cultural contexts within which media operate. Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1956) pose the question 'why does [the media] apparently serve different purposes and appear in widely different forms in different countries' (as cited in Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 1)? Hallin and Mancini (2004), Dobek-Ostrowska (2015, 2019), and Vartanova (2012) deal with the question by focusing on the media systems operating in the context of established liberal democracies, and the media systems existing in what have been described as 'hybrid regimes' (Hale, 2010; Sukosd, 2018), and develop five models. These include the Liberal Model, the Democratic Corporatist Model, the Polarised Pluralist Model, the Politicised Media Model, and the Statist Commercialised Model.

This chapter – as a foundation for the study – explores the relationship between media and conflict. It begins with a discussion of the normative frameworks

of media within democracy. The second part of the chapter focuses on the political contexts in liberal and hybrid regimes since 1991, and situate within these the specific features of the media systems that have developed there. The nature of the media systems of liberal democracies (Europe and North America) as conceptualised by Hallin and Mancini (2004) and the media systems of hybrid regimes as outlined by Dobek-Ostrowska (2012, 2015, 2019) and Vartanova (2012) are explored. Finally, the chapter sets the context for the subsequent analysis of the media coverage of the Ukraine crisis through an examination of the link between media and conflict identifying the difficulties and gaps in the current research on the topic.

1.2 Media and Democracy

The media in democratic societies are understood to perform several key functions. Although they are not exhaustive, they are widely accepted as the key ones. In order to address the main questions of this study, the next section offers an introduction to the role of media in democracy.

1.2.1 Five functions of the media in democracy.

Inform and educate.

According to McNair (2011), the media must inform the public of what is happening around them. This can be referred to as the ‘surveillance’ or ‘monitoring’ functions of the media. Also, the media must educate the public on national affairs. This includes circulating information on the meaning and significance of the ‘facts’ (McNair, 2011, p. 19), and on the activities of the government including disclosing wrongdoings such as waste, inefficiency, corruption, and the subsequently negative impact on economic development (Ojo, 2003, p. 822). The media efforts should be

aimed at holding power to account by creating awareness, knowledge and understanding of particular issues, and ensuring ‘accountability, transparency, probity and integrity’ (Ojo, 2013, p. 429). The importance of the informative and educational virtues lies upon the fact that citizens without being well informed by media, would be incompetent to follow and understand the daily issues the government is dealing with. As a consequence, citizens would not take part in the democratic process such as for example get involved in electoral decisions. The underlined political participation leads to the second function of the media which is explained in the following section.

Public sphere & public opinion.

The ‘public sphere’ and ‘public opinion’ are two concepts strongly linked to media’s functions and democratic representative theory (Boyd, 2011, p. 53). While democratic theory highlights the importance of the individual, the political process stresses that individuals act collectively in determining who will govern them (McNair, 2011, p. 17). That is to say, the individual’s personal opinions become the public opinion of the people as a whole acting for the common interest. Public opinion, in this sense, is shaped in Habermas’ ‘public sphere’ theory. Habermas (1962/1991) defines the public sphere in its ideal form as ‘made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state’ (p. 176). Namely the public sphere is a platform in societies aiming to encourage political participation by talk (Fraser, 1990, p. 57). Thus, the success of the public sphere stems from the idea that every person is an equal participant in debate through communication. As Habermas stresses, political participation would enable the public sphere to produce opinions and views functioning to direct the national affairs.

In this sense, the public sphere is the source of public opinion needed to ‘legitimate authority in any functioning democracy’ (Rutherford, 2000, p. 18).

Advocacy and persuasion.

The media in a democracy function as a platform not only for citizens’ public opinion, but also for the advocacy of political views. The media are believed to be open to political parties who need a channel to deliver their policies and programmes to citizens. According to McNair (2011), the media also ‘actively endorse one or other of the parties at sensitive times such as elections’ (p. 20), especially in the print sector. Ezell (2001) sees the advocacy role as attempting to achieve changes within society by increasing public support for specific policies. Accordingly, the advocacy role is often connected with the notion of persuasion (McNair, 2011; Edgett, 2002). The persuasion role aims to change ‘individuals’ attitudes and/or to encourage certain behaviours or actions through emotional arousal techniques’ (Minoletti, 2003, p. 38). In certain political areas such as an election campaign, persuasion is related to broader work concerned with media influences on public opinion (Edgett, 2002). Edgett (2002) relates advocacy to persuasion pointing out that the former is an ‘act of publicly representing an individual, organization, or idea within the object of persuading targeted audiences to look favourably on – or accept the point of view of – the individual, the organization, or the idea’ (p. 1).

Watchdog & fourth estate.

The watchdog role of the media aims to protect the public’s welfare by monitoring the conduct of government officials, which is key to democracy. This function sometimes is also referred to as ‘accountability reporting’, ‘investigative

reporting’, ‘public-service reporting’, or ‘public-interest reporting’ (Starkman, 2014, p. 8). Brunetti and Weder (2003) argue that in a democratic society, a free press’s role as a watchdog strengthens the transparency of a government decision-making process, thus revealing and preventing misuse of public office, malfeasance, and financial scandals (pp. 1802-1824). A demonstrative case is the revelation of the Watergate scandal during the Nixon presidency in 1972, which exemplifies the exercise of the watchdog role by two muckraking journalists: Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein from *The Washington Post* (Patterson, 2003). They spent several months investigating and finally uncovered high-ranking officials’ abuse of power. This illustrates the way in which the media served society by keeping government in check (Boydston, 2013). This case contributed substantially to the fall of Nixon regime (Genovese, 1999, p. 111).

In some formulations of the watchdog role, the media are portrayed as the Fourth Estate. The term was first used in the late-eighteenth century by Edmund Burke, to refer to the role of media ensuring that all other organisations – the three branches of government (the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary) – serve the public (Baran & Davis, 2011, p. 110). Therefore, properly functioning media are essential to keep leaders honest: once people learn about misconduct or incompetence, they will in theory take action against it. For instance, in the context of political elections, many (Gurevitch & Blumler, 1990; Randall, 1998; Norris, 2006) suggest that the media should hold the government and politicians answerable to the voters, and be subject to subsequent punishment if there is any misconduct. Jebril et al. (2013) add that, the media are perceived as contributory to ‘both the main dimensions of political accountability, vertical (the ability of citizens to oversee actions of the power holders) as well as horizontal (the system of ‘checks and

balances' between state institutions, public agencies, and branches of government)' (p. 7). Essentially, the media function as a means for electorates to make decisions by circulating information about government actions. This understanding of the press as the 'fourth estate' and the expectation for it to perform as a 'watchdog' – revealing the wrongdoings of bureaucrats and other powers within the democratic system – is mostly deep-seated in the liberal, Anglo-American view of journalism (Waisbord, 2000).

Agenda-setting.

Finally, there is an agenda-setting function of the mass media (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), referring to 'the process by which attention is distributed on a given agenda' (Boydston, 2013, p. 218). It is argued that the media are assumed to play a particularly important role where they spotlight major world events that may call for actions by the governments or the international community. McCombs and Shaw (1972) explain that newspapers for example, highlight salient issues by setting lead story on the front page and displaying large headlines. Television news would indicate the salience through the opening story of a newscast. Such routines or patterns repeat every day and stress the significance of each topic. As McCombs (2011) puts it: 'the news media can set the agenda for the public's attention to that small group of issues around which public opinion forms' (p. 1). Hence, the shifting salience of topics on the media agenda is viewed as basis for public opinion formation about the overall performance of leaders. Agenda-setting has been linked closely to the notion of framing by many researchers (Riker, 1986; McCombs et al., 1997; Entman, 2007; Balabanova, 2015). Entman (1993) suggests that selection and salience constitute essential part of the framing process. Thus, a perceived reality is

selected and made more salient in order to ‘promote a particular problem definition, a causal interpretation, a moral evaluation, and/ or treatment recommendation’ from the daily events (p. 52). This means that particular dominant narratives/featured frames occur at the expense of counter narratives that are marginalised (Freedman, 2017). Yet, the downplayed or omitted subjects are not necessarily insignificant. Entman (1993) notes, ‘the omissions of potential problem definitions, explanations, evaluations, and recommendations may be as critical as the inclusions’ (p. 54). The two notions – agenda-setting and framing – together may result in media bias (Entman, 2007, p. 164). Overall, Brown and Deegan (1998) argue that the mass media’s agenda-setting function is so influential that it may significantly influence people’s perception about the world.

In order for these above discussed democratic functions to be fulfilled, and thus for a public sphere or a democracy to be real, Aalberg and Curran (2012) argue that public opinion is one of the key principles of democracy. They stress that access to information is vitally important to the health of democracy (Aalberg & Curran, 2012, p. 3). They offer two explanations:

First, it ensures that citizens make responsible, informed choices rather than act out of ignorance or misinformation. Second, information serves a “checking function” by ensuring that representatives uphold their oaths of office and carry out, broadly, the wishes of those who elected them (Aalberg & Curran, 2012, p. 3).

Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) similarly stress the importance of citizens being politically informed. They argue that more-informed citizens are more tolerant of democratic norms, are more likely to be keen on, follow and talk about politics,

and are more likely to play a part in politics such as to vote in elections (Delli Carpini, 1999, p. 17). Thus, in order to express political opinions and find their self-interests, citizens demand appropriate information about current events.

Having outlined five of the main roles of media within democracy, it is necessary to question whether the media deliver on them in reality. To what extent do the media fulfil or fail in their democratic role? Critics such as Habermas (1962/1991) argue that the commercialisation of the newspaper press at the dawn of the twentieth century is the most important cause of the failure of the public sphere. He regards the earlier bourgeois press as ‘primarily politically motivated’, which then transformed into a business enterprise making ‘critical debate’ a good that can be consumed (Habermas, 1962/1991, pp. 164-185). As he points out, the new social forces, for example, financial orientation, turned the press into an agency of manipulation: ‘It became the gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere’ (Habermas, 1962/1991, p. 185). This came in parallel with the role that the state started playing in the private realm and everyday life where the public sphere was degenerated; whilst citizens were regarded as consumers who paid attention to consumption and private concerns rather than to democratic participation (Kellner, 2000). Importantly, the media’s democratic roles became transformed from enabling individual participation in public discussion into constructing and confining public discourse to those subjects authorised by media corporations (Kellner, 2000).

The transformation of news consumption manifests itself in many ways, ranging from a decline in the number of journalists to ‘the collapse of local newspapers’ (Balabanova, 2019, p. 188). This is an implication of the fact that the media functioning as part of the democratisation process is at stake (McNair, 2011). The media’s failure in delivering on the expected roles can be traced through four

dimensions (Balabanova, 2015, 2017, 2019). Dumbing down (Franklin, 1997) is the first dimension, referring to a trend towards the over-simplification of subject matter to make it more appealing to the mass audience. The second dimension indicates the increase in tabloidisation (McNair, 2011), owing to not only the commercial stresses but also the pressure on journalists to prioritise entertainment over harder news (Barron, 2015). This leads to the third dimension – news as ‘spectacle’ (Louw, 2010). The final dimension is the media’s increasing reliance on public relations material along a falling number of investigative journalism (Balabanova, 2019). All these dimensions feed back to the notion of commercialism that is privileged at the expense of the watchdog role.

Other scholars (e.g., Entman, 1990; Postman, 1985) share a similar view by addressing the question of market forces. They have studied the quality of news media information, arguing that increased market power and shifting news values are seen to have traumatised the information environment. This is mainly due to the growing competition in the news market, which has urged journalists to dramatise the news in order to attract more public attention (Aalberg & Curran, 2012, p. 3), and to treat politics as entertainment to make it seem interesting (Aalberg & Curran, 2012). The news media then become more profit-driven rather than what Habermas originally suggested – striving for truthfulness. Such increase in soft and de-contextualised news degrades the public’s information about public affairs (Bennett, 2003; Curran, 2010). Bennett (2003) exemplifies this point by arguing that typically in the U.S., the news coverage is saturated with melodrama and stereotypes, but lacks analysis and explanation. Consequently, the quality of news media information is often called into question. Curran (2010) goes further and comments that if important

information is unavailable to the public they would therefore be disempowered to make informed decisions protecting their own interests.

Some scholars (McNair, 2011; Somerville, 2017) suggest that there is no impeccable relationship between the media and democratic structures. This can be explained by two factors. First, the concept of objectivity is disputable due to the unavoidable bias that occurs when selecting and organising information. Second, journalists themselves are prone to social forces such as politics, economics, and other elites (Balabanova, 2007, p. 55). Hence, the different political, economic, and socio-cultural contexts/conditions can help explain the differences in the role. As such, it is important to look at the different media systems that have been established particularly in Europe since the end of the Cold War in 1991 and the democratisation of Central and Eastern Europe. The chapter turns to look at the models developed to identify and compare the media systems of the so-called hybrid and liberal societies (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015, 2019; Sukosd, 2012; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). The next section begins with a general introduction of the relevant political contexts.

1.3 The Media Systems

1.3.1 The political contexts: liberal vs. hybrid regimes.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the concept of liberal democracy became the dominant norm across the world (Habets, 2015). While liberalism continued in Western European countries characterised by ‘equal treatment of individuals or groups by the state’ when dealing with justice and basic rights such as free speech (Mukand & Rodrik, 2019, p. 8); the post-communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe underwent fast and significant changes in their politics, society, and economy. As Herrero et al. (2017) state the changes

embraced ‘capitalism, democracy, and human rights in a very short period of time’ (p. 4802). However, some of these emerging liberal democracies – adopting a broadly liberal position on issues such as freedom of expression – did not shy away from advocating illiberal approaches for certain purposes. This is the reason why these less liberal (or even illiberal) regimes became often interchangeably labelled as ‘illiberal democracy’ (Zakariah, 1997), ‘delegative democracy’ (Oates, 2013), competitive authoritarian systems, or hegemonic-party systems (Diamond, 2002, pp.21-22). Hale (2010), however, argues that neither democracy nor authoritarianism can accurately describe most Eurasian countries’ political systems (p. 33). He instead suggests that it is more fruitful to understand those countries as a type of hybrid regimes (Hale, 2010). Likewise, Sukosd (2018) makes a clear distinction between hybrid regimes and liberal democracies. He explains that despite the officially declared principles of a democratic constitutional state, such as pluralism, and a multi-party system, the systems of checks and balances fall short of the official declarations. Accordingly, the opposition is often marginalised thus having zero possibility of winning pluralist elections. As such, Sukosd (2018) continues, hybrid regimes cannot be called illiberal democracies, as they are not liberal or constitutional democracies, but are in between democratic and authoritarian political systems. Following this, Hale (2010) conceptualises the hybrid regime as a combination of contested elections with pervasive political clientelism, while other scholars (Carothers, 2002; Levitsky & Way, 2002, 2010; Sakwa, 2011) describe the system as a ‘grey zone’ between democracy and authoritarianism.

The illiberal practice implies an impossibility of fairness and honesty. As Couldry (2012) points out, systems generate ‘the conditions under which the practice is itself possible’ (p. 39). Central to the hybrid regimes, according to Puddington

(2017), is the weakening of political pluralism. A hybrid regime is mostly characterised by its capacity for control in all spheres of society – the media, the judiciary, civil society, economy, and the security forces (*Freedom House*, Jun 2017). The institutionalisation of media in particular becomes a powerful technique to legitimate the authority (Mazepus et al., 2016).

1.3.2 The media systems of liberal democracies.

The media systems of societies are shaped by significant historical change associated with elements ranging from politics to economies and socio-cultures. As McNair (2006) puts it ‘communication systems are never in exactly the same place twice’ (p. xiv). In other words, the media systems cannot be simply conceptualised without taking into account specific examples of things in flux (Chadwick, 2017, p. 22). Hallin and Mancini (2004) have developed three media system models mainly focusing on the Western liberal world. They empirically propose four dimensions covering four key variables to measure and compare different media systems. These include media markets (strong or weak development of a mass circulation press), political parallelism (degree and nature of the links between the media and political parties), journalistic professionalism, and state intervention (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 21).

First and foremost, the differences among media systems – deeply rooted in the historical development of the mass circulation press, lie not only in the quantity but also in the nature of the newspapers. On the one hand, high and low rates of newspaper circulation are features of Northern and Southern Europe respectively. On the other, the newspapers of Southern Europe generally aim to serve a certain (relatively small) group that is well-educated and politically active (which might be

termed elites). Therefore, a horizontal process of communication characterises the media systems within that region. The newspapers of Northern Europe and North America, by comparison, are characterised by their broader public targeting including those outside the political world. In this sense, a vertical process of debate is associated with the media systems of these countries, although the horizontal process may simultaneously take place as well. Other aspects of media market structure include historical differences in literacy rates and differences in the function of media. For instance, there is a bigger gender gap between male and female readership in Southern Europe than that in Northern Europe (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

The political elements of the newspapers of Southern Europe lead directly to the second dimension of media systems – that of political parallelism. It was not until the late nineteenth century when journalists started to be independent from specific political interests. The trend applied particularly to commercial presses as they were profit-driven rather than politics-oriented. Thus, advertisement played an important role in the financial sponsorship. Nevertheless, this cannot be interpreted as an ideal dichotomy between commercial and politicised presses. Hallin and Mancini (2004) point out that there is a likelihood that commercial media can be politically partisan whilst non-commercial media may stick to the idea of political balance (pp. 26-27). Regardless of the possibilities, the researchers found significant differences among media systems in terms of the relationships between the media and political actors and between advocacy and neutral traditions of political journalism. One important difference is political orientations, which Blumler and Gurevitch (1975) conceptualise as ‘party-press parallelism’, while Hallin and Mancini (2004) theorise the term as political parallelism that contains several components. The latter include

organisational connections between media and political parties, the tendency for media personnel to be active in political life, the partisanship of media audiences, and the journalistic role orientations and practices (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 27-29). Hallin and Mancini suggest that political parallelism is often connected to two concepts: internal pluralism and external pluralism (2004, pp. 29-30). The former is defined as pluralism achieved within each individual media outlet or organisation, thus ensuring a low level of political parallelism. The latter, on the contrary, is defined as pluralism achieved within the media system as a whole including different media outlets or organisations thus covering diverse voices in society. As a result, a media system associated with external pluralism is generally considered to have a high level of political parallelism.

Professionalism is the third dimension. Three indicators have been closely related to the concept of professionalisation: journalistic autonomy – achieved within media organisations; distinct professional norms – including ethical principles and practical routines (such as newsworthiness); and public service orientation. In addition, the researchers draw a contrast between professionalism and (political) instrumentalisation. A general argument is that professionalisation can be in danger under the operation of political instrumentalisation or commercialisation, or both at once (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 34-37).

The final dimension of the media system examined by Hallin and Mancini (2004) is the state's role. This has important implications for shaping the media system of any society, although with different levels and forms. The view is shared by many other researchers focusing on Western countries (Curran et al., 2009; Aalberg & Curran, 2012; Bruggemann et al., 2014). Hallin and Mancini (2004) discover a critical gap in funding levels not only within Europe, but also between

Europe and the United States. Other forms of state intervention include the following:

(1) libel, defamation, privacy, and right-of-reply laws; (2) hate speech laws; (3) professional secrecy laws for journalists and conscience laws (protecting journalists when the political line of their paper changes); (4) laws regulating access to government information; (5) laws regulating media concentration, ownership, and competition; (6) laws regulating political communication, particularly during election campaign; (7) broadcast licensing laws and laws regulating broadcasting content, including those dealing with political pluralism, language, and domestic content (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 43-44).

Therefore, a liberal media system is expected to have a low level of state intervention thus relying significantly on market forces (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 44).

Based on the above four dimensions, the researchers inductively propose three media system models covering countries from the United States and Canada to most of Western Europe: The Liberal Model, the Democratic Corporatist Model, and the Polarised Pluralist Model.

First, the Liberal Model refers to the media systems in countries such as the UK, Ireland, and those in North America (or Anglo-Saxon countries), featuring a high level of market mechanisms and commercial media. The countries are characterised by an early development of press freedom and mass-circulation press, although the circulation rates may have changed and decreased compared to the Democratic Corporatist countries. This model epitomises the normative ideal of the

neutral independent watchdog role, thus separating the media systems from political systems.

Second, the Democratic Corporatist Model is seen to be present within Northern continental European countries with welfare state tradition, strong public service broadcasters, and partisan media along identity groups. Specifically, it is characterised by a historical co-occurrence of commercial media (with early development of press freedom and high newspaper circulation) and media associated with social and political groups (but with a high level of professional autonomy), and by a state role that is legally limited but relatively active in reality. Political parallelism is historically high. There is also a moderate level of external pluralism and a tradition of commentary-driven journalism, alongside an increasingly developing norm and practice of neutral professional journalism. The media are generally seen as social institutions. That is to say, under the Democratic Corporatist Model, the boundaries between the practices of media and the practices of those existing outside the media are to some extent porous.

Finally, the Polarised Pluralist Model – exclusive to few small countries such as Luxembourg – encompasses the media systems across the Mediterranean countries of Southern Europe. The model sketches out four features. First, a consolidation of the media and party politics – elite-driven press with small circulation. Second, a lower level of historical account of commercial media development – lower mass circulation newspapers. Third, a high level of political parallelism – strong political life, external pluralism, and advocacy journalism tradition. Fourth, a strong role of the state – as an owner, regulator, and funder of media. Hallin and Mancini (2004) consider these features as being rooted in a high degree of ideological diversity and conflict in the delayed development of liberal

institutions. Papatheodorou and Machin (2003) share a similar view. They describe the relationship between the media systems and political systems in South European societies such as Portugal, Spain, and Greece as an ‘umbilical cord’ that was never cut. They argue that this is the case even after a dramatic transformation of media systems took place in late 1980s, aiming to be in line with Western patterns.

Likewise, Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) provide four explanations for such ‘state paternalism’ or ‘political clientelism’: a tradition of advocacy reporting; instrumentalisation of privately-owned media; politicisation of public broadcasting and broadcast regulation; and limited development of journalism as an autonomous profession. Therefore, this model epitomises a greater gap between the ideal of democratic role and reality. More precisely, the journalists have beliefs in neutrality and objectivity whilst they practise in an opposing direction where partisan advocacy has long become entrenched. Thus, the media systems under this model can be generally explained by the characteristics of the political systems.

Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) three models focusing on media systems of western liberal states have led to widespread discussions about how the framework might apply to the media systems beyond Western Europe and North America. This motivated the authors themselves later to expand the range of world regions in a later collection of studies (Hallin & Mancini, 2012a), incorporating Central and Eastern Europe (e.g., Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012; Vartanova, 2012), the Middle East (e.g., Kraidy, 2012), Asia (e.g., Zhao, 2012), Africa (e.g., Hadland, 2012), and Latin America (e.g., de Albuquerque, 2012). Many researchers find it particularly difficult to reach a consensus on the post-Soviet media sphere¹, arguing that ‘media in post-Soviet societies are a moving target, influenced by technological, geopolitical, and

¹ Including that of emerging democracies and hybrid regimes.

cultural developments' (Rollberg, 2014, p. 175). Dobek-Ostrowska (2012; 2015) and Vartanova (2012) adopt Hallin and Mancini's (2004) framework proposing a Politicised Media model and a Statist Commercialised model to characterise the media systems of hybrid regimes.

1.3.3 The media systems of hybrid regimes.

Eastern European countries' unique historical experience of political, social, cultural, and economic changes after the collapse of the USSR in 1991, rendered substantially different media models within the region and also in relation to those in Western European societies. Some see the models as coming in line with many of the Western features (e.g., Vartanova, 2012) or as similar to Hallin and Mancini's Polarised Model (e.g., Jakubowicz, 2007; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012). Jakubowicz (2007) sees the process of media change in Eastern post-communist countries in general as comparable with the one in the Mediterranean countries due to the shared characteristics between the two (p. 304). These include 'late democratization and incomplete, or (in some cases) little advanced, modernization and weak rational-legal authority combined in many cases with a *dirigiste* state', as well as the feature of state paternalism or political clientelism (Jakubowicz, 2007, p. 304). The scholar also uses the term 'panpoliticismo' to describe a situation in the region when politics permeates social systems including the media thus having influences on them. This not only results in a delayed liberal democracy, but also represents 'a political culture favouring a strong role of the state and control of the media by political elites' (Jakubowicz, 2007, p. 304).

This strong role of the state is especially evident in some countries of the region, running in parallel with a low level of journalistic professionalism and a high

level of marginalisation of independent journalism (Sukosd, 2012). Sukosd (2012) points out that the public and state media from some Eastern European countries are under huge pressure, not only from governments but also from the oligarchs who internalise and instrumentalise the media organisations for political and economic interests. As a consequence, there are not many independent journalists in the region, compared with Western Europe. Especially after the global financial crisis that hit the region in 2008, Stetka (2012) argues, Western global media businesses began their divestments thus leaving the Eastern media markets – a phenomenon referred to as ‘de-Westernisation’ (p. 438). This, however, opened the way for ‘the growing role of oligarchs in media ownership’ (Sukosd, 2012, p. 130). As Sukosd (2012) puts it, in order to accumulate wealth, those oligarchs used the media to financially and politically support political parties that they have close connections with. As a result, the media systems in the region in general come close and are almost identical to the ones of hybrid regimes (Sukosd, 2012, 2018).

Regardless of the similarities at different levels, there are different types of post-communist media systems depending on the nature of their political systems (Sukosd, 2012) as well as their cultural background (Voltmer, 2013). Herrero et al. (2017) point out that media system developments in the East should not be categorised into any of the three Western media models developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004), due to the particular evolution that has taken place in these countries after 1991. Three factors identified by Voltmer (2012) with regard to the trajectories of the media transition can be used to explore the new types of media systems. First, the media are a unique mixture of old structures from the Soviet past, new elements from Western models, and particular ‘features born out of the desire to implement something different and better than the institutional predecessor’ (Voltmer, 2012, p.

235). Second, the legacy also applies to the individuals within these institutions (Sparks, 2008). After the regime change processes, journalists generally stayed in their positions, thus continuing the old rules and practices in their work. Third, the political elites are reluctant to accept the media as independent players. They tend to use the old tricks such as ‘direct pressure, threats, and editorial interference’ (Voltmer, 2012, pp. 235-236).

Dobek-Ostrowska (2019) shares a similar view. In her recent study on the media systems of the Central and Eastern European countries (CEE), she argues that despite the fact that there are 21 countries sharing the same geographical region, ‘each has a unique political history and experience of democracy; equally diverse is the condition of civil society in each jurisdiction’ (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2019, p. 260). More importantly, the political, economic, and social processes and factors in these individual countries are also very dynamic, which makes it difficult to see their ‘direction, intensity and effects’ (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2019, p. 260). Hence, as Dobek-Ostrowska (2019) writes, the media systems in the East ‘are not as stable as in Western Europe’ (p. 274). Dobek-Ostrowska (2015; 2019) suggests a ‘Politicised Media Model’ to describe the media systems of Poland and Hungary, and Vartanova (2012) proposes a ‘Statist Commercialised Model’ to refer to that of Russia. Despite the unique national contexts, the two models share two commonalities.

First, a high level of state intervention (Sukosd, 2012). This indicates a ‘dominant-power politics’ (Sipos, 2012) or ‘one-party hegemony’ (Urban et al., 2017) where the ruling party attempts to play a strong role in terms of controlling the media especially in the Public Broadcasting Media and frequently intervening in the private media. The practice of media policy is thus determined by pro-government bodies including editors for the purposes of patronage and mobilisation in favour of

the government. Political policy on media is seen as a censorship instrument (Urban et al., 2017, p. 159). As Bozoki and Hegedus (2018) argue, the political power attempts to build an 'executive control over the judiciary, the subordination of the public media to the government for propaganda purposes' (p. 1176). In addition, Dobek-Ostrowska (2019) highlights the very existence of political cleavage-divided journalists (Glowacki, 2017).

Second, the role of oligarchs (Sukosd, 2012). Some of the media owners are in a close connection with the powerful, thus 'the oligarchic ownership model exists next to a strong control of the public media by political elites' (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2019, p. 267). As a result, the media systems of hybrid regimes are a 'dominant-power' system featuring a high level of state intervention (Sipos, 2012). The deep politicisation (due to government's policy) and the resulting weak media freedom, according to Dobek-Ostrowska (2019), exemplify that 'media transformation [has] derailed' (p. 266). Despite the normative standards of objectivity, the models in both liberal and hybrid regimes demonstrate that fulfilling the media's democratic role is challenging.

The ultimate challenge to the normative frameworks is often posed by war and conflict when the media cover foreign policy issues. Williams (1992) argues that 'war should not be seen as a special case of how the media works but rather as a magnifying glass which highlights and intensifies many of the things that happen in peacetime, albeit revealing them in exaggerated form' (as cited in Carruthers, 2000, p. 13). The extent to which the media are actually independent from the politics in the context of war and conflict has remained open to debate. This is the case even in Hallin and Mancini's (2004) Liberal model that highlights the media's detachment from the political power and its market-driven features. For example, in 2003,

questions about the situation in Iraq flourished: Where were the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)? Did Saddam Hussein – the then President of Iraq – have a connection to Al Qaeda? Although evidence did not support either of these justifications for the invasion of Iraq, beliefs that Saddam Hussein owned WMD and that he was related to Al Qaeda continued to exist (Stroud, 2008, pp. 341-432). Many American people in fact tended to embrace these beliefs especially between 2004 and 2006, although the subsequent information noticeably disproved them (Castells, 2009). Kull et al. (2003-4) study the case of the invasion of Iraq concluding that at the beginning of the invasion, those watching FOX news tended to believe the existence of both the weapons and the link while those watching Public Broadcasting Service and listening to National Public Radio did not (as cited in Stroud, 2008, p. 342). This finding is important as it shows how diverse patterns of news coverage may lead to people generating varied impressions of the actual event taking place globally. Hence by misinforming the public, it is possible that polarised attitudes toward political issues would be greatly encouraged or even generated.

Zaller and Chiu (2000) focus on the censorship and the national perspective of the US media when they cover the country's military, and state that: 'It is a truism that journalists find it difficult to report critically on government activity during foreign policy crises. They [...] fear that tough reporting will undermine the government's ability to deal with the crisis' (p. 61). A number of empirical studies have suggested that the media's role in democracies during conflicts in general has always been disputable (Bennett, 1990; Entman, 1991; Hammond, 2007a, 2007b, 2017; Balabanova, 2007, 2015; Carruthers, 2011; Parry, 2010, 2011; Robinson, 2002; 2017; Robinson et al., 2010; Freedman, 2017; Hammond et al., 2019; Boyd-

Barrett, 2019). The following section looks at the theoretical debates on the role of media in the context of war and conflict.

1.4 Media and Conflict

The news media are a central forum where issues related to war are openly debated (Robinson et al., 2010, p. 1). This, aided by the developments in communications technology, is part of the reason for the increasingly extensive levels of news media's attention to conflicts. The ever-changing globalised environment of 24-hour news channels, real-time reporting, and the internet have rendered the information and images of conflict more accessible to a majority of the population worldwide. As Carruthers (2011) notes, the battle over images during the 1980s has extended to the internet – today's increasingly significant place for the presentation and exchange of visual imagery. Consequently, following the description of the Vietnam War as the first 'television war', the Iraq war in 2003 was given the name the first 'YouTube war' (p. 5).

The other contributing factor for the increasing degree of attention paid to conflicts by the media is the very nature of the news media and the emphasis on 'the dramatic, the bloody, and the controversial' (Balabanova, 2007, p. 2). As Galtung and Ruge (1965) in discussions on 'news values' or newsworthiness suggest, negative news such as wars and conflicts are more likely to be selected for coverage than positive news (pp. 65-71). Where there is something new, discontinuities, and drama; there is news. Journalists after all are interested in 'change' (Keen, 2000, p. 1). In comparison with 'good news' that is generally considered no news (Minear et al., 1996, Wolfsfeld, 2011), Altheide (1995) argues that conflicts, drama, and war are newsworthy. This is because conflicts strongly attach to TV news owing to their

potential for dramatic visuals such as ‘explosions, bombs, people running, and a range of emotional reactions of people’ (Altheide, 1995, p. 184). This is the case especially if there is a high level of destruction and human loss (Balabanova, 2017). Balabanova (2017) argues that violent events such as genocide and extreme human suffering are more likely to be reported (p. 233). Wolfsfeld (2011) describes the media’s obsessive need for sensationalising violence as a main influence on how they frame violent events. To highlight how wars can bring economic benefits to media, he says:

War’s drama is especially suited to television news where viewers can see and hear the horrible things that happen: explosions, hysterical victims and bystanders, fires, neighborhoods destroyed, dead bodies being dragged out of burning buildings, wounded soldiers writhing in pain, and coffins being lowered into the ground (Wolfsfeld, 2011, p. 83).

Consequently, it is arguable that nothing is able to make audiences pay attention to the news like war. Several scholars suggest that war ‘sells’ (Balabanova, 2007; Carruthers, 2000, 2011; Moeller, 1999; Lasswell, 1927; Hudson & Stanier, 1999). This perception was famously proved by an American news channel – Cable News Network (CNN) covering the first Gulf War in 1991 (e.g., Carruthers, 2011; Hoskins & O’Loughlin, 2010).

Some researchers (e.g., Shaw, 1996) believe that war coverage has the potential to not only shape the public’s perceptions of the situation, but also influence the policy-making process. The use of images of human suffering can lead the public, politicians, and non-governmental organisations among others to have the feeling that they must ‘do something’. This attention paid to the humanitarian

dimension was a feature of the coverage of conflict in Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, and Kosovo during the 1990s (Carruthers, 2011). For example, Carruthers (2011) suggests that media used pictures of starving infants as the facilitator for:

Operation Restore Hope' in Somalia in 1992; pictures of Rwandan refugees entering Kigali were used as the motivation behind a massive relief effort in 1994; and the use of reporting of atrocities committed by the Belgrade regime against Kosovar Albanians triggered NATO's 1999 bombing campaign to accuse Serbian ethnic cleansing (pp. 142-143).

Marx (2008) sees this attention paid by the media in the name of improving 'the human condition' as stirring moral consciousness (as cited in Carruthers, 2011, p. 143). This is how the so called 'CNN effect' has emerged. The theory quickly prevailed in discussions of media power in the 1990s (Gilboa, 2005a). On the other hand, some researchers (Hallin, 1986; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Bennet, 1990; Entman, 1991; Mermin, 1999) have maintained that news media coverage of international politics often challenges the democratic 'watchdog' role, by being 'indexed' in close concordance with national foreign policy establishments as the 'manufacturing consent' thesis suggests (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The two theories – exemplifying the extremes of the debate over media's role in conflict and war – will be critically discussed in the next section, with empirical evidence provided to support the arguments on both sides.

1.4.1 The manufacturing consent thesis.

Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue that in recent history the media appear complicit in support of government actions such as for example during the Vietnam

War. In addition to government influence, journalists themselves tend to both self-censor and interpret issues through specific perspectives such as ‘the cultural and political prisms of their respective political and social elites’ (Robinson, 2002, p. 12). Herman and Chomsky (1988) suggest that media biases ‘arise from the preselection of right-thinking people, internalized preconceptions, and the adaptation of personnel to the constraints of ownership, organization, market, and political power’ (p. xxii). The authors put forward a propaganda model (PM) hereafter to outline five media ‘filters’ that ‘fix the premises of discourse and interpretation, and the definition of what is newsworthy’ (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. 2). Although the PM was originally developed regarding the US media system, Freedman (2008, 2009) argues that the model is also relevant to a UK media environment as it highlights economic-driven forces within the media industry.

The five filters are ownership, advertisement, sources, flak, and anti-communism (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The first – ownership – refers to media industries being part of conglomerates that are profit-driven and controlled by wealthy people. As such, mainstream media are in a kinship sharing important common interests with networks of other political and economic corporations, such as banks and government (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. 14). The second filter highlights that these media corporations often rely on advertisements as major source of income. Over time, the strive to remain financially viable leads to a tendency that the media eventually align their coverage towards the interests of specific audiences or sellers, and thus marginalising the content that may not satisfy the most powerful advertisers. The third filter notes that news media outlets rely largely on elite sources for two reasons. On the one hand, they typically believe that the elites are accurate and ‘reliable’ sources of information; on the other hand, this way of newsgathering

– not requiring the otherwise necessary fact-checking – is lower-cost. The resulting coverage is dominated thus not only by political and economic elites, but also by ‘experts’ and think tanks, all of which help with the cost reduction in newsgathering. Flak is the fourth filter. Herman and Chomsky (1988) use the term to refer to negative responses to programmes or news content, which results in a marginalisation of material that challenges mainstream sources. This is due to the fact that dominant organisations hold privileges and power, thus pressuring media to play a propagandistic role in society. For instance, after the publication by the British newspaper the *Mirror* of film-maker John Pilger’s anti-Bush position that challenged Bush’s war plan of bombing Afghanistan in 2001, ‘the fund manager of one of Trinity Mirror’s large American investors’ called the newspaper’s chief executive to complain about the news content (Freedman, 2009, p. 64). The final, fifth filter is anti-Communism understood as a control mechanism. The construction of an ‘enemy’ is the main theme here. While anti-communism primarily fulfilled this role during the Cold War period, since then the enemy has been largely replaced with that of fundamentalist Islam (Freedman, 2017; Freedman & Obar, 2016; Hammond, 2017).

This propaganda model explicitly demonstrates that the conscious control over the public opinion is seen as an important factor in democratic societies. The rule of the masses by the elite can be achieved through ‘manufacturing consent’. The US media, as the authors conclude:

Inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state. The media serve this purpose in many ways: through selection of topics, distribution of concerns, framing of issues, filtering of information,

emphasis and tone, and by keeping debate within the bounds of acceptable premises (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. 298).

Many scholars have provided support for the thesis in their empirical studies (Bennett, 1990; Entman, 1991; Entman & Page, 1994; Wolfsfeld, 1997; Robinson, 2002; Balabanova, 2007; 2015; Carruthers, 2011; Hammond et al., 2019; Boyd-Barrett, 2019). They adhere to the position that the media cover war and conflict in line with national foreign policies. Robinson (2002) identifies an executive version of manufacturing consent paradigm highlighting ‘the extent to which news media content conforms with the agendas and reference frames of government officials where government officials are understood as members of the *executive*’ (p. 13). In this context, Robinson claims that the news media follow the executive policy line (2002, p. 13). Entman (1991) on the basis of significant empirical analysis of the US news coverage of the shooting down of the Korean Airline and Iran Airline planes in the 1980s, reaches a similar conclusion that media reporting is compliant with the policy interests of the respective American governments (pp. 6-27). Some studies on wartime media coverage combine the notion of framing and agenda-setting tradition showing the importance of media guidance for particular issues (Christie, 2006). For example, Dorman and Livingston (1994) in their empirical study with regard to the 1991 Gulf War observe that while the news coverage was ‘rich with references to an alternative historical context: Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany’, the media gave ‘selective attention’ to ‘the historical root cause of the crisis’ (pp. 65-67). The media’s use of frames indicates that there was limited policy debate about the crisis. Consequently, the ‘alternative interpretations and policy implications’ were eliminated (Dorman & Livingston, 1994, p. 73). A further empirical evidence for this view can be found in a later study where Entman and Page (1994) examine 118

opinion pieces in *The New York Times* covering the period leading up to the 1991 Gulf War. The researchers find that most of the reporting hardly criticised the foreign policy on US involvement in the war (Entman & Page, 1994). Criticism was rather 'procedural' in terms of relying heavily on official sources and encouraging 'the over-representation of administration views' (Entman & Page, 1994, p. 96).

This pattern is still evident in the second Gulf War in 2003 when the media in the UK delivered 'subtle but clear bias towards [...] pro-war assumptions' (Lewis et al., 2006, p. 126). Similarly, Robinson et al. (2010) suggest that British media during the 2003 invasion of Iraq were overall supportive in the war effort, despite the opposition coverage. Robinson et al. (2010) use framing analysis to scrutinise the media's war coverage and suggest two key points. First, the news agenda was set on daily issues such as 'battle' stories, while substantive issues such as the rationale for intervention was marginalised, with relatively low level of reporting of domestic dissent. Second, the British media in particular reproduced the perspective of official sources and actors. In other words, the government still heavily engaged in setting the agenda and framing the news reporting. Robinson et al. (2010) claim that this is mainly due to the patriotic sentiments among journalists as well as their commitment to humanitarian intervention. Carruthers (2011) with a focus on the 2003 Iraq war coverage, likewise recapitulates that the media became voluntary co-conspirator in wartime propaganda. Overall, the empirical studies exemplify that war coverage is constructed by the media as per their biased interpretation and framing. As Bruggemann (2014) suggests the ingredients of journalistic framing ranges from simply circulating officials' interpretations of a situation to actively reproducing the journalist's subjective interpretation (pp. 61-82).

The framework of the manufacturing consent thesis, however, has not received universal support in times of war. For example, some scholars (Sparks, 2007; Freedman, 2009, 2017; Boyd-Barrett, 2010) critically point out that the PM underemphasises the potential of alternative frames produced by pressures among the elites and among progressive journalists. Hallin (1994) suggests that the PM fails to account for other possible media roles such as offering a place for elite debates as the media are described as ‘perfectly unidimensional’ within the model (p. 13). As Freedman (2017) argues, the thesis may not be helpful in demonstrating specifically ‘how journalistic practices are shaped by news environments and how the professional ideology of journalists – including a commitment to “objectivity” and “truth-telling” – intersects with their wider surroundings’; although it may be precise in explaining the general idea that a pro-market media is pro-war driven (pp. 74-75). Bennett’s (1990) ‘indexing (journalists’ reliance on official sources) hypothesis’ can be useful in dealing with how and why journalists are ‘naturally’ official line-driven. He states that journalists ‘tend to “index” the range of voices and viewpoints in both news and editorials according to the range of views expressed in mainstream government debate about a single topic’ (p. 106). Thus, Bennett (1990) concludes that ‘mass media news is indexed [...] to the dynamics of governmental debate’ (p. 108). In other words, when there is general consensus on the objectives of foreign policy for instance, media are likely to be unable to be critical of this consensus and to stress independent voices. Moreover, news for Bennett (1994) is not only ‘elite driven’, but also sensitive to the impact of divisions within elites. This is the case particularly in times of conflict which may allow journalists to report opposition voices (p. 24).

A similar interpretation of how the media cover war and conflict is described by Robinson (1999, 2002) as the 'elite version' of the manufacturing consent thesis. He describes how 'news media coverage conforms to the interests of political elites in general whether they are in the executive, legislative or any other politically powerful position in society' (Robinson, 2002, p. 13). The elite version also highlights that during periods of elite dissensus critical coverage might appear (Robinson, 2002, p. 14). Therefore, rather than merely emphasising media reporting as a reinforcement of government policy in the way that the executive manufacturing consent suggests, there is a possibility that news media coverage might be critical of executive policy on war. Furthermore, there might also be a chance that the media may take sides, especially when there are elite debates over policy (Robinson, 2002, pp. 14-15). Namely, either deliberately or unintentionally, journalists might have an opportunity to choose which side of elites they support, or even, in the words of Wolfsfeld (1997), to be supportive of 'non-elites'. From this perspective, the media are seen as active and powerful participants in political debate (Robinson, 2002, p. 15). Robinson (2002) suggests that, elite manufacturing consent theory does not imply a passive news media with dependence on political elite sources due to the possibility of media's opposition against policy.

More evidence from Robinson (2002) highlighting the elite consensus/dissensus factor in relation to media power is provided via a policy-media interaction model, where he begins with an essential understanding of policy un/certainty. He defines policy uncertainty as 'a function of the degree of consensus and co-ordination of the sub-systems of the executive with respect to an issue' (Robinson, 2002, p. 26). Accordingly, Robinson (2002) argues that manufacturing consent theory only undoubtedly applies when there exists elite consensus over an

issue. This is in line with the executive version of the manufacturing consent thesis, where the media are unlikely to criticise the policy. In contrast, if there exists elite dissensus over an issue, the media respond to the debate thus providing critically and supportively framed coverage. This is what Robinson (2002) identifies as the elite version of the manufacturing consent thesis. Furthermore, if the elite dissensus combined with a high level of policy certainty within government exist at the same time, the media are expected to align with official policy. Finally, according to Robinson (2002), when elite dissensus along with policy uncertainty exist, the media, in addition to reflecting the debate via critically framed coverage, might be able to influence policy contrary the suggestions of the manufacturing consent thesis. More empirical evidence about the political consensus factor is to be found from other researchers (Hallin, 1986; Mermin, 1996, 1997, 1999; Zaller & Chui, 1996, 2000).

In the study on media coverage during the Vietnam War, Hallin (1986) argues that patriotic media privileged government sources and marginalised oppositional ones making Americans the ‘good guys’ (Parry & Goddard, 2017), and later these government sources ‘became more and more divided’ (Hallin, 1986, p. 10). This shift occurred because of the failure of the political consensus on the war. The divisions within the political elites and the increasing anti-war sentiment inside the US contributed to the media’s changing focus. Hallin (1986) details that before 1968 the media coverage of the Vietnam War merely reflected official sources and elite consensus about the war effort. Critical coverage was often dependent on information from Congressional leaders. Nevertheless, after the Tet Offensive took place in January 1968², the political consensus changed, and the news coverage of the war started to reflect this dissensus. Thus, the media were in fact playing a rather

² Several rounds of North Vietnamese attacks on South Vietnam and its U.S. ally.

follower role responding to the appearing divisions. As Hallin (1986) writes, 'the media became a forum for airing political differences rather than a tool of policy' (p. 187). Accordingly, he develops three ideological spheres to imply different journalistic standards. The first sphere is that of consensus, where the media are unlikely to present opposition views on any given political issue. Instead, journalists are rather feeling responsible for advocating and protecting consensus values among elites. The second sphere is that of legitimate controversy where Hallin (1986) points out that the media feel it is their obligation to practise objectivity between opposing claims. This sphere is seen as the one where many of today's progressive journalists fall within (Keeble, 2017, p. 13). Finally, there is a sphere of deviance. Hallin (1986) states: '[US media] play the role of exposing, condemning, or excluding from the public agenda those who violate or challenge the political consensus' (p. 117). Within this sphere, the media tend to attack 'those political actors and views which journalists and the political mainstream of the society reject as unworthy of being heard' (Hallin, 1984, p. 21). The defeat in Vietnam was a blow for the U.S. military and politicians, which was often blamed on the media for the graphic/negative coverage that was seen as turning the public opinion against the war (Elegant, 1979). Former President Ronald Reagan referred to this as the 'Vietnam syndrome' (Parry & Goddard, 2017, p. 161). Hallin's (1984, 1986) findings make significant points about the media's rather obedient role, thus rejecting the accusation.

Mermin's (1999) study of news coverage during post-Vietnam US military interventions is a further empirical research supporting the indexing theory (Bennett, 1990) and the elite manufacturing consent theory (Robinson, 2002). Mermin (1999) develops two versions of the indexing hypothesis: correlation and marginalisation. The former is similar to Bennett (1990) and Hallin's (1986) arguments highlighting

that the change of media's emphasis is according to the level of consensus on a foreign policy issue within political elites. The latter marginalisation version holds that if critical views are not articulated within political elites, the critical debate is marginalised or ignored. The news media then will do something that contradicts the journalistic autonomy from the government (Mermin, 1999, p. 6).

Zaller and Chiu (1996, 2000) study news coverage of foreign policy from the beginning of the Cold War to the 1999 Kosovo conflict, and offer supportive evidence of the theory that the indexed media are passive and faithfully deliver politicians' lines. They describe the news media as to 'wax hawkish and wane dovish as official sources lead them to do' (Zaller & Chiu, 1996, p. 386). However, this statement is found to apply only for the period between 1945 and 1991. The follow-up study focusing on the post-Cold War period discovers no indexing pattern and contradicts Mermin's (1999) findings. The researchers argue that the media were less in line with executive officials and in certain ways more balanced when issues did not contain communist enemies (Zaller & Chiu, 2000, p. 77). The difference between the two results from Mermin (1999) and Zaller and Chiu (2000) lies in the use of different methodologies in terms of coding scheme (Zaller & Chiu, 2000, pp. 80-81). But the change in media's role is similarly observed by Entman who previously proves the media's compliance with foreign policy interests (Entman, 1991, 1994), and later argues that the humanitarian interventions of the 1990s such as the 1991 Gulf War and the Somalia crisis (1992-93) were triggered by influential news media coverage (Entman, 2000). The end of the Cold War is seen as the reason for the shift in how the media cover war and conflict. That is, the disappearance of communism as a direct threat to U.S. security enabled elites to be critical of policies without looking unpatriotic. In this case, Entman (2000) claims that demonisation that 'was

the engine of interventionism' became more difficult (p. 14). Consequently, the 'benefits of intervention policies' that were embedded among journalists and the public during the Cold War transformed into a 'costs schema' in the post-Cold War era (Entman, 2000, p. 14). In addition, the development of technology made it possible to publish image of dramatic visual details of U.S. casualties. The rising public concern about these two factors – the costs schema and the image – became perceived pressure against the country's involvements in Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Thus, the media in the post-Cold War era became increasingly critical of foreign policy on war effort in many ways, ranging from selecting sources to constructing frames (Entman, 2000). As Entman (2003) puts it: 'the media now pounce upon any signs of failure or quagmire and in doing so apply their own evaluative criteria as much as indexing elite opposition' (as cited in Robinson et al., 2009, p. 539).

Similarly, Bennett et al.'s (2007) later updated concept of indexing hypothesis suggests a number of 'notable conditions' (such as events, technology, and investigative journalism) that may lead to independent journalistic practice including challenging official sources. One example of those 'notable conditions' is the 2003 Iraq War, where the media became more anti-war oriented after Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) were found to be absent. However, Baum and Groeling (2010) examining news coverage of the Iraq War between 2003 and 2007, argue that the notion of 'notable' implies 'exceptional infrequency' (p. 4). Speaking of the notable conditions such as 'major breakthroughs by investigative journalists', they argue: 'it is difficult to precisely define and measure them, and even more difficult to determine ex ante which events are likely to give rise to them' (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p. 4). Consequently, the media's dependence on official sources remains intact.

Other scholars (e.g., Chomsky, 1999; Hammond, 2007a, 2007b) agree that the media during the 1990s such as the 1999 Kosovo crisis were more of a tool used by Western political elites to justify and glorify their military actions in other countries.

An example of this tendency is news coverage of the 1999 NATO air strikes against Serbia (Hammond, 2007a, 2007b). Hammond (2007b) investigates the relationship between news framing and power by comparing leading frames by British mainstream media with the official government perspective. He discerns some overall patterns in the media's misrepresentation and distortion and summarises that in the Kosovo conflict the media morally simplified and promoted NATO's air strike by framing the bombing as 'good against evil' (Hammond, 2007b, p. 219). Hammond (2007a, 2007b) suggests that the humanitarian crisis was successfully justified to the Western public as a humanitarian war. This position can also be found in the comparative study of Balabanova (2007) who scrutinises Western and Eastern European countries – Britain and Bulgaria's print media regarding the NATO's air war in 1999. She finds that the Western media in 1999 were overall supportive of the war effort in terms of a clear foreign policy line on the NATO's military action, with a focus on suffering people in Kosovo. Once the question of air strikes was set on to the agenda, the British media paid significant attention to the issue with three dominant topics including the air strikes against the FRY, the direct clashes between Serbs and the Kosovo Albanians, and the peace talks/negotiations (Balabanova, 2010, p. 75). The British media framed the air strikes during the first period (February/March 1999) in a supportive way, and became critical of the government but with regards to the effectiveness of their strategy during the second period (April/May 1999). Overall, the British media were supportive of the war effort from February to May 1999, where the manufacturing

consent thesis was identified (Balabanova, 2007, pp. 148-149). Yet, this kind of journalistic practice of selective reporting on human suffering not only challenges the normative framework of media's democratic role as 'watchdogs' and causes 'a perception that human rights are only relevant to the reporting of distant conflict', but also means that it is possible to completely miss some human rights stories (Balabanova, 2017, p. 233).

In addition to the indexing hypothesis (Bennett, 1990) and the elite manufacturing consent theory (Robinson, 2002), Entman (2004) proposes a media cascade model to replace the indexing approach suggesting that 'the White House, its supporters, and its critics peddle their messages to the press in hopes of gaining political leverage' (p. 4). He believes that the media's important role in politics is a result of its ability to frame the coverage in ways favouring one side over another. This is because of the very existence of differences among elites in the post-Cold War era. Even when the administration is initiating and promoting war, media are not completely passive receptacles for government propaganda (Entman, 2004, p. 428). At least not always. The model also clarifies deviations from the preferred frame, and proves how information cascade works – from the administration on the top, to other elites, then to news organisations, and to the texts they produce, finally reaching the public.

Unlike the variables such as degrees of political consensus, Wolfsfeld (1997) focuses on the level of control over the political environment and argues that the media rather respond to and drive political agendas instead of initiating them. They quicken political success and failure. Wolfsfeld (1997) highlights the competition among opponents along two dimensions: a structural (struggle over access) and a cultural (struggle over meaning). The struggle over the news media is seen 'as part of

a more general struggle for political control' (Wolfsfeld & Sheaffer, 2006, p. 334). The former dimension refers to the level of interdependence between a political antagonist and respective media. According to Wolfsfeld (1997), 'the relative power of either side [...] is determined by the value of its services divided by its need for those services offered by the other' (p. 14). There is an important exchange of information between the two systems. Wolfsfeld (1997) stresses that competing parties attempt to promote their own interests on a policy/issue, whilst their respective media need materials (e.g., information and events) from the antagonists in order to produce news. The latter cultural dimension emphasises the impact of norms: how rules, principles, and routines have an impact on the building of media frames of conflict. According to Cottle (2006), this cultural dimension suggests that political contests 'are also struggles over meaning in which success within the news media can lead to higher levels of political support' (p. 22). Easy access to media is an important factor in order to promote and legitimise specific discourses and thus ensure hegemonic power. Wolfsfeld's (1997) arguments together give an idea of a process that is neither linear nor constant, because of the dynamic nature of things. As he says, 'the competition between authorities and challengers over the news media is as fascinating and unpredictable as politics itself' (Wolfsfeld, 1997, p. 5). Overall, the models (the executive and elite versions of the manufacturing consent thesis, the indexing hypothesis) both empirically and theoretically highlight the importance of elite consensus that renders the media significant degree of dependence upon political line in the context of war/conflict (Balabanova, 2015; Robinson, 2011). The other theories from Wolfsfeld (1997) who emphasises the struggle over the news media, and Entman (2004) who highlights the media's ability

to frame news coverage in ways favouring one side over another, propose how the media might be in line with political policy within mediated conflict.

Technological factors are another prism through which to review the current media landscape. This leads scholars to rethink whether the manufacturing consent thesis still applies to the changing media ecology in today's interconnected communications. Roger (2013) argues that the centralised manufacturing consent model is somewhat outdated in the current 'deterritorialised media age' (p. 34). Others such as Livingston and Van Belle (2005) and Wolfsfeld (2011) similarly point out that technological innovations have improved the ability of journalists to collect information and images and thus increased the number of 'spontaneous' news that are not scheduled by the authorities. This results in a difficulty for the government to maintain a monopoly over information. Yet, empirical studies suggest that the advances in communications technology have not brought in independent journalistic practice in times of war, but rather caused tougher restrictions on media movement in war zones (Robinson, 2004). Moreover, when there is an event such as a distant conflict, it is the authorities that journalists will go to in the first place, for authoritative information (Wolfsfeld, 2011). Wolfsfeld (2011) explains that the new technology indeed enables the media to get more access to news stories that might have not been available previously. However, most of that news is with official involvement (p. 36). More empirical proof on his argument is offered by Livingston and Bennett (2003) in their study of how the US media reported international stories between 1994 and 2001. The findings reveal a trend that there was an increase in event-driven news. However, the media still stuck to official sources and agenda. As Livingston and Bennett (2003) state: 'officials seem to be as much a part of the news as ever. When an unpredicted, nonscripted, spontaneous event is covered in the

news, the one predictable component of coverage is the presence of official sources’ (p. 376). Thus, the seemingly spontaneous presentation of a news event is already mediated by reference to authority. Hence the importance of the technological development should not be undervalued, but it should not be exaggerated either.

More empirical evidence is offered by the study on the 2014 conflict between Israel and Palestine from Qiu and Sanders (2014) who suggest that during the first few weeks of the conflict, there was a systematic favouring of Israeli officials on *CNN* over Palestinian ones, and of ‘dramatic’ pictures that stereotyped the participants. The dramatic pictures were an important value in the news production. As a news editor from *The Guardian* acknowledges the pictures featured ‘a disproportionate use of images of Palestinians throwing rocks’ (as cited in Freedman, 2017, p. 69). Freedman (2017) adds to this the journalists’ reluctance to challenge the powerful from Israel. He quotes a senior news editor from the *BBC* in Philo and Berry’s (2011) study: ‘following any critical report, “we wait in fear for the phone call from the Israelis”’ (p. 69). Regardless of the attempt to be ‘objective’ in covering the conflict, Freedman (2017) argues that the construction of equal representation of all sides is a journalistic device that should be rejected. Given the asymmetric nature of the assault on Gaza, he continues, objectivity is rather ‘a strategy to paint a picture of two equal sides battling it out for regional hegemony’ (Freedman, 2017, p. 69). Boyd-Barrett (2019) in his recent study on Western news coverage of the Syrian conflict finds that a large number of seemingly credible sources of information offered by the media were actually created or funded by the governments. This important finding speaks directly to the third filter of the Propaganda Model – journalistic reliance on ‘legitimate sources’ (Herman &

Chomsky, 1988). The reporting routine, thus, supported Western political stances and goals in the region (Boyd-Barrett, 2019).

Western news media coverage (especially the UK and the U.S.) in the context of war and conflict is extensively researched by scholars as demonstrated above. This indicates a lack of non-Western media focused studies of war and conflict. Few scholars adopt a comparative approach to incorporating war coverage outside of the Western media (e.g., Balabanova, 2007). Heywood's (2014) research on European television news reporting of war and conflict in the Middle East post 9/11 (including a peace conference, Israel-Palestinian fighting, and intra-Palestinian fighting) contributes to the field. Heywood (2014) examines news values and agenda-setting techniques by looking at three public broadcasters from three European countries – Britain (the *BBC*), Russia (*Channel 1*), and France (*France 2*), and identifies different roles of public (the *BBC* and *France 2*) and state-aligned (*Channel 1*) broadcasters from 2006 to 2008. She argues that the hierarchy in news values can be partly explained by the structure of the broadcasters. The other explanation is the events occurring within or in relation to the reporting country (Heywood, 2014, pp. 280-281). For example, the *BBC* tends to use 'a "futility of war" narrative, human interest, and compassion aspects of the conflict', which is connected to two reasons (Heywood, 2014, p. 280). One is due to the Middle East editor's important role in determining news agenda according to her/his subjective interpretations and views on war reporting. The other is linked to the fact that the Afghanistan and Iraq wars were still going on during the studied time period, thus gaining more attention by the media. Quite different from the *BBC*, *France 2*' news coverage focuses mainly on the negative value of subjects on terrorism and the Islamic republic in the region, but with bare reflection on the compassion values in relation to the human aspect.

However, the French media noticeably prioritises the events in Lebanon in detail as well as France's diplomatic role in Israel. The Russian media *Channel 1* is found to be highly supportive in the national foreign policy as Russia played an important diplomatic role in the region. For instance, the media tends to offer a wider scope in its news coverage, incorporating even non-conflict related stories especially that of Israel by using the overall conflict narrative. This is regardless of the fact that the Middle East is 'not purely a site of conflict' (Heywood, 2014, p. 283). As Heywood (2014) explains, by doing this the Russian media is attempting to highlight the country's close relationships with the Russian-speaking diaspora in Israel (p. 283). A recent comparative study from Nelson (2019) essentially examines how Russian external service *RT* framed international conflicts: 'the 2011 NATO intervention in Libya and the 2014 Russian intervention in the Ukraine' (p. 127). For purposes of comparison, the researcher includes two media outlets from the West: *Voice of America* (U.S.) and *Deutsche Welle* (Germany). The results show a 'persuasive power of certain framing devices by *RT*' via synchronising its editorial perspectives in support of the Kremlin's foreign policy (Nelson, 2019, p. 136). The pattern of editorial synchronisation is also found between *Voice of America* and the US government. This observation reflects Bennett's (1990) indexing thesis (Nelson, 2019, p. 137).

1.4.2 The CNN effect theory.

Against the background of an extensive literature on the relationship between media and conflict that has stressed the tendency for the news media to act in favour of government war aims (e.g. Bennett & Palets, 1994; Hallin, 1986; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Robinson et al., 2010; Balabanova, 2007, 2015; Hammond, 2017,

2018; Hammond et al., 2019; Freedman, 2017; Keeble, 2017), a new discourse emerged during the 1990s through the so-called CNN effect theory. Gilboa (2005b) explains how global television news became a reality in the early 1980s when CNN expanded its broadcasting reach to countries worldwide. Due to the newly emerging technologies and the capabilities of satellite broadcasting and cable TV, global media players such as the CNN were able to become a global phenomenon. Nevertheless, 'it was not until the 1990-1991 Gulf conflict, that CNN became a significant actor in international relations' (Gilboa, 2005b, p. 325). And it was around this time that the CNN effect theory first appeared, which initially referred to the 'adverse psychological, economic, and financial consequences of CNN's war coverage' (Gilboa, 2005b, p. 325). Namely, the theory examined the emerging 24-hour news providers worldwide and traditional broadcast media such as television news and newspapers, to better appreciate how real-time broadcasting shaped the making of news and their effects on policy making (Gowing, 1994; Minear et al., 1996; Livingston, 1997; Robinson, 2002; Gilboa, 2002, 2005a, 2005b; Balabanova, 2007; Bahador, 2007). Academic research shed light on the importance of the different contexts in determining the power of Western media that might have (or not) caused US-led humanitarian interventions such as the 1991 Kurdish crisis in Northern Iraq, Somalia in 1991-92, Bosnia in 1994-95, and Kosovo in 1999. As Gilboa (2005a), Seib (2002), and Robinson (2002) critically argue the evidence to suggest the existence of the CNN effect theory remains contradictory. The related empirical studies have discovered contextual factors such as levels of policy certainty (Entman, 2004; Minear et al., 1996; Robinson, 2002; Shaw, 1996; Strobel, 1997), national interests (Gowing, 1994, 2000; Jakobsen, 1996, 2000), nature of interventions (Livingston, 1997), and types of media system (Balabanova, 2007). More studies

such as that of Freedman (2000), and Yarchi, Wolfsfeld, Sheaffer, and Shenhav (2013) highlight political opponents' ability to influence international media coverage to support their course. These include agenda-setting, framing, and facilitating diplomatic and military assistance.

There are a number of definitions being used when discussing the notion of the CNN effect. Seib (2002) offers a general understanding of the theory defining it as 'illustrat[ing] the dynamic tension that exists between real-time television news and policymaking, with the news having the upper hand in terms of influence' (p. 27). Schorr (1998) sees the CNN effect as 'the way breaking news affects foreign policy decisions' (as cited in Gilboa, 2005b, p. 29). Robinson (2002) puts it differently focusing on all media impact upon political decision-making. 'The CNN effect', he argues, 'is in the alleged influence of the media upon decisions to intervene during humanitarian crises with the use, or threat of use, of force' (Robinson, 2002, p. 2). Two other important interpretations are similar to Robinson's definition. Livingston and Eachus (1995) highlight news sources as a way of deciding whether or not social actors have control over the policy process, and define the CNN effect as elite decision makers' loss of policy control to news media (p. 413). In their scrutiny of the media role during the US invasion and withdrawal from Somalia from 1992 to 1993, Livingston and Eachus (1995) write: 'Shifts in policy come in response to media content, and policy makers, in some measures, have lost control of policy making to the news media' (p. 416). Feist (2001) drives this view further, covering the media's influence in terms of their assumed ability to prevail over certain national interests. He describes the CNN effect as: 'compelling television images such as images of a humanitarian crisis, cause U.S. policymakers

to intervene in a situation when such an intervention might otherwise not be in the U.S. national interest' (Feist, 2001, p. 713).

Neuman (1996) provides a broader-time span of the media effects by looking at the coverage's influence on the primary decision and on the following intervention phases including long-term deployment and exit strategies. She regards the effect as a 'curve' during a foreign crisis where the coverage floods the airwaves and politicians are pressured to follow the crisis. The coverage activates the public's emotional outcry forcing policy-makers to 'do something': 'change course or risk unpopularity' (pp. 15-16). This indicates a powerful role of television driving political officials to initiate a military intervention in a humanitarian crisis, and to make them again end the intervention once there are casualties or humiliation in military. The 'forcing' function, in this sense, is key to the definition that includes two parts (Gilboa, 2005b, p. 29). Gilboa (2005b) describes the first part as to signify the media putting the issue of humanitarianism on the agenda. The second part represents the powerful force of television that can force politicians to change policy because of public opinion. Similarly, building upon Neuman's two effects, Freedman (2000) studies global news coverage of conflict at different phases with a focus on the collective and often irrational emotional effect of strong visual images, and identifies three effects of television coverage on humanitarian interventions. They are the 'CNN effect' – whereby images of human suffering push governments into intervention; the 'body bag effect' – whereby images of casualties pull the military out; and the 'bullying effect' – whereby the use of excessive force risks to deactivate public support for intervention (p. 338). The latter two effects refer to the public intolerance for unexpected casualties, both among military (body bags effect) and among citizens of the target country (bullying effect).

Strobel (1997) uses interviews with policymakers, critically highlighting the significant factor of obvious national interests. He argues that the media are only seemingly influential when politicians frame and motivate coverage in the first place. As Strobel (1997) says 'pictures and other news media products can help explain the need for intervention to the public, making officials' task of persuasion that much easier' (p. 162). This pattern is similarly recognised by Gowing (1994, 2000) and is partly accepted by Jakobsen (1996, 2000). Gowing (1994) also uses interviews with policymakers in several countries, and concludes that in spite of substantial news coverage of atrocities in the 1991 Bosnia, the Western and the US politicians resisted the media pressure to intervene. In a later study, Gowing (2000) with regards to the change of U.S. policy toward the 1996 catastrophe in Burundi, demonstrates that regardless of the absence of media coverage, the government was willing to intervene. The opposite examples imply the same observation that highlights national interests as the determining factor for interventions, thus undermining the CNN effect theory.

Jakobsen (1996) explores the reasons of post-Cold War UN peace enforcements by looking at the operations in Kuwait, Northern Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, and Haiti. He finds two distinct patterns leading to the operations: national interests and humanitarian sentiment. CNN reporting played an important role because it set the issue on the agenda; but it was not the determining factor for the intervention. As Jakobsen (1996) concludes when national interests are perceived to be at stake, governments that want to intervene in an international situation will use the media to mobilise both domestic and international support and will be less concerned with casualties (pp. 212-213). In this case, the CNN effect does not exist because the intervention is desirable by policy makers. On the other hand, when

national interests are not seen to be at stake, the media then play a different role mobilising pressure on government to act. Simultaneously government's decision of whether to go to war is influenced by the perceived chance of success. In this scenario, an intervention seems unlikely to take place unless 'the risk of casualties can be kept to a minimum and the operation can be limited in time' (Jakobsen, 1996, p. 213). But this is not the rule for all times. For example, in the case of the Bosnia conflict, Jakobsen (1996) argues that the Western powers exacerbated the situation and thus could not limit their involvement. They were increasingly drawn deeper into the conflict and in order to avoid a shameful withdrawal, the decision was made to use force. Jakobsen (2000) later expands this view with the emphasis on national interests and evaluation of casualties. He suggests that due to the fact that it is unlikely to conduct interventions quickly with a low risk of casualties, 'media pressure on reluctant governments is most likely to result in minimalist policies aimed at defusing pressure for interventions on the ground' (Jakobsen, 2000, p. 138).

More observations of the CNN effect are made by Livingston (1997), Mermin (1999), Wheeler (2000), and Bahador (2007) who identify important differences among different CNN effects. Livingston (1997) provides three variations of the CNN effect: a 'policy agenda-setting agent' – emotional and persuasive news coverage of humanitarian crises is able to reorder foreign policy priorities; an 'impediment' to the achievement of desired policy goals, suggesting either media's link with breaches in operational security or that the media is powerful enough to challenge public and political support for an operation – this is also what Freedman (2000) calls the 'body-bags effect'; and finally an 'accelerant' to policy decision-making, as new communications technology shortens politicians' 'response time', instantaneous media quickens decision-making (Livingston, 1997, p. 293).

Livingston's (1997) three manifestations have been highlighted by many scholars, but not everyone was convinced due to the likelihood of different effects that might occur in one on-going conflict (Carruthers, 2011, p. 146).

Wheeler (2000) differentiates 'determining' from 'enabling' effects of television coverage. The 'determining' effect refers to policy forcing, while the 'enabling' effect suggests that coverage enables politicians to initiate humanitarian intervention by mobilising domestic support (p. 300). For example, in the case of Iraq and Somalia in the 1990s, Wheeler (2000) argues that the media coverage of the humanitarian crises was an important enabling condition rather than the determining one, in making intervention possible. A further example of the notion that media's influence is conditional is offered by Bahador (2007). Bahador (2007) in his study on the 1999 Kosovo crisis demonstrates that the CNN effect takes place when the media take sides and depict one party as a victim. According to him, the media can contest an official policy's credibility by being critical of and characterising the policy as ineffective, so that the policy-makers 'are pressured to alter policy in order to fill the void' (Bahador, 2007, p. 11).

Since framing is seen as key in the war news coverage (Robinson, 2002; Bahador, 2007; Freedman, 2017), how the international media convey messages is important to how the conflicts are perceived and understood. However, one problem is that some conflicts do not attract media's attention in the first place. For instance, in the 1990s, while the 1999 Kosovo crisis attracted significant attention by the media, humanitarian emergencies in Africa such as Congo and Sierra Leone did not receive any attention (Hawkins, 2004; 2008). Hawkins (2011) argues that the media often selectively and disproportionately cover conflicts thus omit most of the world's conflicts: 'the deadliest conflicts are among those ignored' (Hawkins, 2011, p. 55).

Hawkins (2011) labels the unreported conflicts as 'stealth conflicts' (losers), while the chosen conflicts are select winners. He examines the US media in 2009 and argues that Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, and Pakistan were the winners. The determination to cover them is related to the US interests (e.g., belligerent, benefactor) rather than being random (Hawkins, 2011, p. 65). In a more recent study on media coverage of international terrorism (the Al-Qaeda attack of the United States on 9/11, the Palestinian attacks against Israel, and Islamic terror against British targets), Yarchi et al. (2013) discover that political value proximity leads to more frequent reports of terrorism attacks. If a victimised country has a closer political value (i.e., liberal democracy and a high standard of human rights protection), the media will report in detail what happened in the country and follow the framing of the victim government.

In addition to these conditioning variables, Shaw (1996, 2000) focuses on humanitarian rationale and formulates an argument that viewing the graphical portrayal of human tragedy is the main reason for humanitarian interventions. In his empirical study of the Western response to the Kurdish refugee crisis immediately after the 1991 Gulf War, Shaw (1996) argues that the global flow of news and the visual representation of distant suffering led to 'the unprecedented proposal for Kurdish safe havens' (p. 79). However, while Shaw (1996) highlights the media's role in what he defines as a global reduction of 'emotional and psychological distance' (p. 8), the view is opposed by the 'compassion fatigue' thesis (Moeller, 1999). Moeller (1999) sees 'compassion fatigue' as responsible for the failure of contemporary journalism, including the nature of its global crisis coverage (p. 2). Specifically, she insists that compassion fatigue functions as a pre-limit in that 'editors and producers do not assign correspondents to possible stories; it abets

American self-interest; it strengthens simplistic, standard reporting; it increases the standards for stories to be reported; it makes journalists sensationalise; ‘and it encourages the media to move on’ (as cited in Cottle, 2009, p. 132). That is, the excess of media images of human suffering is considered to have overwhelmed audiences’ capacity to care (Cottle, 2009, p. 128).

In addition to the ‘compassion fatigue’ thesis, more recent studies such as that of Freedman (2017) mirror Jakobsen’s (2000) argument in relation to the national interests factor and contend that while the governments strive to legitimise and sustain military action by expecting the media to supportively frame the issue, editors and journalists faithfully share and concretise the ideological expectations about national interest. Rather than direct censorship, argues Freedman (2017), the media are often willing to accept and reproduce what politicians and generals have offered such as agenda and briefings. The circulation of such fed information can ultimately naturalise the idea that ‘conflict is an inevitable, acceptable or necessary part of modern life’ (Freedman, 2017, p. 77). As Parry (2010) in her empirical study on British media’s photographic representation of the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict points out, the editorialising decisions and the media owner’s preference were two major factors that resulted in *The Times* downplaying the Israeli military force used against the Lebanese people. During the 2003 Iraq Invasion, the high-circulation and pro-war media outlets (*Sun, Mail, Telegraph, Times*) were overall supportive of the glorified ‘humanitarian’ and ‘liberation’ discourses, thus legitimating the initial invasion that eventually caused internecine strife in Iraq (Parry, 2011, pp. 1197-1198). Using the universal value of humanitarianism as justification for military interventions is essentially associated with ‘attempting to create an image of purposefulness’ (Hammod, 2007a, p. 59). Hammond et al. (2019) see Western

media's advocacy of liberal interventionism in Syria with their 'moral impulse' as part of the efforts to implement the 'regime-change' agenda in the country. Robinson (2017) shares a similar view on the often-exaggerated humanitarian sentiment whilst the significance of *realpolitik* that is shown to shape intervention decisions is overlooked. He argues that in the context of the post-9/11 'war on terror' over the past almost two decades, a combination of 'humanitarian' aid strategies and military operations has reflected the US and Western geo-strategic interests. For example, these interests have been pursued in conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan, yet presented in a sugar-coating of the humanitarian agenda 'as a public justification for these wars of national/security interest' (Robinson, 2017, pp. 191-194). Thus, the news framing of the humanitarian discourse reflects 'the masking of geo-political strategy' (Robinson, 2017, p. 189), resulting in conflicts being 'simplified beyond recognition' (Robinson, 2019a, p. 562).

Another contextual factor can be found from Balabanova's (2007) empirical study where she points out the importance of media system in Bulgaria that framed the coverage of the 1999 Kosovo crisis in a relatively neutral way. While she validates the manufacturing consent thesis in the British media, the CNN effect theory was not substantiated in any of the two countries' media. A study by Baum and Groeling (2010), discussed earlier with regards to news reporting of the 2003 Iraq War, shows that elite criticism of the US government was a vital factor that enabled news media to play an influential role. Nevertheless, the significance of this argument lies in the high frequency in reporting the elite criticisms of the government's policy on a war. Robinson (2011) links this fact to the corollary that 'high levels of elite-consensus (policy certainty) are likely to inhibit media influence' (p. 6). When there exist clear policy lines on a specific action, the media are believed

to be rather submissive than forcing solidarised officials to change course. This again resonates with Robinson's (2002) earlier work where he emphasises the elite's 'consensus' and 'dissensus' factors as discussed above.

In responding to the necessity of examining and reflecting how news media report war and conflict in general and in particular the CNN effect theory in the current world, Balabanova (2011) and Robinson (2011) call for an exploration of different national contexts rather than merely that of the US and the UK cases. Taking into consideration the national context is an essential element to better understand war coverage dynamics that might differ across nations. Thus, 'how different global crises become communicated, contested and constituted by the world's media' communication flows might also cause a 're-imagining of the political within an increasingly interconnected, interdependent and crisis-ridden world' (Cottle, 2009, p. 170). As Robinson (2017) suggests, these are uncertain and troubling times where there are military operations co-operating with humanitarian operations attempting to 'win "hearts and minds" of the population, at the expense of the latter's independent role (p. 192). The current media often endorse the humanitarian dimensions and fail to see the significance of geo-political play and realpolitik (Robinson, 2017). The US/NATO and its regional allies' constant belligerent stance is seen as the real risk of catastrophic conflicts with geo-political enemies (Robinson, 2019a). This world encompasses spin and other newspeak that do not have fixed meanings, whether they are hegemonic or counter-hegemonic (Bob et al., 2008). Given the advantages of cross-national research (Hallin & Mancini, 2004) and the theme of this study, the next section focuses specifically on the existing research on the Ukraine crisis coverage through a comparative lens thus identifying the key findings and the key gaps.

1.4.3 Media coverage of the Ukraine crisis.

The on-going Ukraine crisis has been accompanied by an information war in the media domain. Few comparative studies have compared the news coverage of the Ukraine crisis in and outside the West. An overarching feature shared by these studies is an alignment between the media coverage and the national policies on Ukraine, thus reflecting the manufacturing consent thesis (Herman & Chomsky, 1988) and the indexing theory (Bennett, 1990). For example, Nygren et al. (2018) adopt quantitative content analysis and semi-structured interviews with journalists to scrutinise news coverage of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine from 10 July to 6 September 2014 in four countries: Ukraine, Russia, Poland, and Sweden. They find a clear patriotic pattern that applied to the Ukrainian news coverage and journalists in support of the national struggle. Two key factors were identified in the Russian news coverage: journalists' self-censorship and strong political control over mainstream media. The latter was seen as causing rather passive professional values. Nygren et al. (2018) suggest that the mediatised conflict in Eastern Ukraine was strongly associated with 'the political economy of the media systems' and the 'professional journalistic cultures' (Nygren et al., 2018, p. 1074). Therefore, activism and self-censorship were two major factors explaining the journalistic practices in Ukraine and Russia. As a consequence, news reporting of the Ukraine crisis mainly followed political division. The Polish reporting on the crisis was even more 'anti-Russia' than the Ukrainian, focusing on 'Russian aggression, international sanctions, and threats against Poland' (Nygren et al., 2018, p. 1074). The Polish media was, therefore, characterised by a certain degree of journalistic professionalism with clear activist attitudes. The professional culture also applied to the journalism in Sweden. The Swedish media focused mainly on international politics and the downing of MH17.

Although impartiality existed, there was evidence showing a strong preference in covering western actors and perspectives (Nygren et al., 2018, p. 1074).

This compliance between the media and the politics is also found in Szostok, Gluszek-Szafraniec, and Guzek's (2016) cross-national content analysis on news coverage of the Ukraine conflict in German, Polish, and Russian leading weekly opinion magazines. The researchers state that the Polish media tended to 'reproduce opinions expressed by society rather than the ruling elite', such as calling for radical sanctions on Russia (Szostok et al., 2016, p. 165-166). This is due to the historical fear of Russia that continues until today in Poland (Szostok et al., 2016).

Nonetheless, according to Szostok et al. (2016), this does not mean an effort to play an independent role from the powerful. As the researchers point out an overt compliance between the political elites and the media existed in the context of the Ukraine conflict (Szostok et al., 2016, pp. 165-167). Szostok et al. (2016) did not find an apparent manufacturing of consent in the German and Russian media.

Especially in Germany, the political magazines (*Der Spiegel* and *Focus*) tended to offer various perspectives on the conflict, such as being wary of sanctions on Russia, including Russophile coverage, and criticising the government for being incompetent to deal with Russia. Szostok et al. (2016) explain this balanced stance by referring to the close cultural and social relationship, as well as the heavy economic interdependence between the two countries. But over time more critical coverage such as that about 'the lack of a single EU position and the lack of firm resistance against the Russian annexation of Crimea' started to appear in the German media (Szostok et al., 2016, p. 166). The surprising results coming from the Russian magazines clearly acknowledged Russia's involvement in the Ukraine conflict (Szostok et al., 2016). Szostok et al. (2016) suggest that there was critical coverage

identified in the Russian publications. For example, the media published opposing voices towards Russia's situation in the context of the Ukraine crisis, owing to the fact that Russia's involvement would incur costs at the social and political levels.

Mirroring Nygren et al.'s (2018) findings with regards to the patriotic pattern in Ukrainian media and the strong political control of Russian media, Roman, Wanta, and Buniak (2017) use framing analysis to examine television news coverage of the Eastern Ukraine conflict across three different countries – Russia (*Channel One Russia*), Ukraine (*I+I*), and the U.S. (*NBC*) – from April 2014 to March 2015. The researchers argue that the studied news media relied greatly on sources and frames in line with the respective governments. In addition, the Russian and the U.S. media were more likely to report the sufferings and the deaths than the Ukrainian media. Roman et al. (2017) explain the U.S. media's reliance on official sources as a 'journalistic tradition' in war coverage. Due to the feature of operating under a tight control by the government, the Russian TV tended to symbolically annihilate alternative views and use Second World War symbolism such as 'fascists' in covering the Ukrainian side. The Ukrainian channel, on the other hand, often glorified Ukrainian troops as 'our guys' and 'heroes' (Roman et al., 2017, pp. 15-17).

Roman et al.'s (2017) findings regarding the compliance between the politics and the media in Ukraine and Russia is supported in a later study of Fengler et al. (2018) who examine 13 European countries' newspapers in covering the Ukraine crisis in the first half of 2014: Albania (*Panorama* and *Shqip*), Czech Republic (*Mlada Fronta Dnes* and *Pravo*), Germany (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Suddeutsche Zeitung*), Latvia (*Diena* and *Latvijas Avize*), the Netherlands (*De Telegraaf* and *De Volkskrant*), Poland (*Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*), Portugal (*Diario de Noticias* and *Publico*), Romania (*Adevarul* and *Romania Libera*),

Serbia (*Danas* and *Kurir*), Switzerland (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and *Tagesanzeiger*), the UK (*The Guardian* and *The Times*), Ukraine (*Den* and *Segodnya*), and Russia (*Kommersant* and *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*). Fengler et al. (2018) first of all point out that newspapers from Ukraine and Russia were identified as representing the respective national politics on the Ukraine crisis. In addition, while there was a high visibility of the Russian President Vladimir Putin as a major aggressor in the crisis, the featured ‘human suffering’ pattern (Russian and Ukrainian newspapers in particular) identified by Roman et al. (2017) was also evident in Fengler et al.’s (2018) study where the evidence revealed a general tendency ‘to “humanise” conflict coverage’ (p. 17).

Lichtenstein, Esau, Pavlova, Osipov, and Argylov (2018) in their comparative study on talk show debates in Russian and German television similarly reflect the above discussed results associated especially with the Russian media. Lichtenstein et al. (2018) also use framing analysis and suggest that the Russian media paid more attention to issues such as the Maidan protests, the stability of Ukrainian politics and economy, the complexities within Ukraine, the political strategy of the Yanukovich government, and the legal situation of the new Kyiv (p. 18). In comparison, the German debate paid less attention to an in-depth understanding of the structural situation in the country, but focused extensively on external issues such as the responsibility of separatist movements and the new Kyiv (Lichtenstein et al., 2018, p. 18). Regardless of the critical coverage of both Russian and Western politics from both countries’ media outlets, the researchers argue that their reporting on the Ukraine crisis was highly representative of the governments’ policies on Ukraine. While the Russian media emphasised the political interests, the German media often

showed one-sided coverage. This reflected Bennett's (1990) indexing thesis (Lichtenstein et al., 2018, p. 19).

The attention paid to the Ukraine crisis examined by Lichtenstein et al. (2018) is explained in detail by Fengler et al. (2018) where the researchers find that among the 13 studied countries, Poland, Latvia, Germany, and Switzerland paid the biggest attention to the conflict, which can be explained by factors such as their diplomatic roles in solving the crisis, economic exchanges, geographic proximity, and cultural proximity. Second, distant countries such as Portugal, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, the UK, as well as Latvia (*Diena*) and Switzerland (*Tagesanzeiger*) paid limited attention to the Ukraine crisis, as they – as countries – played a minor role in looking for solutions to the crisis. These countries' newspapers thus focused on international or EU politics rather than domestic issues and politics (Fengler et al., 2018). Third, news coverage from South-Eastern European countries – Albania, Romania, and Serbia was marginal. This was due to a lack of 'resources for foreign coverage in the print sector of these countries' (Fengler et al., 2018, p. 16). The researchers provide two explanations. First, newsrooms tended to send unexperienced staff to report the Ukraine conflict. Second, weaker internalisation of news factors owing to 'substantial deficits in journalism education' resulted in a different method of selecting news subjects and allocating editorial resources to foreign coverage (Fengler et al., 2018, p. 16).

1.4.3.1 Locating this research.

The above presented arguments about the characteristics of the media systems of liberal and hybrid regimes, the media's overall submissive role leaning towards the governmental lines in covering war and conflict, and the lack of

comparative studies of war coverage including those outside of the Western media illustrate the current trends in the research on the topic. The recent comparative studies on the news coverage of the Ukraine crisis discussed above all focus on national-language media outlets (television, newspaper, and magazine) that target national audiences. Given the facts that the Ukraine crisis is an international conflict and English-language presence is more commonly accessed by global audiences, this study will help to fill the gap in recent research firstly in the area of media and international conflict, secondly in the specific field of Russian and British war reporting. Existing comparative study on Russian and British media coverage of the Ukraine crisis between 2014 and 2015 is very limited for the time being, although the literature on Russian coverage is more extensive especially on *RT*. Nevertheless, *The Moscow Times* and *Pravda.ru* have generally been excluded from the analysis. Finally, mirroring Balabanova (2011) and Robinson's (2011) earlier call for examining war coverage beyond the Western world – the UK and the U.S. in particular, this research expands to a country with a hybrid political regime with different national peculiarities ranging from politics to culture and socio-economics. Therefore, looking at news media coverage of war and conflict under the hybrid regime will add to the existing and limited empirical studies on the subject, thus contributing to the theoretical development in terms of the applicability of the theories on media coverage of war. Overall, this comparative research offers a new insight into the way national contexts such as regime types contribute to the currently scarcely-researched field of cross-national (liberal and hybrid) comparisons of war coverage. Drawing upon the broader context of media systems of hybrid and liberal regimes (Vartanova, 2012; Hallin & Mancini, 2004), the study aims to shed light on

the role assumed by three media outlets from different political ends in one hybrid and one liberal country.

What is expected is a general consensus between the media and their host countries' foreign policies on legitimating political decisions in relation to the conflict. This is considered an apparent pattern especially occurring in the Russian media, given the nature of the media system – the statist commercialised model – as conceptualised by Vartanova (2012). The manufacturing consent thesis is therefore hypothesised to be evident in the Russian media due to the high level of state's involvement in the media industry. The tabloid-style right-wing media, in particular, could be seen as more submissive to the government lines. However, the manufacturing consent thesis may not be applicable to all the Russia media. As Vartanova (2012) proposes, there are commercially-oriented media outlets in the country. Due to the fact that the British media under the liberal model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), in the sense of journalistic professionalism and market mechanism, strive to be watchdogs, the subservient nature in the context of the Ukraine crisis can be very subtle. The focus, therefore, will be on assessing in detail how the news coverage of the Ukraine conflict is framed in Russia and the UK respectively. This will provide evidence as to whether the media tend to align themselves with the national policies on Ukraine, and the exact nature of this possible alignment. Thus, this will offer significant answers not only to the dynamic of news framing in the context of war and conflict, but also to the development of pertinent theories: the manufacturing consent thesis and the CNN effect theory. This also helps highlight aspects of media systems, thus answer the main research question in relation to the extent and the ways the news coverage of the Ukraine conflict supports or refutes media systems theory.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the normative frameworks of media within liberal democracies, as well as the different models of media systems across liberal and hybrid regimes. The literature on the war coverage during international conflicts illustrates very well the ever-changing and disputable relationship between political power and the media. The two main theories – the CNN effect and the manufacturing consent – have polarised the debate on media's role in conflict. While the former emphasises the power of the media stressing varied contextual factors, the latter delivers a strong criticism of the media system and its subservience to political elites. The empirical studies exemplify that objectivity in the war coverage can only be regarded as journalism ideology. When it comes to war, the media are seen largely to underline moral and humanitarian sentiments, thus legitimising military activities and dehumanising the enemy (Riegert, 2003).

The chapter has also acknowledged the limitations of these findings in terms of the main focus on liberal contexts (especially the UK and the U.S.), and identified the research gap that the current study aims to address. The following chapters explore the extent to which the selected Russian and British media paid attention to the Ukraine crisis between 30 November 2013 and 28 February 2015; and the way in which the Russian and British media differed in framing the narrative of the Ukraine crisis. Finally, an analytical discussion assesses the extent and the ways the coverage of the Ukraine crisis supports or refutes media systems theory.

The following chapter is going to offer a detailed discussion about the nature of Russian and British media. The empirical evidence offers to situate them, build a comparative picture, and understand the media under a hybrid regime and the media in the context of an established democracy.

Chapter 2

British and Russian Media

2.1 Introduction

Sukosd (2012), Dobek-Ostrowska (2015, 2019), and Hallin and Mancini's (2004) characterisations of the media systems of hybrid and liberal regimes introduce a broader understanding of how media systems usually operate within the different regions. However, this does not mean that any of the models will apply precisely to the media system of an individual country. This is evident in both the hybrid and liberal regimes. On the one hand, while Vartanova (2012) proposes a Statist Commercialised model – exemplified by Russia – sharing some of the Western features, a number of empirical studies (e.g., Becker, 2014; Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018; Oates, 2013) have strongly disapproved the liberal ideal of ‘watchdog’ role in the Russian media system. This is due largely to the country’s political, economic, and socio-cultural peculiarities with contradictory features, creating what Hale (2010) and Sukosd (2018) call a hybrid regime. On the other hand, although the UK is categorised within the Liberal Model, it is often exemplified as an exception by both theoretical and empirical studies. Most debates are focused on ‘its strong public broadcasting, its ideologically polarized press, and its lack of fit with the Liberal model’ (Humphreys, 2012; Norrris, 2009; as cited in Bruggemann et al., 2014, p. 1043).

This chapter looks at the nature of the Russian and British media situating them and building a comparative picture and understanding of the media existing in what have been described as ‘hybrid regimes’ (Hale, 2010; Sukosd, 2018) and in the context of an ‘established democracy’ (Bühlmann et al., 2012). While the British media has the tradition and established market mechanism (Balabanova, 2007; Hallin

& Mancini, 2004), strong public broadcasting (Aalberg & Curran, 2012), and regulation of commercial broadcasting (Hallin & Mancini, 2004); the Russian media has been undergoing remarkable transformations since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. These transformations have directly affected the media ecology in today's Russia. Thus, the attention here is devoted primarily to the established nature that characterises the British media, and the historical development that has led to the current characteristics of the Russian media. The chapter aims to connect the nature of the Russian and British media with the broader structure of the media systems theory outlined in Chapter one. To achieve this, the chapter first looks at the British media. It then focuses on the Russian media transformations from 1990s to 2000s, highlighting the economic and political factors as key drivers of change. Empirical evidence is provided throughout.

2.2 British Media: Liberal Model

Despite the fact that the term 'Anglo-America model' is commonly used within the discussion of the Liberal Model, seemingly to refer to the similarity between the media systems in the UK and the U.S., Hallin and Mancini (2004) themselves point out that the two systems are different in many ways (p. 11). They suggest that certain variations among countries should be taken into account when characterising their media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). For example, under this model political parallelism is suggested to be low, internal pluralism prevails, commercial print media dominate, state's role is seen as limited, and professionalism is strong. Nonetheless, the UK is particularly characterised by high level of partisan media, strong public broadcasting and regulation of commercial broadcasting. The information-oriented journalism has features such as strong commentary practice and

journalistic autonomy is often limited by political instrumentalisation (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 75). As Hallin and Mancini (2004) note the UK media system is market dominated (except for the *BBC*), where commercial media are characterised by a high level of internal pluralism. With regard to freedom of information and the reporting of matters deemed sensitive for national security, the UK is seen as having a rather strong and 'secretive' state (Humphreys, 2009, p. 198). Similarly, Aalberg and Curran (2012) in their empirical study on media's information role in six countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden) demonstrate a strong British public broadcasting that has a powerful effect on the public's understanding of political issues.

For some the rapid digitisation of media sources has strengthened the British media's democratising role, both by offering various accesses to information and by allowing the public to have their voices heard due to the interactive nature of the internet (Castells, 2010; Curran, 2002; Allan, 2006; Boczkowski, 2004; Humphreys, 2009). Most of these researchers, however, carefully point out that, the digitisation is not entirely unproblematic. In the mid-1990s and early 2000s, newspapers in Britain started to put their content online. The Office of Communications (Ofcom) (2007) reported that the major UK media outlets such as *Daily Telegraph*, the *BBC*, and *Daily Mail* launched online national news operations in 1994, 1997, and 2004 respectively (as cited in Fenton, 2010). The web-based operations became significant in the 2010s not only for newspapers, but also for all major broadcasters and news agencies (as cited in Fenton, 2010, p. 557). Fenton (2010) argues that the nature of news gathering, however, challenges the notion of journalistic objectivity and impartiality. She highlights the fact that 'interested readers can check the validity of one news report against another and even access the news sources referred to'

(Fenton, 2010, p. 560). In doing so, a particular viewpoint will be reinforced by following the hyperlinks online news media have offered to their audiences. This process is seen to be merely a network authorising ‘the news’ rather than a bringer of the truth (Fenton, 2010). This results in the necessity of offering views and perspectives on the given news, which Fenton (2010) regards as the fall of objectivity.

Since the 2010s, there has been a decrease in the number of traditional media like print and broadcasting, and a growing number of media enterprises that are owned by the same few parent corporations that dominate news provision and storylines (Paterson & Sreberny, 2004, p. 14). This is a manifestation of the media ownership and concentration in the UK. A key concern expressed by researchers is Rupert Murdoch’s ownership of numerous media assets (Iosifidis, 2016, pp. 425-445). This is seen as threatening media pluralism and diversity especially when the owner has a close interest in the political agenda of these newspapers (Douglas, 2012). For these reasons the UK parliament has introduced media ownership rules initially as part of the Broadcasting Act in 1990. The rules have been amended in 1996 and 2003. The current form of the rules is governed by the Communications Act (2003). The rules aim to sustain economically open competition, and social pluralism and diversity in terms of news source and citizens’ viewpoint. These include the following:

- 1) the national cross-media ownership rule, which (broadly) prevents large newspaper groups from owning a Channel 3 licence; 2) the Channel 3 appointed news provider rule, which requires the regional Channel 3 licensees to appoint a single news provider; 3) the Media Public Interest Test, which allows the Secretary of State to intervene in media

mergers to determine whether the merger might result in harm to the public interest; and 4) the Disqualified Persons Restrictions, which prevent certain bodies or persons from holding broadcast licences generally, others from holding certain types of broadcasting licences and still others from holding broadcast licences unless Ofcom has determined that it is appropriate for them to do so.

In spite of the Internet and the digital media popularisation that enables diverse news sources, TV remains a vital source of news, and newspapers preserve a significant role in setting the news agenda (Iosifidis, 2016).

The Communications Act (2003) and the Enterprise Act (2002) are the major pieces of regulation directing British media. The former mostly applies to electronic media and the latter applies to newspapers (Iosifidis, 2016). However, they did not offer any regulation of Internet content (Humphreys, 2009, p. 209). The present law is seen as unsuccessful in preventing concentration, and instead resulting in ‘more concentration and cross-ownership in the traditional industries like newspapers and broadcasting’ (Iosifidis, 2016, p. 425). This is because it has eliminated strict media and cross-media ownership rules, and has put more focus on ‘self-regulation’ instead (Humphreys, 2009; Iosifidis, 2016). This is especially beneficial for foreign interests such as Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation that can own British media companies. According to Iosifidis (2016), as these policies are expected to prevail, the concentration particularly in the newspapers sector is likely to continue to grow in the following years.

The discussed nature of the British media is empirically supported by Bruggemann et al. (2014) who reviewed the classification of countries under Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) media systems. Bruggemann et al. (2014) are theoretically

sceptical about the state's role as a one-dimensional category as suggested by Hallin and Mancini (2004), and propose a three-dimensional category. The sub-dimensions are public broadcasting – the state may introduce and sustain a strong public broadcasting system to complement commercial media; ownership regulation – policy-makers may impose ownership regulations thus restricting the free market forces; and press subsidies – government may support the press with subsidies (Bruggemann et al., 2014, p. 1058). Their empirical analysis confirms the scepticism. They argue that the media system of the UK is less liberal than initially theorised, as it displays 'high level of state intervention with regard to ownership regulation and broadcasting but low levels in terms of press subsidies' (Bruggemann et al., 2014, p. 1058).

These features are seen as important to distinguish the UK from the U.S., thus reflecting the theoretical considerations offered by many researchers (Humphreys, 2012; Norris, 2009; Hallin & Mancini, 2012b) in terms of separating the two within the same model. Accordingly, for both empirical and theoretical considerations (Iosifidis, 2016; Fenton, 2010; Humphreys, 2012; Norris, 2009; Hallin & Mancini, 2012b), the British media is suggested to detach from the Liberal model proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004).

2.3 Russian Media: Statist Commercialised Model

The Russian Federation has a presidential parliamentary system, which on the surface seems similar to the Western liberal democracy, but exhibits features that have led to its conceptualisation as a hybrid regime. In this context, the Russian media system is complex and mixed, deeply rooted in the country's history (Vartanova, 2012). Lehtisaari (2015) characterises the media system of Russia as a

combination of ‘market forces, state ownership, power struggles between actors in different sectors, obstacles to media freedom and challenges within the media convergence³’ (p. 1). Vartanova (2012) validates and extends Hallin and Mancini’s framework to the media system of Russia, and proposes a ‘Statist Commercialised Model’. Using the four original dimensions and applying them to evaluate and theorise the Russian media system, Vartanova (2012) stresses the importance of a strong state-media relationship in terms of state control of the media and the political discourse, along with a growing commercialisation that ensures financial inflow from the prosperous advertising sector. Professionalisation, ‘in the sense of journalistic autonomy and professional solidarity, is “low”’; while political parallelism, in the sense of instrumental use of media by politicians and identification of media with political orientations, is “high”’ (De Smaele, 2010, p. 57). The high level of political parallelism in the Russian media system is embedded in power struggles between the state actors from different business areas and political spectrums.

The regulation of media ownership, the limitations on news content and press freedom distinguish the Russian media system from most Western media systems. Despite the high level of state’s interference, Slavtcheva-Petkova (2018) believes that there are still surviving independent media outlets fulfilling their ‘watchdog’ role (p. 35). Rather than a dichotomy between liberal or illiberal, Vartanova (2012) insists that when the overarching paternalism meets the increasingly growing commercialism of the media industry, the Russian media outlets tend to operate in a third way of blending the statist mentality with the liberal practice. She argues that the Russia’s media model shares certain commonalities with the Polarised Pluralist model and the Liberal model (Vartanova, 2012, p. 142).

³ ‘A shift towards covering digital technologies in media content production and distribution’ (Doyle, as cited in Lehtisaari, 2015, p.1).

Nonetheless, recent empirical studies (e.g., Oates, 2013; Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2019) strongly disagree with Vartanova's (2012) theorisation where she stresses the importance of commercialism element. This is mainly due to the high levels of state interference and journalists' self-censorship in today's Russian media industry, thus bringing the Russian media system close to that of the old Soviet style. In order to obtain a full picture of Russian media, it is important to look at the country's significant and constant transformations experienced since the collapse of the USSR in 1991.

2.3.1 Major transformations in media industry from 1990s to 2000s.

The recent history of the Russian media demonstrates how the existing media system was preconditioned by the country's political and economic development. In the 1990s, under Boris Yeltsin's politically 'polycentric' regime based on the balance of different power centres (Vartanova, 2012, p. 133), the Russian media went through important evolutions following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The reformed post-communist media system was affected by several new features such as 'the market economy, the end of the ideological control of the Communist Party, the political pluralism, and the development of new public institutions' (Khvostunova, 2013a). By absorbing Western media concepts alongside the global economic values of capitalism, writes Khvostunova (2013a), Russian media attempted to emulate most of the Western features: 'freedom of speech, private ownership of the media outlets, similar legislation, distance from the state, public influence, and a watchdog role' (The Interpreter, 6 December 2013). The development of the new Russian media system, however, was strongly influenced thus restrained by the inveterately cultural and professional backgrounds of Russian journalism (Pasti, 2007).

Switch and Shiryaeva (1997) observe a reverse trend during the 1990s from a primary reconciliation to the West towards a return to the previous customs and partiality during the Soviet times (as cited in De Smaele, 2010, p. 53). The same is noticed by Azhgikhina (1999) who evaluates the media after a ten-year evolution (as cited in De Smaele, 2010, p. 53). De Smaele (2010) adds to this the fact that Yeltsin himself also expected the media to be loyally supportive of his reforms during the transition period. Yeltsin's Russia, in fact, cultivated and enriched an oligarchic system operated by groups such as politicians, bankers, and media tycoons (De Smaele, 2010; Khvostunova, 2013a, 2013b). Pankin (1998) highlights the paradoxical phenomenon of media independence combined with a low level of freedom of speech. The Russian researcher Valery Ivanitsky argues with regard to the failure of media transformation in the 1990s that:

The state, while liberating the economic activity in the media, was not ready to relax control over the content. This has produced practically unsolvable tension for the media themselves trying to function both as commercial enterprises and as institutions of the society (as cited in Vartanova & Grusha, 2013).

The role of the state in Russian media has been and remains dominant. As Pankin (1998) puts it, it is 'genuinely pluralistic unfree media' (p. 30). In 2000 Vladimir Putin's rise to power alongside the synchronic political transition led to a further transformation of the Russian media system. The political shift from 'polycentric' to 'monocentric' in the name of enhancing stability such as reducing internal conflicts/power struggles, in fact brought Putin a large public support (Khvostunova, 2013a). In order to secure the stability of the regime Putin established

‘power verticals’ in a number of ways, such as removing all alternate political powers and seizing control over the administration, the parliament (State Duma), the judiciary, and the media system (Vartanova, 2012; Khvostunova, 2013a, 2013b). As a result, the hold of the government over the media became stronger. Media as ‘tools’ remained focused in the hands of a closed and loyal political circle (Trepanier, 2015.)

Thus, in early 2000s a number of state organisations took ‘financial or managerial control over 70 percent of electronic media outlets, 80 percent of the regional press, and 20 percent of the national press’ (Fossato, as cited in Vartanova, 2012, p. 134). 51 percent of the most broadly watched *First Channel* continued to be owned by the state, but the rest of the ownership moved to private but government-friendly hands (De Smaele, 2010). Private stations such as *NTV* are owned by businesses either controlled by the state or in good relationships with the government (e.g., *Gazprom*). Furthermore, to support the vertical power system, the media depoliticised Russian journalism by creating ‘empty’ roles of political programming and commercial-driven content (Vartanova, 2012). As Vartanova (2012) argues the process itself increased the ‘depolitization and instrumentalization of political communication’ and stimulated consumption (p. 134). Oates (2013) explains this phenomenon by underlining journalists’ conceptions about their own role: an inherited tradition of being a political player, and journalists’ self-censorship in terms of their awareness of ‘the limits of what can be said’ (pp. 12-14). Slavtcheva-Petkova (2018) points out one of the factors that significantly influence journalists’ role perception – media subsidies from the government. This is due to the economic unsustainability of most Russian media, wherein journalists are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with the power (pp. 49-50). This defining feature is seen to

remain in the current media system of Russia. Becker (2014) shares a similar view and highlights the rules on government ownership, ranging from ‘mutually beneficial relations with owners’ who are closely allied with the political leadership, to a number of ‘quasi-legal’ and tax methods against independent media (p. 195). Consequently, the new Russian media in early 2000s was given substitutive names such as ‘semi-state’ (De Smaele, 2010, p. 54), ‘semi-authoritarian’ (Toepfl, 2014, p. 69), ‘neo-Soviet’ (Oates, 2007), and ‘neo-authoritarian’ (Becker, 2014).

In addition, there are certain media outlets acting in line with commercial models: ‘selling products directly to consumers and serving as the contact between consumers and advertisers’ (Lehtisaari, 2015, p. 3). Such formats encompass ‘glossy magazines, business newspapers, and commercial radio stations’ (Lehtisaari, 2015, p. 3). Moreover, Lehtisaari (2015) highlights that oligarchs or business tycoons also play an important role in the private media sector. They simultaneously may have other interests in areas such as politics and business. Alisher Usmanov for example, one of the oligarchs in Russia, owns ‘the Kommersant publishing house, part of Mail.ru, half of the UTV holding – such as radio stations and music and Disney TV channels, and part of mobile operator MegaFon’ (Forbes, as cited in Lehtisaari, 2015, p. 3). Yet, his business is mainly in the metal and mining industry. Usmanov is also seen as closely connected to the Putin’s regime. Mikhail Prokhorov is another business tycoon, who has oppositional political opinions and small media ownership. According to Lehtisaari’s (2015) description of this group of media owners, they obtain resources through other doings in business and politics, and instrumentally use their media assets, thus ‘advancing diverse interests and working to counter rivals’ (p. 3). Especially from the late 1990s to early 2000s, journalistic values have been significantly replaced by processes of standardisation and commoditisation, leading

to sensationalism and appealing to mass tastes as well as entertainment values (Vartanova, 2012, p. 138). Consequently, the desire to serve the economy became an important characteristic of the media system, emphasising new media structures and professional practices.

In the first ten-years of the 2000s, Russia was one of the fastest increasing advertising markets across the globe, and the media were ever more reliant on advertising (Vartanova, 2012). However, this tendency stopped and retreated especially in the 2010s, noticeably into a government-oriented position. This is, as Lehtisaari (2015) argues, because of the market and politics that are seen as the two major factors driving for change.

2.3.2 Economic and political factors.

From a market perspective, the importance and influence of technological development is highlighted, such as the change from printed newspapers to digital publications that is broadly experienced across the globe. Russian media enterprises, particularly those in newspaper publishing, also have confronted the challenge of digitalisation and converged media production and output (Lehtisaari, 2015). As Vartanova (2012) notes, the dramatic decline in newspaper circulation was overwhelmed by the popularisation of television that consisted of two models: one state controlled and the other commercial. Regardless of the ownership structure, advertisement and sponsorship played the most important role in financing the TV sector (De Smaele & Vartanova, 2007; Vartanova, 2012).

On the other hand, media industry experienced an increasing level of policy interferences. Regarding the commercial media's political environment and government interference levels, Russia has been characterised as a closed regime

that, yet, seeks an open Internet policy (Toepfl, 2014). But as Oates (2013) notes the Russian government's role in online sphere is as significant as in print and TV media (p. 8). Media regulation is seen to have become tougher in recent years (Simpson, Puppis, & Bulck, 2016; Vartanova, Vyrkovsky, Makeenko, & Smirnov, 2016). Some media policies such as restricting foreign ownerships are making 'the Russian media system less globalised and integrated amongst the transnational media structures' (Vartanova et al., 2016, p. 67).

This is exemplified primarily in the tightening of control over the internet and the protectionist measures put in place (e.g., putting limits to foreign stakes in media capital) (Vartanova et al., 2016). According to Peterson (2005), while the Russian government promoted IT as 'a productivity enhancer in government and an economic motor in business', the government's various operations against media freedom in fact illustrates a low interest in encouraging IT's openness (p. 5). Mathews (2010) defines Kremlin's policies on independent media such as *Novaya Gazeta* as they 'are allowed to be critical, as long as they are not too widely listened to or circulated' (as cited in Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018, p. 44). More recently, Dougerty (2015) writes, Putin's administration rigorously curbs internal communications – predominantly 'TV, which is watched by at least 90 percent of the people', as well as newspapers, radio stations, the Internet. Thus, most news channels are saturated with the government's information, whereas independent media organisations are significantly marginalised (The Atlantic, 21 April 2015). The state intervention becomes severe in the following years, especially since Putin commenced his second term as president in 2012 (Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018). Putin's government then began to regulate media ownership, aided by seeking to 'depoliticize media and the citizenry' (Becker, 2014, p. 206). In October 2014, President Vladimir Putin signed

into law amendments limiting foreign investors from owning more than 20% in Russia's media organisations (Luhn, 2015). In a recent study Dobek-Ostrowska (2019) agrees with Vartanova's (2012) claim that the media are an 'obedient child' and thus are political tools for propaganda purposes, but labels the model an 'authoritarian model of the Russian media system'. This model is especially applicable to the media landscape after late 2014 when the Russian legislature passed new laws on restricting foreign ownership of the media. As Dobek-Ostrowska (2019) puts it: 'the state holds a monopoly on broadcasting. [...] [Private media] are controlled strictly by the political regime' (p. 263). In this sense, oligarchs who usually are linked with ruling leaders play an important role in the media industry. Consequently, there is a clear political interest and political bias in the media system of Russia.

Overall, from 2000 onwards, the public debate in the Russian media has been either replaced by imitative forms, or pushed to publications with minor market share, like *Novaya Gazeta*, or to the internet (Khvostunova, 2013a). Under the new circumstances of Putin's monocentric political system, reciprocal links were established between the media and the state through the latter's direct and indirect financial and political state control. The media also enjoyed financial inflow from the advertising sector (Vartanova, 2012; Vartanova et al., 2016). The increased political control and the restricted ownership are the two most noticeable tendencies in the TV sector. This is predicted to continue in the short term (Lehtisaari, 2015). In terms of newspapers, there has been a shrinking advertising revenue and a challenge of media convergence. Independently private-owned media businesses continued until 2012. A trend subsequently developed of a growing position of pro-governmental media. The

regulation of media ownership, the limitations on news content and press freedom distinguish the Russian media from that of the UK.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the characteristics of the media system of a liberal democracy – the UK, and the essential development of the media system of a hybrid regime – Russia, since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. This allowed the researcher to draw a comparison between the two media systems highlighting their significant differences. The current media system of Russia is in large part influenced by its historical account of political, social, and cultural development, especially after President Vladimir Putin's rise to power in 2000. Therefore, the state plays a significant role in the media sector, suggesting restricted journalistic autonomy, and the journalists themselves remain less professional in terms of role conceptions and self-censorship. This represents a clear contrast to the British media that is officially detached from the political power and is market-driven, yet the state intervention is seen to operate in many ways such as ownership regulation and broadcasting. The journalists in the UK, however, do strive to be 'watchdogs' holding power to account. Or at the very least they are mindful of not operating without integrity. But the level of parallelism is still high. On the contrary, the Russian media has features of a high level of political parallelism entrenched within oligarchy circles, with an overall governmental orientation.

The next chapter – that also offers context for the subsequent analysis – moves on to an introduction of the case study – the Ukraine crisis, by presenting an overview of the crisis development from 30 November 2013 to 28 February 2015 and the different foreign policies of Russia and the UK in relation to it.

Chapter 3

The Ukraine Crisis

3.1 Introduction

There have been a growing body of research examining various aspects of the Ukraine crisis, especially in the fields of international relations and political communication (e.g., Sakwa, 2015, 2017; Van der Pijl, 2018; Malyarenko & Wolff, 2018; Pantti, 2016, Nygren et al., 2018; Szostok et al., 2016; Roman et al., 2017; Fengler et al., 2018; Lichtenstein et al., 2018). These studies have addressed questions in relation to the roots of this controversial conflict, as well as the roles the media from across the globe have played during the crisis. This chapter draws key information from a vast literature on the subject, and dicusses the events leading up to and during the Ukraine crisis till February 2015, with a focus on Russian and UK national foreign policies on Ukraine. It functions to provide the context for the analysis of news coverage of the Ukraine crisis in the subsequent chapters.

3.2 The Ukraine Crisis

Since the former Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich suspended the preparations for the country's EU Association Agreement on 21 November 2013, a prolonged conflict broke out in Europe's borderland. Opposed to Ukraine's economic ties with Russia, the EU deal would have opened borders for products and enabled free movement of people. However, Yanukovich argued that Ukraine could not abandon Russia entirely for the EU, since the sacrifice would directly worsen the country's already struggling economy (Traynor, 2013). Many believed that Russia strongly opposed the EU deal and pressured Yanukovich into suspending the deal (Svyatets, 2016). Yanukovich's subsequent rejections of EU/IMF loan packages

immediately divided Ukraine along the lines of future relations with Russia (Svyatets, 2016). About 10,000 pro-European protesters mainly from Western Ukraine, took to the streets in Kyiv to reject the decision. This is what the media around the world referred to as Euromaidan protests, as the demonstrations took place on the Maidan Square to begin with. Simultaneously around 4,000 demonstrators mostly from Yanukovich's power base in the pro-Russian East of Ukraine gathered in Kyiv to support his continuation of closer economic ties with Russia. An arguably peaceful demonstration of pro-Europe course exploded. This quickly developed into a violent clash separating families, communities, and – as a result – the whole Ukrainian nation (Pikulicka-Wilczewska, 2015, p. 2).

In January 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament approved restrictive anti-protest laws as clashes turned deadly. This was followed by Prime Minister Mykola Azarov's resignation and parliament's cancellation of the anti-protest law. The country soon headed towards civil war, with 28 people including ten policemen reported killed on 18 February (Van der Pijl, 2018). Two days later, Kyiv saw its worst day of violence for almost 70 years. According to Schreiber and Kosienkowski (2015), violence broke out when a shootout occurred between protesters and police in Maidan Square, leaving 88 people dead within 48 hours. Protesters insisted that Yanukovich's government shooters opened fire on them, while the government blamed opposition leaders for provoking the violence. As clashes intensified, different groups joined, uniting liberals, moderates, technocrats, pro-Europeans, and far-right nationalists. According to Yuhas (2014), over 100 people were reportedly killed in the protests (*The Guardian*, 13 April 2014).

With violent fighting escalating in Ukraine, senior officials from Germany, Poland, and France met in Kyiv to broker an agreement with Yanukovich. A deal

aimed at offering a peaceful and constitutional way out of the crisis was agreed and signed by Yanukovich and the leaders of opposing parties (Yatsenyuk, Klitschko, and Tyagnybok) at 4 p.m. on 21 February (Sakwa, 2015). The moment was also witnessed by the three European officials as well as Russia's special representative (Sakwa, 2015, p. 88). However, the deal was extravagantly rejected by the Maidan protesters who insisted on Yanukovich stepping down. The violence temporally ended up with Yanukovich's fleeing to Russia, and a coalition government formed out of the opposition, agreeing to hold new elections on 25 May (Yuhas, 2014). The interim government was seen by Russia as an illegal one. With the new leaders rising to power, many controversies surfaced in the Crimea peninsula – an autonomous region of Southern Ukraine but with strong Russian ties, and in Eastern Ukraine such as the Donbas area. Parliament voted to prohibit Russian as the second official language in the country, which caused a wave of anger in Russian-speaking regions (De La Pedraja, 2019). The vote was later overthrown.

As the month of February drew to a close, Russia quickly responded to its perceived political coup in Kyiv – the collapse of the Yanukovich regime, by sending in military and taking control of the Crimean Peninsula (Kofman et al., 2017; Hierman, 2018). The Kremlin officially denied the soldiers in Crimea were Russian and the intention of annexing the peninsula; but maintained that the residents were legally to hold a referendum determining the region's status and MPs had authorised President Putin to use military force as Yanukovich pleaded for help. Two weeks later the referendum took place in the city of Sevastopol (site of Russia's Black Sea Fleet) on 16 March, with a majority voting for unification with Russia. Despite Ukraine and many political leaders condemning the vote as illegal, Russia recognised its result and created an official treaty on annexing the Crimea into Russia

(Toal, 2017), or in the words of President Putin: ‘welcome back’ Crimea that ‘has always been an inseparable part of Russia’ (Walker, 2014). In fact, the close tie between Russia and Crimea had long existed. Historically, Crimea had been part of Russia since the 1700s until 19 February 1954 when Nikita Khrushchev – the then general secretary of the Soviet Union – formally handed it over to Ukraine as a gift to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Ukraine’s union with Russia (Rutland, 2015). The change in territory did not include Sevastopol, which however was retained by Ukraine following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Budapest Memorandum (1994) was designed as a *modus vivendi* for Russia and Ukraine, it enabled Russia’s acceptance of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity – in response to which Kyiv in 1997 launched agreement to let Russia’s fleet remain in Sevastopol (Rutland, 2015). During the speech about ‘Crimea and Sevastopol returning home’ on Red Square, Putin denounced the West and listed a series of what he called false pretences of a humanitarian intervention. This referred to NATO’s expansion towards Russia by intervening in Kosovo in 1999, and by toppling Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi in Libya in 2011 (Myers & Barry, 2014; Van der Pijl, 2018).

Russia, on one hand, and the United Kingdom and the EU, on the other, were allies of opposite sides of the belligerent camps in Ukraine. Since the beginning of the Ukraine crisis followed by Russia’s annexation of the Crimea the UK has been supportive of Ukraine. A series of high-level political dialogues following the collapse of the Yanukovich government took place in 2014. Importantly, the UK played a leading role in designing sanctions packages imposed on Russia for its annexation of the Crimean Peninsula as well as its actions in Eastern Ukraine (Perraudin, 2015). The sanctions targeting certain individuals, companies, and sectors were agreed and applied by most EU Member States (Foreign Affairs

Committee, 2 March 2017). The Western bloc also suspended Russia's participation in the Group of Eight and European Council, although European Union leaders were divided over punishing Russia for seizing Crimea. According to Waterfield and Freeman (2014), Britain, Sweden, France, and East European countries went along with the sanctions and pushed for arm sales to Russia to be halted, while Germany and Italy disagreed on how strongly to respond to Russia at an EU summit as they were heavily economically dependent on Russian gas and oil imports (*The Telegraph*, 20 March 2014). As a quick consequence of the economic sanctions, Russian markets trembled, and the country's economy faced a fall into recession. The EU and the US supportively guaranteed Ukraine a 16-billion-dollar loan as part of an effort to rescue its economy. Although several meetings between top diplomats from Russia, the US, and EU took place in Europe, the talks finished with no results. Each state was committed to their country's official line (Yuhás, 2014).

As the conflict continued, on 15 April, the new Kyiv's (interim) government started its first official military action – Anti-Terrorism Operations against federalisation forces (pro-Russian) across Eastern Ukraine (Black & Plekhanov, 2016; Maltseva, 2016). Putin warned that Ukraine was on the 'brink of civil war' (Thompson, 2017). Less than a month later, clashes in the Black Sea city of Odessa left 42 people dead. Most of them were pro-Russian activists. Shortly after, the rebels in the Eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk announced independence in the context of escalating fighting between the new Kyiv and pro-Russian forces (Maltseva, 2016). The Russian military were seen to have not only centred on Ukraine's Eastern border but also entered the Eastern region of Ukraine – the Donbas. The region was one of the major battle grounds between the new Kyiv

government and separatist forces, with constant revelations that Russia transferred weaponry to the separatists (Jackson, 2014).

Petro Poroshenko, one of the richest men in the country was elected Ukraine's President in May, and soon signed the landmark EU Association Agreement – that Yanukovich previously refused to sign and triggered the clashes in Kyiv. It seemed like a termination of the conflict, when Russian parliament annulled a parliamentary resolution that authorised the use of Russian forces in Ukraine. But the crisis reached another peak on 17 July. 298 people lost their lives when Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 from Amsterdam was shot down in Eastern Ukraine, allegedly by pro-Russian rebels, with Russia quickly denying any involvement (Davidson & Yuhas, 2014). What followed in the end of July was the EU's launch of further economic sanctions on Russia, limiting access of Russian banks and oil companies to long-term Western financing.

Several dialogues about ceasefire followed between Ukraine, separatist forces, Russia, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE – an independent body providing a mediating role during the Ukraine crisis). A peace deal was eventually signed in Minsk, Belarus in early September. The Minsk Protocol aimed to end the violence and 'committed the government to extensive decentralisation of the Donbass' (Svyatets, 2016, p. 170). Nevertheless, domestically conflict remained between Western and Eastern Ukraine. Outside of the country, NATO reported that Russian military equipment and troops were witnessed entering Ukraine. The peace talks lasted a few months until they collapsed in the beginning of 2015. The conflict continued. In early February 2015 the Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel and the then French President Francois Hollande initiated and formed a ceasefire deal with Ukraine and Russia after the US declared it was considering

providing Ukraine with lethal assistance. Some European leaders disagreed with arming the new Kyiv's government forces, as they feared it could further the conflict, while Philip Hammond – then Defence Secretary suggested that Britain did not rule out offering ‘lethal force’ to assist Ukraine in its ground battle against pro- Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine (Dominiczak, 2015).

After the ceasefire went into effect, violations quickly followed. After few days without casualties had raised hopes that the peace might hold, Ukraine's National Defence and Security Council reported 300 violations of the ceasefire by 20 February. Then the EU extended sanctions on Russia. The then British defence minister Michael Fallon in a speech confirmed that the UK service personnel would provide Ukraine with medical, logistical, infantry, and intelligence training for government forces from mid-March. He added, ‘Russia must abide by its commitments at Minsk [...] stopping continued separatist attacks, and allowing effective monitoring to take place’ (*BBC*, 25 February 2015). Meanwhile, Mr Putin described the conflict in Ukraine as an ‘apocalyptic scenario’. Speaking on Russian television, he denied that Russian military forces were involved in the conflict but he expressed his support for the recent Minsk ceasefire deal as the best way to stabilise Eastern Ukraine (*BBC*, 24 February 2015). Ukrainian and pro-Russian rebels said they were withdrawing their heavy weapons from the front line in Eastern Ukraine under the terms of the ceasefire agreed in Minsk (Taylor, 2015).

According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), since the opening of the conflict, over 500,000 people have left their homes seeking a safe land elsewhere in the country, and hundreds of thousands have escaped from Ukraine, mostly to Russia. By February 2015, over 5000 have died, and over 10,000 were severely wounded in the battle in Eastern Ukraine (as cited in Pikulicka-Wilczewska, 2015, p.

2). United Nations estimated 6,000 victims died by March 2015 (*The Telegraph*, 5 March 2015). The scale of the human catastrophe has been significant and is continuing to increase. By the time of writing, the Ukraine crisis has become the largest humanitarian tragedy in Europe since the conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990s. According to the European Commission (2016), there were over 9,000 deaths and 20,000 injured, over 1.6 million people displaced domestically and internationally, and five million in need of humanitarian aid.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the Ukraine crisis development from November 2013 to February 2015. It has also outlined the foreign policies of Russia and the UK in relation to the conflict. This offers an important context for the subsequent analysis. The thesis now moves on to discuss the adopted research methodology.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

There are several methods that can be used in studying media and war/conflict. For example, Critical Discourse Analysis is often adopted by researchers (e.g., Amer, 2017; Atawneh, 2009) to examine influencing factors (ideological, economic, or political) in war coverage. Other approaches such as visual analysis are also of increasing importance and popularity in the field of the study of war reporting (e.g., Fahmy, 2010; Parry, 2010, 2011; Parry & Thumim, 2016; Corner & Parry, 2017; Ojala et al., 2017; Makhortykh & Sydorova, 2017). However, the aim of this study, as delineated in the introduction, is to assess how the Ukraine crisis was covered by the selected Russian and British media from a comparative perspective, as well as measure the extent the media characteristics suit the media systems theory. Critical Discourse Analysis and visual analysis are not adequate methodologies in offering large scale empirical research on the focus of this study, despite the in-depth information they may provide. Framing analysis is therefore adopted, allowing for a thorough examination of changing patterns, commonality, and difference across large media samples. A number of existing studies have used the approach to scrutinise the relationship between media and conflict (e.g., Entman, 1991; Hammond, 2007b; Kent, 2006; Melki, 2014; Alitavoli, 2019; Al Nahed, 2018; Lichtenstein et al., 2018).

This chapter discusses the adopted research methods. In developing the methodology, it was of significance to establish a range of methods enabling a reliable, valid, systematic, and quantitatively and qualitatively-rich analysis of news

media coverage. Thus this study follows a mixed-methods approach consisting of methods commonly used in traditional quantitative content analysis (such as frequency and word counts that determine the trend or pattern of the representation over the chosen timeframe), through to quantitative assessments of reporting frames, and in-depth qualitative analysis of news media reports in measuring the attention paid and the actual frames used by the British and the Russian media in their coverage of the Ukraine crisis.

The chapter is comprised of four sections, starting with a theoretical discussion of methods and the specific ways the adopted approach helps to identify news frames. The second section sketches out how the theoretical explanations are applied to the case study – the Ukraine crisis. This is followed by the third section – a description of the sample. The final section discusses the actual implementation of framing analysis in the case of Ukraine. The data will be analysed in three steps – first, the level of media agenda – quantity and length of media reporting of events – will be measured that gives general answers to the second research question: To what extent the selected British and Russian media have paid attention to the Ukraine conflict between 30 November 2013 and 28 February 2015. The second step is a framing analysis that answers the third research question. Based on the results from the first step, the framing analysis is used to explore what news frames are adopted in the mediated Ukraine conflict coverage. The third step is an integrated approach that aims to use the results from the framing analysis to qualitatively identify and analyse observations in terms of qualitative differences between the selected Russian and British media outlets. This step will give answers to the fourth research question: What are the differences between the Russian and British media that characterise the narrative of the Ukraine crisis. Drawing upon the identified differences (if any), the

subsequent analytical discussion will tease out the key findings surrounding the characteristics of the Russian media and the British media in the context of the Ukraine crisis. This will offer a direct answer to the first and main research question in relation to the media systems theory and its applicability in this case.

4.2 Theoretical Backgrounds

Traditional quantitative content analysis has been centred on counting words, reporting quantity, and measurement of column inches or other such straightforwardly quantifiable matters. The quantity and length of media reporting of events in a particular way is significant, allowing researchers to measure the level of media agenda (van Dijk, 2009). While the method is able to generate authentic and replicable results, the critics argue that it is incapable of exploring the nuances and meanings of the text (Anthonsen, 2003; Gerbner, 1958; Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Namely, the method alone does not allow researchers to scrutinise the internal meanings and relationships within and between texts. It often functions as the quantitative investigation of message characteristic vindicating the sample and thus selecting data for further in-depth analysis to add weight to the quantitative findings, such as framing and qualitative analysis. As outlined later in the chapter, the study combines a systematic measurement of quantifiable manifest content with interpretations of numerous pre-defined frames in the news coverage of the Ukraine crisis, which is adopted as part of the efforts to ensure reliability and validity. It is followed by an in-depth qualitative analysis – an extension of the framing analysis which adds context – aiming to systematically reduce the large volume of data to greatly organised and concise categories of crucial results, and to go beyond manifestation to include latent analysis of the contextual meaning of texts.

4.2.1 Qualitative analysis

Qualitative analysis has been advanced by scholars, all of which draw attention to a combined observation of text and its specific context. Patton (2002) focuses on data reduction and sense-making stating that the method attempts to ‘identify core consistencies and meaning’ (p. 453). Neuendorf (2002) suggests that qualitative analysis is more about the analyses of rhetoric, narrative, discourse, interpretation, or critical view (pp. 5-7). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) offer an elaborated explanation describing qualitative analysis as helping to identify what the media say about society and discovering the ‘truth’ about a society. This is what they term ‘the media’s symbolic environment’ (pp. 31-32). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) define it as ‘a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns’ (p. 1278). Morse and Field (1995) describe the method as to mainly explore fundamental meanings of the content. Likewise, Zhang and Wildemuth (2017) write that qualitative analysis addresses a specific theme demonstrating rather ‘the meanings of the phenomenon than the statistical significance of the occurrence of particular texts or concepts’ (p. 319). Therefore, the method requires researchers to conduct heavily interpretive readings of media texts, which is time-consuming hence often involves small samples. Regardless of this, qualitative analysis is expected to produce explanations or typologies from subjects. Hence the method is an essential path to understanding the deeper meanings, the perspectives and intentions of the media, and the ‘likely interpretations by audiences – surely the ultimate goal of analysing media content’ (Macnamara, 2005, p. 5).

For researchers, a balance between description and interpretation when conducting qualitative analysis is required. Patton (2002) states that qualitative

research is about interpretation that represents researchers' individual and theoretical understanding of the subject. Description, on the other hand offers contextual background that should be rich and thick (Denzin, 1989). What researchers are recommended to do is to combine the two by offering 'sufficient description to allow the reader to understand the basis for an interpretation, and sufficient interpretation to allow the reader to understand the description' (Patton, 2002, pp. 503-504). In doing so, researchers can monitor the 'cultural temperature' of society (Hansen et al., 1998, p. 92), reflect society and culture (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996), and discover and understand 'social reality in a subjective but scientific manner' (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2017, p. 318). However, scholars are often concerned about the disputable concept of objectivity when it comes to the interpretation and perception of 'reality' in qualitative analysis. It thus is important here to point out that *objectivity* is widely seen as impossible (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Hansen et al., 1998). Nevertheless, to minimise this weakness, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) suggest to compare media reality with social reality by qualitatively looking at actual media content that reveals important differences.

There are a variety of approaches to qualitative analysis. For this study, given the manifest quantification that attempts to discover the frames used in the first place, an extension of the framing analysis is used, with the purposes of understanding the contextual use of content (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1283) and the phenomena being observed across event and countries (Power & Vera-Zambrano, 2018). As Macnamara (2005) puts it, while quantitative research method generates empirical data that is highly likely generalizable and representative and thus reducing research findings to the moderate position on major research questions, in-depth

qualitative analysis has the advantage of exploring discourse at different points within the range (p. 18).

4.2.2 Framing analysis.

4.2.2.1 Definitions and objectives.

In spite of journalists' best intentions, news as a socially constructed product is not objectively generated, nor is it politically, economically, or ideologically neutral (Cozma & Kozman, 2017, p. 2). Framing attempts to explain how realities and meanings are constructed via communications (Entman, 1993; Reese, 2001; Myers, Klak, & Koehl, 1996; McQuail, 2000). The concept has been one of the most fertile research areas in linguistics and discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1977), sociology (Goffman, 1974), journalism, communication, and media studies (Scheufele, 1999), political communication, political science, and policy studies (Entman, 1993). Therefore, there is a broad range of definitions, frame types and methods discussed in the literature (Matthes, 2009). Goffman (1974) with the aim of explaining 'what is happening' and determining what is salient, notes that frames help classify, enabling individuals 'to locate, perceive, identify, and label' everyday occurrence (p. 21). Gitlin (1980) shares and expands this definition in his seminal research on the relationships between the news media and the Student New Left movement, conceptualising framing as 'persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion' (p. 7). He continues that media frames as journalistic routines quicken the procedures of identifying and classifying information that are to be efficiently packaged to the audience.

Tankard et al. (1991) reviewing the literature on framing, offer a methodologically oriented concept describing media framing as 'a central organizing

idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, and elaboration' (p. 6). Iyengar (1991) adds to this by observing that framing is a process that may refer to only subtle alterations in the statement or presentation of problems (p. 11). He uses and defines episodic frames as to apply specific cases or particular individuals' experiences to illustrate the issue; while thematic frames are conceptualised as emphasising wider trends placing 'political issues and events in some general context' (p. 2). Poverty, for example, may be thematically framed in a way that suggests social, economic, or political forces are to blame; while episodic framing brings the public to believe that the poor's own plight causes poverty. Iyengar (1991) observes that the majority of the news coverage of poverty is predominantly episodic over thematic, thus likely influencing audiences to believe that the poor themselves (rather than the society) are responsible when they are experiencing poverty. As such, the responsibility is successfully shifted from society to the poor themselves.

Creed et al. (2002) from a cultural studies perspective shed light on the main goal of framing knowledge underlining that actors from different social contexts rely on their own acquainted cultural accounts so as to generate political change at the societal or organisational level. With regards to the framing research, they contend: 'Because of its underlying attention to context, standing, and power, frame analysis provides us with a linked theory and methodology that gets us farther in our projects than other methodologies' (Creed et al., 2002, pp. 34-55). A frame then is frequently viewed by scholars as the fundamental notion allowing to characterise everyday events within individual structures, and to promote particular aspects of issues. That is to say, media frames are like organisations that subliminally but importantly structure the social world, hold privileges to deliver a particular interpretation. In the

words of Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira (2008), frames construct a conceptual context that ‘facilitates the apprehension, classification, and understanding of messages in accordance with individuals’ ideas previously associated with the frames adopted’ (p. 54).

The social and political origins of framing provide a wide research ground that is not limited to textual analysis. For example, D’Angelo (2002), in responding to Entman’s (1993) call for the establishment of a paradigm of news framing research, argues that there is not, nor should there be, a single ‘mended’ paradigm of framing research. Given the news orientation of this study, Entman’s definition is adopted, and is by far the most cited – although some critics (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2012) have expressed concern about its theoretical vagueness. Entman (1993) suggests that selection and salience constitute essential part of the framing process. Thus, a perceived reality is selected and made more salient in order to ‘promote a particular problem definition, a causal interpretation, a moral evaluation, and/ or treatment recommendation’ from the daily events (p. 52). According to Entman’s (1993) definition, reporters can enhance salience to the recipients who think about the given issue with ‘noticeable, meaningful or memorable’ elements (p. 53). This can be achieved by way of using specific keywords, phrases, quotations, reiteration, pictures, and/or associations with culturally familiar symbols (Entman, 1993). Entman labels the methods such as ‘repetition’ or reiteration as quantitative salience (1993, p. 53), which requires measuring the frequency of frame occurrences, making information more visible, meaningful, or memorable. A message, by contrast, is more qualitatively salient if represented by a figure who enjoys public trust, if it reflects prior consensus, or if it is merely convincing (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 639).

De Vreese (2005) and D'Haenens (2005) resonate with Entman's definition believing that the media may shape the public opinion by framing issues in a particular way, thus shaping the public agenda. Such research stems from the assumption that the way people receive information from the news can affect their interpretation and perception of the issue as a whole, thus may change their judgments on that issue. The notion of framing hence, as Entman (1993) puts it, implies a widespread 'effect on large portions of the receiving audiences, though it is not likely to have a universal effect on all' (p. 54). Therefore, the mass media are 'stunningly successful in telling [their] readers what to think about' (Cohen, 1963, p. 13). Reese (2001) validates the notion in the context of political and mass communication, and contends that frames influence how people perceive, evaluate, and react to an issue. In this sense, in the case of conflict, how the conflicts are framed can have a powerful impact on public perceptions about the roots of a conflict, its victory or failure, and which individual/group of people/country is responsible for it. For instance, Entman (1991) points to the role of government in influencing news frames. His study of two airline incidents uncovers very different frames adopted by the US media, depending on whether the perpetrator was 'us' or the 'enemy'. The U.S. downing an Iranian plane was framed as a technical accident, while the Soviet downing of a Korean plane was represented as a moral crime. Entman (1991) methodologically looks at how the news media applied sources, keywords, metaphors, and agency (the individual identified as causing or solving the issue; the causal force that generated the newsworthy act), arguing that the media generated the strikingly different frames through its de-emphasis of the agency and the victims, and through its choice of graphics and adjectives.

Hence framing analysis is pertinent to exploring how media bias patterns are included in news coverage. This allows us to see how the event is interpreted and what sense is made out of it by the selected media outlets. Framing is inevitable. One cannot not frame, the same as one cannot not communicate in a social interaction. If a frame makes a set of events 'comprehensible' (Fowler, 1991, p. 17), it is fundamental to effective communication. However, a frame represents one interpretation of 'reality' and must necessarily marginalise others, thus the choice of frame is an ideological act. 'Anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position: language is not a clear window but a refracting, structuring medium' (Fowler, 1991, p.10). Proficient journalists in the news narrating process may apply a frame(s) easily to the production, deliberately or not, to inform and attract the recipients' attention. Based on Entman's definition of framing, Dimaggio (2008) from a political economy perspective examines American media reporting of global war on terrorism – focusing on 9/11, Iraq, and Afghanistan. He uses the concept of framing when he refers to a systematic bias in coverage in favour of one perspective or another (p. 23). This may account for some of the main characteristics of mass media coverage. These include: pro-war framing of the news, the consistent omission and censorship of serious anti-war views and other dissident perspectives; media aligning with official statements and government propaganda in the coverage of international events (Dimaggio, 2008, p. 41). Dimaggio (2008) concludes that American corporate media failed to carry stories that held anti-war views, whilst reinforcing the official views and propaganda in support of military confrontations. Accordingly, for this study in order to explore the extent to which media bias occurs, the news frames should be identified in the first place.

4.2.2.2 *Operationalisation of media frames.*

Due to the wide scope of the concept and nature of framing, over the decades researchers have been adding to an extensive list of frame mechanisms used for identifying news frames. In addition to the methods used by Entman (1991) mentioned above, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) used metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases, depictions, and visual images. Tankard (2001) developed a list of eleven framing mechanisms: headline, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads, source selection, quote selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts, and concluding statements and paragraphs. Neuman, Just, and Crigler (1992) divided news articles in their research to two sections consisting of ‘frames’ and ‘facts’ respectively. The division has been used in the operationalisation of news frames in a number of studies of framing effects (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Iyengar, 1991; Price et al., 1997; De Vreese, 2004). In order to know how news influences audiences’ interpretation of facts, the scholars have used various methods to analyse the way the facts are covered in the first place. For the purpose of this study, a combination of deductive and inductive approach that involves predefined *generic news frames* consisting of six frames, *diagnostic* and *prognostic news frames* is applied to scrutinise the news frames used. This approach was chosen for several reasons. First, this approach could be easily replicated. Second, it could cope with large samples. Third, it could thus easily identify differences in framing between media (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Fourth, it offers an opportunity to examine whether the so defined generic frames apply to different global subjects, thus answering the question of ‘how generic the generic frames’ indeed are (Godefroidt et al., 2016, p. 781). Fifth, while a deductive approach – frames derived from literature – allows the researcher to apply a set of frames to other subjects, there is a risk that unanticipated

frames may be overlooked (Matthes & Kohring, 2008). Inductive approach – frames inductively discovered from a small sample – mitigates the weakness of deductive approach (Dan, 2018). Thus, the combination of deductive and inductive approach ensures reliability and validity. Finally, the method can help detect patterns that characterise news coverage of the Ukraine crisis by the Russian and British media outlets and connect these with the media systems theory that is central for the current study. All of this make it an ideal approach to examining the attention paid and the actual frames used by the selected Russian and British media; thus answering the main research question about the extent to which the uncovered characteristics of the Russian and British media support or refute the media systems theory.

4.2.2.3 Generic news frames.

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) differentiate *issue-specific* from *generic* frames. While issue-specific frames represent the more concrete interpretations of specific issues, generic frames denote general and structural features of news and can be used across a range of different news subjects, times, and cultural contexts. De Vreese, Perter, and Semetko (2001) believe that although generic frames do not provide the framing of an occurrence in detail, they ‘allow comparisons between frames, topics, and possibly framing practices in different countries’ (pp. 108-109). Considering the nature of this study, the generic frames are deemed more valuable for this study in terms of comparability (d’Haenens, 2005).

Examples of generic frames include episodic and thematic frames (Iyenger, 1991), strategic frames (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997), and human impact, powerlessness, economics, moral values, and conflict frames (Neuman et al., 1992, pp. 74-75). Among these frames, Neuman et al.’s (1992) suggestions are the most

common generic frames applied by both the media and the audience in a series of current issues (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). Cappella and Jamieson (1997) have identified the dominance of ‘strategically’ framed news, especially in the case of election news coverage. The strategic frame is generally conceptualised as news that focuses on the game characteristics of politics and underlines winning and losing. The researchers argued that the strategic frame in the U.S. news coverage of politics dominates over the issue frame that places interests in policy problems and proposed solutions, as well as the implications for the public. Neuman, Just, and Crigler (1992) offered a comprehensive discussion about a variety of frames dominantly used in the U.S. news coverage: human impact, powerlessness, economics, moral values, and conflict. Their study highlights that news about politics and the economy is usually framed in terms of *conflict* or in terms of the *economic consequences* of occurrences, disputes, and policies. De Vreese (2005) believed that generic frames ‘transcend thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different topics, some even over time and in different cultural contexts’ (p. 54). Other researchers (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1980) recognised these patterns that draw deeply from journalists’ norms and routines in practice. In this context, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) empirically scrutinised five Dutch national newspapers and television news stories during the Amsterdam meeting of the European heads of state in 1997, and developed five news frames in order of prevalence: attribution of responsibility, conflict, economic, human interest, and morality. The conflict and economic consequences frames were proved to be among the most common frames used in the political coverage.

However, the generic nature of these frames was not tested in a cross-national comparative setting to build the generality of the frames beyond national boundaries. De Vreese, Peter, and Semetko (2001) in their work expanded the research on

generic news frames to a cross-nationally comparative setting. The researchers used the conflict and economic consequences frames in television news in the UK, Denmark, and the Netherlands. The investigation showed that conflict was more noticeable than economic consequences in overall political/economic news stories in all three countries. More recently, Van Cauwenberge, Gelders, and Joris (2009) in their cross-national study also tested and then validated the conflict and economic consequences frames, which appeared more frequently in the quality papers in France, the Netherlands, and Belgium that they examined in relation to the coverage of the European Union. In addition to these two frames, the authors added a nationalisation frame to scrutinise the news coverage. This is because previous empirical studies discovered that the nationalisation of EU-related news tended to decline (Gleissner & De Vreese, 2005). The results confirmed the tendency. Drawing from this past research, the current study uses six clearly pre-defined generic frames suggested by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and by Van Cauwenberge et al. (2009): the *conflict*, *human interest*, *economic impact*, *morality*, *responsibility*, and *nationalisation* frames. The combination of these frames has also been applied by Godefroidt, Berbers, and d'Haenens (2016) to scrutinise four countries' (the U.S., the UK, France, and Russia) news coverage of the Syrian conflict in a comparative content analysis. The following is an outline of each of these frames.

The *conflict* frame emphasises conflict between individuals, groups, institutions, or countries (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The scholars have found that conflict can attract public attention (Hoge, 1994; Galtung & Ruge, 1965), as it remains a basic and valuable ingredient of news, especially in foreign news coverage (De Vreese, 2005; Neuman et al., 1992). Cappella and Jamieson (1997), however,

point out that the news media's focus on conflict has resulted in public mistrust of politicians.

The *human-interest* frame is frequently applied by tabloids aiming to attract public attention (Van Cauwenberge et al., 2009). This refers to an individual's story that could sensationally generate emotional responses, which adds to the narrative quality of the news capturing audience interest in a competitive-market context (Bennett, 1995). In other words, the human-interest frame 'brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem' (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95).

The *economic impact* frame represents an issue or facts in terms of the economic consequences it will have on individuals, groups, organisations, or countries. Previous empirical findings have showed an important news value of the frame that is used quite frequently (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

The *morality* frame locates the issue or facts in the context of morals, social prescriptions, and religious tenets (Godefroidt et al., 2016). Scholars observe that because of the journalistic norm of objectivity, reporters usually use this frame indirectly through citations, reasoning, or implications (Neuman et al., 1992; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

The *responsibility* frame is defined as 'a way of attributing responsibility for a cause or solution to either the government or to an individual or group' (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 96). It shapes public understanding by conveying credit and blame mostly in serious media coverage. For instance, Iyengar's (1987) research on news coverage of poverty in the US suggests that the poor's own plight is responsible for such social problem.

Finally, the *nationalisation* frame describes the fact that journalists tend to report international news from a purely domestic angle (Gleissner & De Vreese, 2005; Van Cauwenberge et al., 2009). This frame underlines ‘a connection between the topic and the country or ideas of national politicians, parties, and/or persons’ (Godefroidt et al., 2016, p. 782). Godefroidt et al. (2016) suggest that this frame can be considered as related to ‘ethnocentrism – judging other countries by the extent to which they live up to one’s own national practices and values – [which] has always been a crucial value determining the coverage of foreign news’ (p. 782).

4.2.2.4 Diagnostic and prognostic frames.

Journalists often inform the audience about the larger social, economic, or political context surrounding an issue. Without such context, the public will only see alienated subjects and lack an understanding of the bigger picture (Godefroidt, et al., 2016). This is what Benford and Snow (2000) refer to as the *diagnostic* frames, whereas Iyengar calls this thematic framing (1991), highlighting the wider background of the issue. When journalists frame an issue thematically, they highlight the wider tendencies, the social context, and the background of the issue. Namely they provide the public with diagnostic frames: ‘a diagnosis of some event or aspect of life as troublesome and in need of change’ (Snow et al., 2007, p. 3). Diagnostic framing consists of guilt or causality (the origin of the issue) thus adding background to a story. Previous studies suggest that attribution of the roots of a problem is frequently present in news coverage (Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Ojala & Pantti, 2017). For example, in reporting on a U.S. citizen who was captured in Afghanistan together with the Taliban soldiers, *The New York Times* made a number of different causal attributions trying to explain why the American young man had turned into a

Taliban fighter (Zhang & Winfield, 2002). These included the young man's different personality, his broken family, the figures he worshiped – Malcolm X and John Lennon, and the place where he grew up.

Along with diagnoses, journalists may also suggest solutions for the problems to people. Snow and Benford (2000) characterise such solutions and strategies as the *prognostic* framing. In order to find out prognoses, they specify the solution consisting of 'at least a plan of attack, and the strategies for carrying out the plan' (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 616). Prognostic framing refers to how the issues identified in the diagnostic frames are to be solved, aiming to offer desirable solutions to the issue. Hence, the diagnosis and prognosis are major constructs of the consensus mobilisation (Klandermans, 1984), potentially intending to produce support amongst individuals in news coverage. For the audiences, the representations of prognoses and diagnoses allow them to link the topic to particular roots and solutions. Taken together, the combination of the six generic, diagnostic and prognostic frames as a whole, reflects Entman's (1993) framing theory highlighting problem definition, causality, morality, and solution (p. 52). To offset any misperception that may occur through framing, Godefroidt et al. (2016) bring attention to the subtle difference between the responsibility frame and the diagnostic/prognostic frames. They accentuate that while the former highlights general responsibilities and recommends a potential solution, the latter give prominence to comprehensive external aspects and detailed solutions (p. 783).

4.2.2.5 Approach for identifying news frames.

Generic frames

The analysis of the six generic frames contains a series of twenty-one yes /no questions stemming from Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and Van Cauwenberge et al. (2009). Some of the questions are not applied for this study as changes have been made to account for the specific subject of analysis (Table 4.1). This modification follows Godefroidt et al.'s (2016) approach that was used for identifying generic news frames in the reporting of the Syria war.

The conflict frame will be identified through four questions about the contentious situation. In light of the subject the second question from Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) (i.e. does one party-individual-group-country reproach another?) is altered: instead of 'reproach', 'fights, riots, and confrontation' (Godefroidt et al., 2016) will be used. The human-interest frame is scrutinised through four questions on the extent to which the story is personalised. Again, Semetko and Valkenburg's last question (i.e., presence of visual information in the story?) is not going to be applied, as visual analysis is not part of this study as the archives used do not always contain visual information. In addition, three items on financial impact will be used to assess the economic impact frame; and three items on moral information will be used to assess the morality frame. The responsibility frame is examined through five items interpreting which party is to be blamed for the issue. Finally, the nationalisation frame is investigated through two questions about the connection between Ukraine and Russia, and between Ukraine and the UK.

Table 4. 1: The twenty-one framing items (adopted from Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000)

<p><i>Generic Frames</i></p> <p>Conflict frame</p> <p>Does the story revolve around disagreement between parties, individuals, groups, countries?</p> <p>Does the story refer to fights, riots, and confrontation between two or more parties, individuals, groups, countries?</p> <p>Does the story refer to two sides or more than two sides of the problem?</p> <p>Does the story refer to winners and losers?</p> <p>Human interest frame</p> <p>Does the story provide a human example or 'human face' on the issue?</p> <p>Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings?</p> <p>Does the story emphasise how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problems?</p> <p>Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?</p> <p>Economic consequences frame</p> <p>Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?</p> <p>Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved?</p> <p>Is there a reference to economic consequences of (not) pursuing a course of action?</p> <p>Morality frame</p> <p>Does the story contain any moral message?</p> <p>Does the story make reference to morality, God, and other religious tenets?</p> <p>Does the story offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?</p> <p>Responsibility frame</p> <p>Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the issue/problem?</p> <p>Does the story suggest some level of the government (including President Yanukovich) is responsible for the issue/problem?</p> <p>Does the story suggest that an individual or group of people in society (including any coalition of the rebels) is responsible for the issue/problem?</p> <p>Does the story suggest solutions to the issue/problem?</p> <p>Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?</p> <p>Nationalisation frame</p> <p>Does the article mention a connection between Ukraine and the individual country?</p> <p>Does the article articulate or quote the ideas of national politicians or persons that are active on a national level?</p>

Diagnostic and prognostic framing

All articles were also scrutinised for proposed causes of and solutions to the Ukraine crisis. Based upon Godefroidt et al.'s (2016) approach to evaluating diagnostic and prognostic frames, six questions were developed to measure potential diagnoses and eight questions were raised to scrutinise the potential prognoses (Table 4.2). Rather than all-encompassing 'diagnostic/prognostic framing', specific causes and solutions were chosen to be looked at, because this allowed us to draw parallels with the policies carried out by the countries involved (Godefroidt et al., 2016, pp. 786-787). This researcher worked out the possible diagnoses pointing towards political, socio-economic, religious factors, human rights abuse, geopolitical factors, specific triggers (and/or other causes). These six elements were determined with guidance from Godefroidt et al. (2016), a close reading of the articles, and in light of recent studies about the roots of the Ukraine crisis (e.g., Ojala & Pantti, 2017; Ishchenko, 2014; Sakwa, 2015). The 'rest' category was aimed to offer an opportunity to suggest a new category once more coding had been done (Godefroidt et al., 2016). The prognostic solutions used were: military action, change in government, diplomacy, financial intervention, internal reforms, and removal of the military weapons arsenal (and/or other solutions) (Godefroidt et al., 2016). Again, the 'other' category was aimed to offer an opportunity to suggest a new category once more coding had been done. As a result, the external assistance was added as a separate option. By this means, this researcher was able to generate a substantial list of diagnoses and prognoses. In order to confidently determine which diagnostic and prognostic frame was present, it was important for the researcher to rigorously follow the rules suggested by Godefroidt et al. (2016): identifying 'specific elements that needed to be mentioned clearly' (Godefroidt et al., 2016, p. 787).

Table 4. 2: Diagnostic and prognostic framing (adopted from Godefroidt et al., 2016)

<p><i>Diagnoses</i></p> <p>Political causes</p> <p>Does the article mention corruption, a lack of political freedom, power struggle between competing oligarchs, and/or unfair elections as a (possible) cause of the Ukraine crisis?</p> <p>Socio-economic causes</p> <p>Does the article mention inflation, rising unemployment, poverty or a lack of prosperity, limited educational opportunities, social insecurity, and/or generation gap between young and old Ukrainians as a (possible) cause of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?</p> <p>Human rights violations</p> <p>Does the article mention infringement or lack of freedom of speech, opinion, religion, equal rights or human rights in general, and/or war crimes against civilisation or the violation of international law as a (possible) cause of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?</p> <p>Religious prescriptions</p> <p>Does the article mention Ukrainian Catholics or Christians, disagreement between diverse religious groups, and/or the character or culture of religious groups as a (possible) cause of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?</p> <p>Global dimensions</p> <p>Does the article mention disputes between Western powers and Russia, Russian ties, new cold war, and/or regional ambitions with limited resources as a (possible) cause of the Ukraine crisis?</p> <p>Particular triggers</p> <p>Does the article mention the shooting of the people, the many (innocent, civilian) victims and/or a violent attack as a (possible) cause of the continuation/escalation of the Ukraine crisis?</p> <p>Others</p> <p>This is a residual category for unforeseen causal elements</p>

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

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

Assistance

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

Rejection

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

Change in government

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

Financial intervention

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

Internal reforms

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

Dismantling military weapons

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

External assistance

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

Others

This is a residual category for unforeseen remedial element.

4.3 The Case Study – The Ukraine Crisis

Having discussed the research methods adopted in this study, the following section aims to introduce the specific case – the Ukraine crisis elaborating on how the theoretical models outlined above will apply and work here.

Following the logic of Godefroidt et al.'s (2016) case study applying the generic frames to the Syrian conflict, journalists in the case of the Ukraine crisis could choose to not only emphasise the violence, confrontation, or disagreements between regimes, groups (including rebels), or international participants, they could equally focus on human circumstances and 'suffering – victims of the crisis; its economic impact – impact on energy, financial contributions/sanctions, cost of intervention' (p. 782); the morality of the violence – shooting individuals including elders and children; 'point fingers towards those responsible for the crisis or its resolution – what can the international community or the countries involved do?; or they can stress an association with their own country' (Godefroidt et al., 2016, p. 782) – such as Vladimir Putin's leading role. Overall, whether the journalistic use of a generic frame is to expedite deliberation or for other purposes, this may well have constructive or disadvantageous effects. For this study, following the frames discussed above, the differences between the selected news media in terms of applied frames can be easily identified.

Moreover, the protest in Kyiv against Yanukovich's political decision to suspend the country's EU Association Agreement marked the beginning of the Ukraine crisis. That means the protesters initially attempted to spotlight a problematic situation in the hope of changing the policy. This represented the possibility for the media to go beyond straightforward reporting and 'add context by presenting reasonable causes, responsibilities, and solutions' (Godefroidt, et al.,

2016, p. 783). Godefroidt et al. (2016) explain that the significance of such diagnostic and prognostic ways of framing on-going conflicts rests with the fact that they may cause various consequences. On the one hand, media can divert the attention from the actual purpose of protest activities to the one of treating the protest as a media ‘spectacle’, eclipsing information about the protesters’ voices (Hallin, 1986; Iyengar, 1991; Luther & Miller, 2005). On the other hand, the way reporters interpret and articulate the development of the Ukraine crisis in general and, for example, the Crimean secession in particular, may encourage different or even polarised attitudes within the public including foreign policymakers. Therefore, the combination of the set of frames – generic, diagnostic and prognostic – as used by Godefroidt et al. (2016), can be applied to this study to scrutinise and compare news framing of the Ukraine crisis in liberal and hybrid regimes.

4.4 The Sample

Representativeness is considered as the first and most crucial criteria when selecting the sample. Accordingly, time periods, media sources, the keywords, and the rationale for their selection are outlined below.

4.4.1 The choice of periods.

An important aspect of this mixed-methods methodology is to identify specific periods of time that allow media reporting to be analysed over time. Crucial points which may be used to divide distinct time periods (timeline divisions used by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies) include the ousting of Victor Yanukovich from power (22 February 2014), the annexation of Crimea (18 March 2014), the declaration of the Donetsk Republic (07 April 2014), the shooting down of

the Malaysian airliner MH17 (17 July 2014), the Russian ‘invasion’/delivery of humanitarian aid in Ukraine (12 August 2014), and the imposition of each subsequent round of Western sanctions against Russia (March, April, July, September 2014). These, following Gamson (1992), provide ‘critical discourse moments’ that media reporters usually use as ‘pegs’. These pegs offer us ‘a way of identifying those time periods in which efforts at framing issues are especially likely to appear’ (p. 26). Table 4.3 sets out the length of each time-period.

Table 4. 3: Number of days for each time-period

Time-period	Number of days
1 st period	89
2 nd period	22
3 rd period	119
4 th period	225
Total	455

As the table above shows, the periods have very different lengths. Their demarcation is driven by the nature of events and developments taking place on the ground and they are used here as a way to break down the story of the Ukraine crisis. The main interest of the study is in comparing how the Russian and UK media framed the Ukraine conflict over the whole duration of the crisis. The timeline division is as follows:

1st period - Crisis in Kyiv: 30 November 2013 – 26 February 2014.

This period marks the beginning of the ‘Euromaidan’ anti-government protests in Kyiv against President Viktor Yanukovich due to his refusal to sign the country’s EU Association Agreement. Several critical events are included here: on 20 February the worst 48 hours of political violence in Europe since the World War II were recorded with 88 people reported to have been killed; the ‘coup’ / ‘revolution’ occurred in the following days starting on 22 February; President Yanukovich fled Ukraine while protesters and politicians agreed to form a new government; and protesters took over Presidential administration buildings including Mr Yanukovich’s residence.

2nd period - Crimean secession / annexation: 27 February – 20 March 2014.

The critical events within this period are: the formation of a new government in Ukraine; the seizing of government building in Crimea by pro-Russian rebels; Russia’s annexation of Crimea; and the first round of sanctions on Russia imposed by NATO countries.

3rd period - Battles in Eastern Ukraine: 21 March – 17 July 2014.

During this time period pro-Russian rebels seized government buildings in the Eastern Ukrainian cities of Donetsk, Luhansk, and Kharkiv, whereas the Ukraine authorities escalated the military activities attempting to regain control; regular Ukrainian army and loyal mercenaries funded and supported politically by the U.S. and the EU, on one side, opposed separatists and militias from Donetsk and Luhansk regions supported by Russia, on the other, which was followed by the introduction of

a second round of sanctions on Russia; the third round of sanctions was initiated following the shooting down of the Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 over Eastern Ukraine. This drove things forward – including NATO’s hardened positions against Russia, although each side blamed the other for the tragedy.

4th period - Stalemate: 18 July 2014 – 22 February 2015.

The final period of analysis covers the period from Russia’s entry into Eastern Ukraine, through to the reported conflicts between the two that were followed by further sanctions, and the international ceasefire agreement signed in Minsk on 22 February 2015.

Scholars (e.g., Chouliaraki, 2008; Parry, 2010) suggest that violence, deaths, and suffering are often extensively mediatised, particularly in the public framing of a conflict because they have potential to ‘cause strong emotions, highlight questions of guilt and responsibility, and assert the sense that there is a moral obligation for people and governments to act’ (as cited in Ojala & Pantti, 2017, p. 4). Accordingly, the four periods that include the critical events are chosen as representative of different stages of discussions connected to the development of the Ukraine conflict. During this time the various political actors involved in the crisis attempted to use powerful arguments to convince their audiences of the correctness of their positions. The media reported these discussions. In this sense, the selected periods could be considered key in illustrating the dominant framing of the conflict adopted by the different media. Thus, with this timeline, changes in the way the media reported on the crisis can be tracked.

4.4.2 The choice of media sources.

This study focuses on the English-language reporting of the Ukraine crisis by the British and Russian news media. It is important to look at the English language presence of the Russian media outlets because these are the ones that are outward facing and attract intense global public attention. The British media coverage is collected from three publications that are selected based on their quality, circulation rates, and political positions – the *BBC*, *The Guardian*, and *Mail Online*. *The Guardian* and *Mail Online* are on either side of the political spectrum while the *BBC* is claiming to be independent. As counterparts, the selection of the Russian media coverage of the Ukraine crisis is based on three media sources – *RT*, *The Moscow Times*, and *Pravda.ru*. They are either entirely English-language media or have English editions in print or online. As already pointed out, this study is not interested in the Russian media that targets a domestic audience. For these purposes it would be pertinent to study domestic local media in Russian language. Rather, this study scrutinises the media either specifically targeting or easily available to an international audience. Taken together, this cross-section of the British and Russian news media constitutes an important component of the public sphere, serving as key information sources for the public, and enabling us to provide a comprehensive analysis of the media reporting in a time of war. In choosing these media every attempt was made to ensure comparability between the British and the Russian outlets.

As such, the selection of the *BBC* and the *RT* is based on the fact that they both are prominent representatives of what might be called the Western and the Eastern European voices in global media. First, both media claim to be independent. However, despite the fact that *RT* officially declares on its website that it is an

Autonomous Non-Profit Organization, independent journalists both from Russia and from abroad have repeatedly indicated that the Russian government supports *RT* with annual subsidies of around 11 billion rubles (Grincheva & Lu, 2016). According to the *RT*'s editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan, in 2015 the funding coming from the Federal Budget of the Russian Federation was increased by as much as 41 per cent and constituted more than 15 billion rubles (Grincheva & Lu, 2016). For its part, the *BBC* is publicly funded through a licence fee. In 2017, as shown in the Financial statements of the *BBC Annual Report and Account 2016/17*, the licence fee income amounted to GBP 3,787.2 million (p. 125). Second, both channels broadcast in English and have a global reach in a number of countries and regions. The *BBC* (2015) claims to have a weekly global audience of 308 million people, and *RT* (2016) states that its services are available to over 700 million people in 100+ countries. *RT* (2016) broadcasts in English, Spanish, and Arabic, and targets first of all international audiences. It positions itself as a channel addressing the most important international issues by providing 'an alternative perspective on major global events' from the 'Russian viewpoint' (*RT*, 2016).

The Guardian and *The Moscow Times* both are quality print media with online editions. *The Guardian* is a British centre-left national daily newspaper (Veneti, Karadimitriou, & Poulakidakos, 2016; Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017), known for its extensive presentation and analysis of international news coverage (Jaber, 2016, p. 74). The paper's war coverage has been analysed in a number of studies (e.g., Parry, 2010; Tumber & Palmer, 2004; Ravi, 2005; Fahmy & Kim, 2008; Dardis, 2006; Guzek, 2019). Furthermore, *The Guardian* reaches a wide range of global audiences (Jaber, 2016, p. 74). The international appeal of the paper is also evidenced by the facts that its online edition was the third most widely read in the

world as of June 2012 (Stripp, 2012), and its ‘global domain’ has over ‘120 million monthly unique browsers’ accessing theguardian.com – up ‘almost 35% year-on-year’ (Murrell, 2016, p. 7). In Russia, *The Moscow Times* is the leading English-language daily newspaper that was firstly published in 1992. The paper originally catered to foreigners living in Moscow, and gradually has attracted a number of local readers since it first appeared. Its news coverage ranges from politics to business and cultural dimensions from within the former Soviet Union. In 2005, the newspaper’s ownership was transferred first to a Moscow-registered publishing house – Independent Media, then to a Dutch-Finnish publishing group Sanoma (Zhang & Fahmy, 2009, p. 523). In October 2014 President Vladimir Putin signed into law amendments limiting foreign investors from owning more than 20% in Russia’s media organisations (Luhn, 2015). Subsequently, the paper’s ownership was once again transferred to Demyan Kudryavstev who had been doing business with the late oligarch Boris Berezovsky (Luhn, 2015). The paper regularly publishes articles by prominent Russian journalists, many of whom take critical positions towards the current Russian government. As the *European Stability Initiative* (2009) research points out, the newspaper is often regarded as a source of high-quality journalism. It is frequently cited by foreign media as a source for Russian political and economic news. It has a good English website where the print articles are published (ESI, 2009, P. 26). Although *The Moscow Times* enjoys less popularity than *The Guardian*, Zhang and Fahmy (2009) state that the newspaper is ‘observed to be a major publication in Russia that takes critical stances toward the government on issues ranging from the war in Chechnya to censorship in the media’ (p. 523). As such, it can be argued that *The Moscow Times* enjoys a journalistic excellence that makes it a

comparable analogue to *The Guardian* in terms of their independent journalistic practices.

In the UK, *The Daily Mail* is one of the country's most polarising sensationalist/tabloid-style, right-of-centre newspaper (Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017, p. 455). *Mail Online* is the name of the paper's online version. Critics argue that it is sensationalist in the way it demonises feminists, foreigners, and the poor (Lawless, 2013). In addition, the latest figures from National Readership Survey (NRS) suggest the *Daily Mail* is still by far the most read national newspaper brand in the UK in print and online (Ponsford, 2017). In Russia, in 1999 a group of journalists who previously worked for the earlier famous Soviet *Pravda* launched *Pravda.ru*. The web-based, tabloid-style newspaper often takes a sensationalist approach to news reporting (Saunders & Strukov, 2010, p. 464). *Pravda.ru* is one of the first and most popular online resources in Russia. According to the Rambler Top 100, from mid-October to mid-November 2009 *Pravda.ru* was the 14th most visited website in Russia in the news media category, attracting an audience of over 62,000 unique visitors daily (*ESI*, 2009). Bennett (2012) states that: It is 'the largest news and analytical internet-holding in Russia, attracts 4 million "unique users" and "50 million" page views; and is the first Russian online newspaper to launch an English version' (p. 374). It is important to note that *Pravda.ru* is unaffiliated with the earlier *Russian Pravda* or with other newspapers using the name *Pravda*. The chairman of *Pravda.ru* says his site is 'the absolute leader among Russian English-language media, with the exception of Russia Today' (as cited in Kopan, 2013). Therefore, the choice of *Pravda.ru* and *Mail Online* is based on their common characteristics in terms of powerful tabloid style with sensationalist reporting and high readership.

4.4.3 The choice of keywords.

For each period, the combinations of key words for selecting articles are slightly different due to the different nature of the four periods. When carrying out the search the method is not simply to account for all the articles that use the specific keywords. This would lead to unnecessary contamination of the results by containing the texts that focus on different subjects and mention the Ukraine crisis only in passing or not at all. Rather, the method employed is to use some of the keywords with an additional option, such as ‘Ukraine’ *and* ‘protest’ so as to narrow the search. In addition, any formulation of the keywords e.g. ‘Ukraine’, ‘Ukrainian’; ‘Russia’, ‘Russian’; ‘Crimea’, ‘Crimean’; ‘fight’, ‘fought’, ‘fighting’ are taken into account when searching for articles. Bearing these in mind, the following are the four sets of keywords.

For the first period, articles containing the following words are selected:

protest, crisis, fight, war, civil war, Ukraine, Ukrainian, Russia, and Yanukovich.

For the second period, the keywords are: *Ukraine, Russia, NATO, Crimea, Crimean*

annexation. The keywords selected for the third period are: *Donetsk, Luhansk,*

Kharkiv, Ukraine, Russia, NATO, referendum, MH17. Finally, in order to identify

relevant articles during the last period, the following keywords are selected: *Russia,*

Russian aid, humanitarian, NATO, ceasefire, Debaltseve. This ensures all articles

relating to the Ukraine crisis were found. All articles were also read manually to

ensure there were no false positives.

4.5 The Implementation in the Case of Ukraine

Step 1: Producing a coding scheme.

To conduct a systematic framing analysis, this researcher took the first step to conduct the *scientific, systematic, and objective* form of appraisal by producing a coding scheme. The coding scheme was designed to provide a detailed account of how the British and the Russian media have framed the Ukraine crisis; with comparisons being made between different media sources from each country. The formulation of this coding scheme followed a preliminary review of part of the sample conducted in September 2017. The pilot work focused on 3 months' worth of news framing of the Ukraine crisis in Russia and the UK, comparing *The Moscow Times* and *The Guardian*. This exercise was helpful in identifying important factors that could be developed into coding categories for the measurement of the news coverage of the Ukraine crisis. As a result, prior to proceeding to the coding of the entire sample, the codebook was modified by adding the 'external assistance' to prognostic frames. The final coding scheme consists of variables in the following order (also see *Appendix A – Codebook*):

A1 – ID Number (ddmmyy)

A2 – Media number (1-6)

A3 – Number of words

B1 – Generic frames (a-f)

B2 – Diagnostic frames (a-f)

B3 – Prognostic frames (a-f)

Step 2: Collecting data.

The researcher took the second step to collect data after the coding scheme had been set up. This was conducted by using Lexis-Nexis for *The Guardian* sample. News articles from the *BBC*, *RT*, *The Moscow Times*, *Mail Online*, and *Pravda.ru* were collected from their online archives. The Lexis-Nexis database had been critiqued for its intrinsic flaws such as ‘false positives’ when a terminology has more than one meaning and the results list would contain spurious ones as well as ‘false negatives’ referring to the possibility of omission when the keyword is extremely precise (Deacon, 2007). To account for these criticisms, the researcher ensured that the well-defined keywords directly referred to the issues. Particular studies have been productive to the extent that the categories were clearly formulated and well adapted to the problem and the content’ (p. 147). Given the timespan of the research and extensive amount of data to be considered, it would not have been pragmatic to collect and look at physical copies of *The Guardian* without a drop in the number of the samples.

Therefore, with all the aspects discussed within the sample above– media sources, keywords, and timelines, articles from *The Guardian* were searched and retrieved from the Lexis-Nexis database. For example, for stories linking Ukraine with the protest in Kyiv, the keywords: ‘Ukraine’ *and* ‘protest’ *or* ‘Yanukovych’ *or* ‘Putin’ *or* ‘Russia’ are input into the search engine and, in order to eliminate irrelevant and duplicated materials, the option of ‘major mentions’ and ‘high similarity’ were selected. This process was repeated for each set of keywords listed earlier. The material that was retrieved for the 15-month period of the study was then processed using computer to determine the number of articles and word-count for each article. *The Moscow Times* articles were collected from its official website

where the print version of archives was available. The researcher downloaded all the issues within each period, and looked through every issue to determine and retrieve the applicable article to ensure credibility without omission. However, coverage of the Ukraine crisis on last day of the final period (22 February 2015) was not available in the newspaper, as it was a Sunday. Therefore, a decision was made by the researcher to extend the final period to the last day of the month – 28 February 2015. The extension was then applied to all the selected media outlets in order to be consistent and comparable. In the same way as the data collection of *The Moscow Times*, the articles from *Mail Online* and *Pravda.ru* were collected from their official websites respectively where archives were accessible.

Finally, for the articles from the *BBC* and *RT*, the researcher used each of the keywords for all periods to search for relevant texts from their online websites. It is important to note here that by the time of empirically conducting this study, four years had passed since the Ukraine crisis broke out. And this presented difficulties beyond the researcher's control namely that there was a possibility that some news articles could have been edited or deleted. This difficulty was encountered especially in relation to the *BBC* and *RT* online websites during the third and fourth periods in particular as these time periods included more events covering longer period. At this point archives were not available for data collection and cross check purposes. As a result, the researcher added several keywords to the existing ones in order to maximise the search results. For each period, the researcher used each keyword to retrieve relevant articles. The new keywords added to the third period are as follows: *Donbass*, *Sloviansk*, *Odessa*, *Poroshenko*, *G7*, and *Sanction*. The keywords added to the fourth period are: *shelling*, *separatists*, *Minsk talk*, *Kharkiv*, *Luhansk*, *Donetsk*, *Mariupol*, and *Russian convoy*.

Overall, a sample of 5,532 news articles were selected for the final analysis (how the researcher determined the relevance is explained in the following section). The retrieved data was stored in Microsoft Word documents. Coding was conducted using a Microsoft Access database that offered the researcher flexibility in sorting and interrogating data, as well as ‘the facility for the export of data to Microsoft Word or Excel for the production of tables and spreadsheets’ (Robinson et al., 2010, p. 188). Next a description is provided of how these frames were identified.

Step 3: Analysing data.

Once the tables of questions (measuring the generic, diagnostic and prognostic frames) were set up, every collected news item was analysed and coded carefully by answering the questions laid out in the Tables 4.1 and 4.2 (pp. 113-116). The researcher used the hard copy of the data in order to read thoroughly, analyse, and make notes due to the process of identifying generic, diagnosis and prognosis frames for each piece of news article. In order to identify the appropriate generic frame the researcher employed a combination of approaches consisting of interpretive analysis and systematic test. First of all, each news article was read thoroughly to both check for relevance and determine the overall message of reports. In spite of existing critiques of this stage of framing analysis as unsystematic and interpretative, it is of significance to scrutinise the overall sense of message conveyed by journalists as structural syntax of news stories makes it difficult for readers ‘to differentiate among statements of fact, analysis, and opinion’ (Neuman et al., 1992, p. 55). For example, research has found that although newspapers generally frame issue early in news stories where facts appear earlier than opinion, journalists also tend to combine several of the ‘fact’, ‘analysis’, and ‘opinion’ into one sentence

or expression (Neuman et al., 1992, p. 55). This thus makes it important to avoid determining the generic frames by the number of the ‘Yes’ answers but to evaluate texts on story level in the first place. As Robinson (2002) argues this aspect of framing analysis ‘does possess a high degree of validity, requiring the researcher to read complete news texts and develop a sense of the overall tone and emphasis of media reports’ (p. 137).

The second step followed a more systematic and reliable approach aiming to test the given frame as per the questions listed. For instance, if an overall sense of ‘responsibility’ was given after the first step of reading the article thoroughly, the researcher then answered the established corresponding questions to robustly test the validity of frame inferences. While answering these questions, the researcher simultaneously conducted two important tasks. The first was to manually categorise the issue reported. For example, with regards to the responsibility frame, some of the journalists’ targets may be Russia, while some may lay the blame on the EU, America, Britain, or Ukraine. Therefore, the effort to quantify the characteristics of the analysed content also had qualitative elements. The second was to identify whether and which diagnostic and prognostic frame was/were used.

Screening / deleting data.

Some irrelevant material that included information on the Ukraine crisis was left out of the analysis. This material included updates, timetables, and news in brief.

Step 4: Analysing the results.

From the resulting data, analytical tables were set up in *Microsoft Word* to compare the results of the different media sources, and those were featured in the

results section. For generating frequency tables, the results were presented in, for example: ‘quantity of coverage by the media’, ‘mean length of coverage by the media’, ‘distribution of generic frames by the media’, ‘distribution of diagnostic frames by the media’, and ‘distribution of prognostic frames by the media’. This was used in the framing analysis part of the research for general measures of tendency and the comparison between the selected media, in order to answer the research questions about attention paid and frames used by different media in the coverage of the selected key events.

Following conclusions being drawn on the framing analysis results, a subsequent evaluation brings the results together by differentiating and comparing the frames into a coherent discussion on how the Ukraine crisis was covered by the two countries’ media respectively. An analytically qualitative analysis – an extension of the framing analysis – as a reflective process was adopted, since knowing the quantity of a particular frame (e.g., responsibility frame) does not articulate whether the coverage reflects fairness or prejudice (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). The main goal behind this analysis was to select and comparatively analyse certain featured frames, and thus identify the extent to which the news coverage of the Ukraine crisis from Russia and the UK supports or refutes the media system models under hybrid and liberal regimes as developed by Vatarnova (2012) and Hallin and Mancini (2004). As explained in the Step 3, the researcher manually categorised the issue reported. This ensured that the researcher later went through all the notes taken during the coding procedure so as to go back to certain articles for further qualitative analysis.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the approach adopted by this study for collecting and analysing data in order to answer the study's key research questions. The framing analysis was key method to produce nuanced data (quantitative and qualitative) on the characteristics of the news coverage of the Ukraine crisis. The method helped determine the range of subject selection and critical messages of the press coverage of the Ukraine crisis and the national Ukraine policy. The analysed content contains six media outlets from Russia and the UK from different ends of the political spectrum. Fifteen month-long period was chosen for analysis divided into four sub-periods reflecting critical phases of the crisis between November 2013 and February 2015. A codebook was built on a pilot analysis of a small part of the sample. The aim was to take into account subtle ways of criticism in the media coverage while also capturing the actual substance of the political messages on the conflict.

The empirical contribution of the study shows not only how the Ukraine crisis was covered by the media outlets from liberal and hybrid regimes, but also how the coverage differed across countries and outlets. The thesis now moves on to the findings of the two countries' media. The results and data of the Russian media will be analysed first, in the chapter that follows.

Chapter 5

Findings – Russian Media

5.1 Introduction

According to the framing theorists (e.g., Entman, 1993) as discussed in Chapter four, the public's perception of the ever-changing Ukraine crisis is dependent on how the media select and organise the information. By highlighting certain elements while downplaying others, framing functions to bring specific ideas to news audiences (Iyengar, 1991). It is expected that there will be a difference between the media outlets from countries with liberal and hybrid political regimes in the ways in which they frame the conflict. Thus, it is important to ask what the different narratives of the Ukraine crisis are and in what ways they contribute to the daily productions of news.

Accordingly, this chapter presents the data from the analysis of the Russian media coverage of the Ukraine crisis between 30 November 2013 and 28 February 2015. The overall 15-months' worth of news coverage has been divided into four periods: 30 November 2013 – 26 February 2014, 27 February – 20 March 2014, 21 March – 17 July 2014, and 18 July – 28 February 2015 as explained in Chapter four. At the core of this assessment are both the quantitative and the qualitative features of the examined media outlets' reports as part of a mixed methods approach. The frames and their supporting evidence in each period are presented chronologically. The sequence of the analysis is identical to that used for the British media in the next chapter. First, to answer the second research question – to what extent have the selected Russian media paid attention to the Ukraine crisis between 2014 and 2015 – the fundamental elements of the news samples such as reporting quantity and mean length of coverage are measured to explore the general descriptive statistics and

measure overall press attention. The decision to start with this assessment by scrutinising numerical quantities in the news coverage stems from two arguments. First, systematically measured numeric values reveal ‘neutral and factual’ features (Richardson, 2007). Second, reporting quantity and length of media reporting of events are media indicators of attention, and allow us to scrutinise the media agenda power in terms of how they shape attention about events (van Dijk, 2009). The chapter then proceeds to uncover the featured news frames of the Ukraine crisis during the defined periods thus demonstrating the characteristics of the Russian media coverage and directly addressing the third research question (What news frames are adopted in the mediated Ukraine crisis coverage?).

5.2 Press Attention

1st period: 30. 11. 2013 – 26. 02. 2014.

In order to answer the second research question (To what extent have the selected Russian media paid attention to the Ukraine conflict during the period?), the overall quantities and mean length of media coverage were measured. First, in purely quantitative terms, the Ukraine crisis enjoyed considerable media attention between 30 November 2013 and 26 February 2014, with a total number of 312 articles (Table 5.1). Second, press attention was also measured through a focus on article length, with an average of 673 words per article. The differences ranged from 84 words (*Pravda.ru*, 5 December 2013) briefly quoting the U.S. Assistant Secretary Victoria Nuland’s stance towards the chaotic developments in Kyiv, to 1,479 words (*The Moscow Times*, 3 December 2013) representing diverse voices from Ukraine and Russia regarding the ongoing protests in the capital. Among the three media outlets, *RT* offered the most extensive coverage with 128 articles and an average of 741

words. This coverage primarily distanced Russia from the Ukraine conflict and insisted that the conflict is a domestic issue, as will be demonstrated and discussed in detail later on in this chapter. *The Moscow Times* paid slightly less attention to the Ukraine crisis – without the difference being significant – with 117 articles and an average of 702 words. The newspaper is however identified as the one that tended to provide the audience with various perspectives on the subject, as will be illustrated below. The tabloid-style media – *Pravda.ru* – during this period paid considerably less attention to the conflict, with 67 articles – nearly half of the number from *RT*. *Pravda.ru*'s lesser attention was also manifested in its mean length of merely 491 words.

Table 5. 1: Press attention by the Russian media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014

	Quantity	Mean Length
RT	128 (41%)	741
The Moscow Time	117 (38%)	702
Pravda.ru	67 (21%)	491
Total	312	

2nd period: 27. 02. – 20. 03. 2014.

The overall press attention during the second period increased noticeably to 401 pieces of news devoted to the escalating conflict. These intensive 22 days had approximately 20 reports per day on the topic by the three media outlets, and focused mainly on the turmoil following Yanukovich's fleeing of Ukraine, Russia's action in Crimea, as well as the imposed sanctions on Russia. The intensified coverage reflects the privileged position of the issue on the news agenda and Russia's geopolitical

interests as the country's involvement became crystallised compared to the previous period when Russia resisted to put itself in the midst of the crisis. As shown in Table 5.2, *The Moscow Times* devoted the most attention to the crisis with 155 articles representing 39% of the whole sample of 401 articles. This is followed by *RT* who published marginally fewer but longer articles, 146 and a mean length of 747 words, in comparison to *The Moscow Times*'s 685 words mean length. *Pravda.ru* again came at the bottom of the table giving least attention to the issue, in terms of quantity and mean length. The media offered 92-word coverage denying the statement of the representative of the State Border Service of Ukraine that Russian troops have started military actions in Crimea (*Pravda.ru*, 4 March 2014). On the other hand, *RT*'s longest news item came on 19 March 2014 with 5,259 words citing President Putin's speech on Crimea's reunification. It is worth signposting here that the case of Crimea's renunciation from Ukraine and its reintegration into Russia has been predominantly connected by the *RT* to the well-known Kosovo precedent – Kosovo's unilateral separation from Serbia in 1999.

Table 5. 2: Press attention by the Russian media: 27.02. – 20.03.2014

	Quantity	Mean Length
The Moscow Times	155 (39%)	685
RT	146 (36%)	747
Pravda.ru	100 (25%)	572
Total	401	

3rd period: 21. 03. – 17. 07. 2014.

The third period covered a longer timespan between 21 March and 17 July 2014, with a total of 1,405 articles on the Ukraine crisis published by the three Russian media. The ranking regarding the reporting frequency remains identical to the second period with *The Moscow Times* on top, followed by *RT* and *Pravda.ru* (Table 5.3). The difference lies in the mean length with *The Moscow Times* on average publishing longer articles than the other two media outlets. Overall, *The Moscow Times* paid the most extensive attention to the Ukraine conflict, critically dealing with the tit-for-tat sanctions between Russia and the West, the new government forming in Kyiv, the anti-Maidan protest/unrest/ referendum in Eastern Ukraine, and the following offensive military action in the region initiated by new Kyiv. *RT* attempted to distance Russia from the deteriorated violence in Eastern Ukraine, whilst reporting that Russia resettled the refugees from severely hit area in Eastern Ukraine due to new Kyiv's launch of Anti-Terrorism Operations. This will be demonstrated further later on in the framing analysis. During this time period the longest news item for a second time was provided by the *RT*'s quoting of President Putin's statements from an interview on 5 June 2014. *Pravda.ru*'s less interest in the Ukraine conflict was evident in its apparently lower number of articles (302) with shorter length compared with *The Moscow Time* and *RT* (536 words on average). Manifestly *Pravda.ru* offered the shortest piece during the third period – only 86 words long announcing that Slavyansk's self-defence forces within the Donetsk region have shot down a Mi-24 helicopter of the Ukrainian Armed Forces (5 May 2014).

Table 5. 3: Press attention by the Russian media: 21.03. – 17.07.2014

	Quantity	Mean Length
The Moscow Times	560 (40%)	652
<i>RT</i>	543 (39%)	588
Pravda.ru	302 (21%)	536
Total	1,405	

4th period: 18. 07. 2014 – 28. 02. 2015.

The overall attention paid to the Ukraine conflict during the final time period covering seven months' worth of news slightly dropped. This is regardless of the fact that the attention radically intensified when the chaos reached a peak as Malaysian Flight MH17 was shot down on 17 July 2014 whilst constant shelling and fighting in Eastern Ukraine took place. The turmoil continued with many civilians reported killed in the ongoing conflict until the end of the period when international parties signed a peace deal. Similar to the first period, *RT* came on top with 583 pieces of news occupying 39% of the whole sample of 1,504 articles. The considerable attention given by *RT* to the Ukraine crisis is marked by a consistent tone in terms of Russia staying on the side-lines in the internal issues of Ukraine such as the downing of MH17, and the inhuman battling on the ground between new Kyiv and pro-Russia forces. *The Moscow Times*, nevertheless, strikingly reduced its interest in the Ukraine crisis compared to that in the previous three periods, with 493 out of 1,504 articles dealing with it. The newspaper still offered more perspectives regarding the issue. The mean length stayed stable at 677 words. *Pravda.ru* in contrast increased attention to the crisis not only by its reporting quantity of 428 articles, but also by its increased mean length of 561 words. During this final time period, the most

extensive and shortest coverage were provided by the *RT* offering 4,560-word item on Russia's discontent over the aggressive Western bodies by quoting from an interview with the Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov (28 September 2014) and by *Pravda.ru* (13 October 2014), briefing about the Governor of People's Republic of Donetsk being severely attacked on the territory controlled by the People's Republic of Donetsk.

Table 5. 4: Press attention by the Russian media: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015

	Quantity	Mean Length
RT	583 (39%)	614
The Moscow Times	493 (33%)	677
Pravda.ru	428 (19%)	561
Total	1,504	

5.3 Framing of the Ukraine Crisis

1st period: 30. 11. 2013 – 26. 02. 2014.

Generic news frames.

The third research question focused on the frames used by the Russian news media during the Ukraine crisis. First, the coverage in all three outlets during the first period revealed a high level of interest in the conflict frame. Overall, the media outlets framed 41% of their coverage using the conflict frame, 7% of the coverage used the morality frame while the human-interest frame was visible in 6.4% of the articles (Table 5.5). In comparison, the amount of coverage framed using the economic consequences frame, the responsibility frame, and the nationalisation

frame, was 15%, 24%, and 5% respectively. Thus, the responsibility frame came second behind the conflict one with the majority of the coverage focusing on the protests, radical groups, the opposition party in Ukraine plotting a coup with support from the US, and the West's interference in the country. This was followed by the economic consequences frame with an overall of 15% of the coverage mainly highlighting the pros and cons of the offers from the EU and Russia. The morality frame (23 articles) was used less than half as often as the economic consequences one among the whole of 312 articles (7%). *RT* contributed more than half of that quantity. Similarly, the human-interest frame was generally the fifth favoured frame with 20 articles in total, *The Moscow Times* using it half of these times. All three media outlets published a similar number of articles using the nationalisation frame amounting to a total of 17, thus making it the least applied generic frame.

Table 5. 5: Distribution of Generic frames by the Russian media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014
(1st period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	Total
Conflict	42 (33%)	55 (47%)	32 (48%)	129 (41%)
Responsibility	39 (30%)	24 (21%)	12 (18%)	75 (24%)
Economic consequences	20 (16%)	21 (18%)	7 (10%)	48 (15%)
Morality	15 (12%)	1 (1%)	7 (10%)	23 (7%)
Human interest	6 (5%)	11 (9%)	3 (5%)	20 (6%)
Nationalisation	6 (5%)	5 (4%)	6 (9%)	17 (5%)
Total	128	117	67	312

Looking at the individual media in more detail, it is notable that *The Moscow Times* used the conflict frame the most – in 55 out of 117 articles (47%) – offering

various perspectives and voices regarding the early stage of the Ukraine conflict. Notably *The Moscow Times* ran counter to the overall framing tendency of using the generic frames (the morality, human-interest, and nationalisation frames). The newspaper, nevertheless, used a similar quantity of the economic consequences frame as *RT*, focusing on the positive and negative aspects of the deals from the EU and Russia. For example, *The Moscow Times* claimed that ‘there is no guarantee his [Yanukovich’s] country of 46 million will now follow Putin’s declared will in joining a Moscow-led Customs Union with Belarus and Kazakhstan – a precursor of the Eurasian Union which Putin envisages’ (*The Moscow Times*, 2 December 2013). On the same day, *RT* showed a more unequivocal position. In a news article titled ‘Ukrainian opposition wouldn’t sign “suicidal” EU agreement’, the media quoted Mateusz Piskorski, Director of the European Centre of Geopolitical Analysis:

I think for the moment being any kind of association and signing a deeper and more comprehensive fair trade agreement between the EU and Ukraine would be a kind of economic suicide for Ukrainian side [...] [T]he EU is not capable of compensating all the financial losses that Ukraine would encounter in case of closer cooperation with the EU. [...] This pro-European rhetoric aims at causing internal crisis and early elections, perhaps next year (*RT*, 2 December 2013).

As Table 5.5 shows, *The Moscow Times* used more human-interest frames with 11 articles, whereas the morality frame was the least used one occupying only 1% of the whole sample. The morality frame, however, received higher prominence in both *RT* and *Pravda.ru*, being the 4th and the 3rd used frame respectively. *RT* in particular, offered 15 articles – 12% of the overall coverage expressing

dissatisfaction with the moral weakness of the European bodies in terms of their double-standard policy towards Russia, their immorally direct meddling in other country's internal issues, as well as the aggressive propaganda in the Western mainstream media. The human interest and nationalisation frames shared the same quantity of 6 articles each provided by the *RT*, representing 5% of 128 articles. Although the nationalisation frame was rarely used by *The Moscow Times* and *RT*, *Pravda.ru* tended to utilise the frame in 9% of its articles, a similar quantity to the morality frame. What *Pravda.ru* used the least was the human-interest frame with merely 3 articles, briefly narrating how the protestors were injured.

Diagnostic and prognostic framing.

Next, the study explored the prevalence of each diagnosis and prognosis among the selected set of Russian media. On the whole, the vast majority of the articles (71%) offered to their readers explanations of the cause of the Ukraine crisis, but only a small number of articles (11%) offered solutions. Table 5.6 shows that, overall, the global dimensions came on top with a total of 62% of the coverage explaining the root of the Ukraine crisis and the current situation between the West and the East. *RT* and *Pravda.ru*, in particular, used the global dimensions frame to label the West as offensive and interfering in the Ukraine crisis. One example is a leaked phone call (between Assistant Secretary of State for Europe – Victoria Nuland and US ambassador to Ukraine – Geoffrey Pyatt) before the collapse of Yanukovich, in which Nuland vocally nominated Arseniy Yatsenyuk to be the future leader in Kyiv. And Yatsenyuk became the new Prime Minister. As *RT* quoted the conversation and reported:

“I don’t think that Klitschko should go into the government. [...] I don’t think it is a good idea,” Nuland said. “[J]ust let him stay out and do his political homework,” a male voice - believed to be Pyatt - replied. “In terms of the process moving ahead, we want to keep the moderate democrats together,” he said. [...] Nuland added that she has also been told that UN chief Ban Ki-moon is about to appoint the former Dutch ambassador to Kyiv, Robert Serry, as his representative to Ukraine. “That would be great I think to help glue this thing and have the UN glue it and you know, f**k the EU,” she said in apparent reference to their differences over policies. “We’ve got to do something to make it stick together, because you can be pretty sure that if it does start to gain altitude the Russians will be working behind the scenes to try to torpedo it,” Pyatt replied. The leaked chat fuels earlier allegations that Washington is heavily meddling in the Ukrainian political crisis by manipulating the pro-EU opposition and helping it in its efforts to oust President Viktor Yanukovich (RT, 6 February 2014).

Table 5. 6: Distribution of Diagnostic frames by the Russian media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014 (1st period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	Total
Global dimensions	46 (52%)	49 (42%)	15 (5%)	137 (62%)
Particular triggers	26 (30%)	13 (11%)	1 (3%)	40 (18%)
Political causes	9 (10%)	25 (21%)	6 (20%)	40 (18%)
Human rights violations	7 (8%)	9 (8%)	7 (23%)	23 (10%)
Socio-economic	0	8 (7%)	1 (3%)	9 (4%)
Religious	0	0	0	0
Total	88 (69%)	104 (89%)	30 (45%)	222 (71%)⁴

⁴ The overall distribution of the diagnostic frames: 222 out of 312 articles (71%).

Political causes and particular triggers were mentioned significantly less both at 18%. The human rights violations were less frequently cited with 10%, while socio-economic causes were discussed in 4% of the coverage. The articles did not mention the religious factor at all. The same tendency with regard to religious considerations is found in the subsequent periods as well. This could be explained by the fact that although Ukraine can be seen as a religious diverse society, there is a majority shared religion across the whole of Ukraine. It is predominantly Orthodox Christian (Bremer, 2016). Thus, religion would not be a dividing factor in relation to the Ukraine crisis.

As Table 5.6 shows, *The Moscow Times* offered the highest number of diagnostic frames in 89% of its sample, whereas *RT* provided somewhat less – in 69% of cases. This was followed by *Pravda.ru* with 45%. The reason for *The Moscow Times*'s higher interest in diagnosis can be connected to its tendency to report on more dimensions and perspectives regarding the Ukraine conflict. For example, the socio-economic causes frame was suggested by the newspaper in eight articles, while *Pravda.ru* published only one, with non mentioning this in the *RT*. For instance, *The Moscow Times* talked about the differences between Russia and Ukraine: The former had oil to benefit its people, the latter did not. Thus, the people in Kyiv were less likely reliant on their government:

Ukraine has no oil. The 3 million residents of Kyiv must survive by other means. As a result, they do not feel indebted to their leaders and cannot be confined to a petrodollar pecking order. For them, [...] Yanukovich is not an alpha male like Putin, bequeathing pensions and food packages from on high. He is just one of the reasons that the average

resident of Kyiv slugs it out at low-paying jobs, struggling to pay bills and put bread on the table (*The Moscow Times*, 4 December 2013).

Another example came from *Pravda.ru* that used the socio-economic causes frame highlighting the harsh conditions for joining the EU:

[T]here is a threat that the country would split into three parts. But neither the West nor Russia are interested in the split of Ukraine. Eastern Ukraine and south-east feed all the other regions of Ukraine. But for the West (the EU), this scenario is disadvantageous because then they would have to feed western Ukraine. The [EU] is already feeding the Baltic states whose economy they've destroyed. Western conditions [...] are harsh and do not suit [Yanukovych's] clan, he refuses it, knowing that it would kill the entire Ukrainian industry (*Pravda.ru*, 12 December 2013).

The Moscow Times again bucked the trend in terms of favouring political causes (21%) over particular triggers (11%), followed by human rights violations (9 articles) representing 8%, which was close to the socio-economic causes frame at 7%. Contrary to *The Moscow Times* that suggested the Yanukovych government's crackdowns as the main reasons for the escalation the Ukraine crisis, *RT* preferred the particular triggers frame implying protesters, radical groups, and the new government's attacks were the roots of the crisis and were responsible for escalating the chaos in Kyiv. *RT* employed the political causes frame in 10% of their coverage highlighting the internal protest and power struggles between parties in Kyiv that led to the intensified conflict. *The Moscow Times*, on the other hand, largely suggested in its 21% articles that Yanukovych's refusal to sign the country's EU Association

Agreement directly triggered the turmoil. *Pravda.ru*'s reporting preference was running in parallel with that of *RT* in terms of using the political causes frame to highlight the role the opposition parties in Kyiv played in the Ukraine conflict. The particular triggers frame was only used once by the media. Beyond these two frames, *Pravda.ru* employed more human rights violations frames especially in the middle of January 2014. The media tended to be critical of Yanukovich's new law of criminalising protests which escalated riots in Kyiv:

“The increasing tension in Ukraine is a direct consequence of the government failing to acknowledge the legitimate grievances of its people. Instead, it has moved to weaken the foundations of Ukraine's democracy by criminalizing peaceful protest and stripping civil society and political opponents of key democratic protections under the law” [...] NSC spokesperson Caitlin Hayden said (*Pravda.ru*, 20 January 2014).

The vast majority of the Russian media (90%) did not provide prognostic solutions (Table 5.7). Among the 32 articles that offered prognosis, the external co-operation was the most frequently-offered solution with 18 articles in total by all three media outlets. The solutions included EU assistance or talks, cooperation either between Russian and the opposition party in Ukraine, or between Russia and the EU, and tripartite negotiations. *The Moscow Times* contributed most of these articles. The second solution the media tended to refer to were internal reforms, followed by change in government and financial intervention. The three media did not suggest military action and dismantling military weapons as possible solutions at all, due to the nature of the events during this period. Overall, the infrequent offer of prognosis especially by *RT* and *Pravda.ru* was consistent with their uses of the political causes

frame (diagnosis) emphasising the conflict as an internal struggle, and with the responsibility and morality frames (generic) blaming the West's direct and immoral interferences in Ukraine's domestic affairs.

Table 5. 7: Distribution of Prognostic frames by the Russian media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014
(1st period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	Total
External co-operation	3 (50%)	13 (68%)	2 (29%)	18 (56%)
Internal reforms	1 (17%)	3 (16%)	3 (43%)	7 (22%)
Change in government	1 (17%)	2 (11%)	2 (29%)	5 (16%)
Financial intervention	1 (17%)	1 (5%)	0	2 (6%)
Total	6 (19%)	19 (59%)	7 (22%)	32 (10%)⁵

2nd period: 27. 02. – 20. 03. 2014.

Generic news frames.

A similar analysis was carried out with reference to the second time period studied here – 27 February 2014 – 20 March 2014. With the total number of 401 articles of coverage attention, the three media outlets framed the Ukraine crisis using the conflict frame in 40% of the whole sample (Table 5.8). As Figure 5.8.1 shows, the overall ranking of generic frames did not change, with minimal shifts among the media outlets. The responsibility frame came second at 21%. The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth commonly used frames were economic consequences, morality, human-interest, and nationalisation frames, respectively. Among these four frames, the

⁵ The overall distribution of the prognostic frames: 32 out of 312 articles (10%).

media used 3% more morality and human-interest frames. On the one hand, *Pravda.ru* contributed extensively to the proliferation of morality frame, from 7% to 17% of the overall coverage attention. The frame moved to second most prominent (17%) during this period from third (10%) in the previous period in *Pravda.ru*. There was a minor difference in the use of the responsibility frame (15%). The media's position became clearer in relation to the Crimean issue and the constant accusations from the West. For example, 59% of the 17 morality frames were critical of western irresponsibility. This included their propaganda in the mainstream media that circulated biased coverage, and their politicians being supportive of the newly self-proclaimed Kyiv government that Russia considered illegitimate. 41% of the morality frames criticised the radical protesters in Kyiv as fascist, and condemned the media disinformation coming from Kyiv.

Table 5. 8: Distribution of Generic frames by the Russian media: 27.02. – 20.03.2014 (2nd period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	Total
Conflict	62 (42%)	62 (40%)	38 (38%)	162 (40%)
Responsibility	45 (31%)	25 (16%)	15 (15%)	85 (21%)
Economic consequences	6 (4%)	42 (27%)	7 (10%)	55 (14%)
Morality	17 (12%)	6 (4%)	17 (17%)	40 (10%)
Human interest	9 (6%)	20 (13%)	6 (6%)	35 (9%)
Nationalisation	7 (5%)	0	12 (12%)	19 (5%)
Total	146 (36%)	155 (39%)	100 (25%)	401

On the other hand, *The Moscow Times* tended to employ 4% more human-interest frames compared to the previous period offering assessments from involved individuals from multiple angles. For example, the media published 20% of the

human-interest framed articles giving details on Yanukovych's wealth and corruption, and the asset freezing of his political and personal circles; 10% of the items revealed the fact that many people willingly rushed to Russia from Ukraine due to the on-going violence in the country. 10% concentrated on the issue of radical Ukrainians who had been actively participating in the conflict. The media also presented the Moscow-based Ukrainians' voice that were critical of Russia's role in the conflict, and the Russian journalists who were harassed in Ukraine. Another observable difference from *The Moscow Times* is the employment of the economic consequences frame, where the media committed nearly half of the 42 articles to demonstrate the ailing economy in Russia because of the country's involvement in the conflict and the Western sanctions. The economic consequences frame, however, was the least used one by the *RT* in only 6 out of 146 articles, 3 of which were optimistic that the economic sanctions from the West would not affect Russia. For example, *RT* on 13 March 2014 published an article titled: 'Western sanctions will only strengthen Russian industry – Rogozin':

Earlier this week, veteran Russian parliamentarian and head of the Liberal Democratic Party Vladimir Zhirinovskiy told reporters that the sanctions would not have any negatively [*sic*] impact on the Russian economy directly. "*The USA is ready to support anyone if this would help them spite Russia, this is still the remnants of the Cold War,*" the politician noted (*RT*, 13 March 2014).

In another report, *RT* informed: 'The Ukrainian parliament has adopted an anti-crisis bill proposed by the IMF to secure an international financial aid package.

Ordinary Ukrainians will have to tighten their belts to help the coup-installed government keep the collapsing economy afloat’ (28 March 2014).

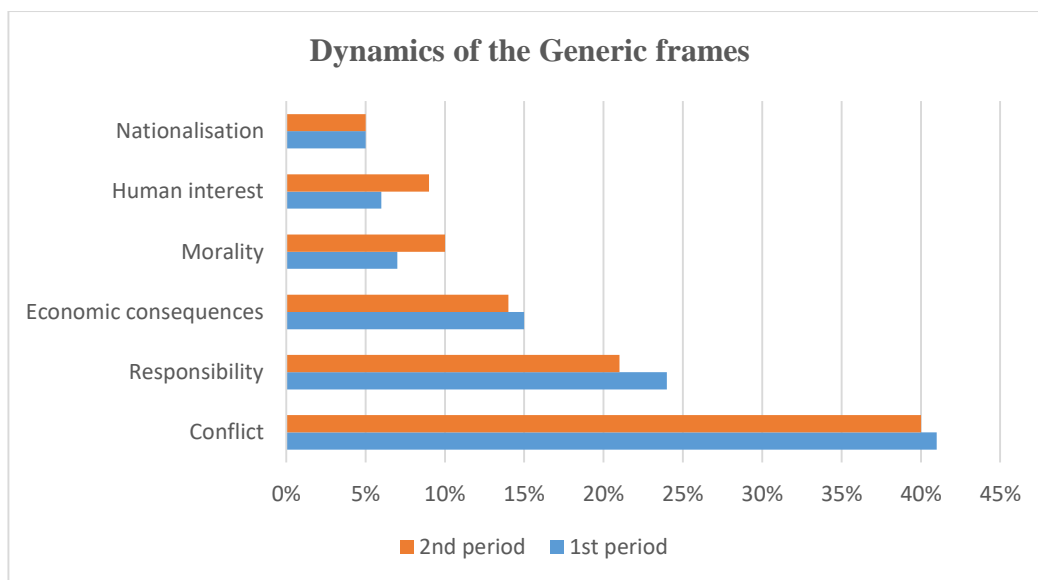


Figure 5. 8. 1

In addition to the decrease in the use of this frame, *RT* increased by 10 percentage points the use of the conflict frame stressing the confrontations between groups within Ukraine and the disagreement among western politicians, thus implying that there was no war between Russia and Ukraine over Crimea, but only conflict with the West. This point was further evident in the media’s use of the responsibility frame (45 articles) in 31% of its whole sample of 146 articles, rendering a large portion (16 articles) of these to a discussion of Russia’s role as peace keeper. A similar quantity of 17 articles were focused on accusing the West of ushering in the pro-longed mess.

Diagnostic and prognostic framing.

Unlike the first time period with vast majority of the news offering diagnosis, the second period saw only 39% diagnostic framing. *RT* provided the most diagnostic

frames with 43% of its articles using these frames, while *The Moscow Times* offered slightly lesser diagnosis at 39%. *Pravda.ru* remained identical to the previous period being the media outlet that least used diagnostic framing. In spite of the overall decrease in diagnosis, the global dimensions frame stayed on top of the list (Table 5.9), with an increase in the use of the frame by *Pravda.ru* which interpreted the conflict as the result of power struggle between the West and the East. Likewise, *RT* clarified the issue with a stronger line that NATO's expansion eastward was the main root of the current situation in Ukraine (Figure 5.9.1).

Table 5. 9: Distribution of Diagnostic frames by the Russian media: 27.02. – 20.03.2014 (2nd period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	Total
Global dimensions	24 (38%)	49 (82%)	19 (58%)	92 (59%)
Human rights violations	30 (48%)	7 (12%)	5 (15%)	42 (27%)
Particular triggers	8 (13%)	1 (1%)	2 (6%)	11 (7%)
Political causes	1 (2%)	3 (5%)	6 (18%)	10 (6%)
Socio-economic	0	0	1 (3%)	1 (0.6%)
Religious	0	0	0	0
Total	63 (43%)	60 (39%)	33 (33%)	156 (39%)

For example, the media reviewed NATO's role in the case of Kosovo crisis and accused NATO of artificially creating the conflict between Yugoslav forces and Kosovan Liberation Army fighters backed by the West. The created crisis was a pretext for NATO intervention, just like the 2003 Iraq WMD crisis:

The KLA's job was to carry out attacks on Yugoslav forces, provoke a violent response from Belgrade, which could then be used as a pretext for NATO intervention to destroy an independent, socialist country which had resisted globalization. A "crisis" had to be created in order to justify the NATO military action. Four years later, we had the Iraq WMD "crisis." Something had to be done about Saddam's deadly weapons which threatened us all, western leaders told us. We couldn't wait for the team of UN weapons inspectors to finish their job (RT, 14 March 2014).

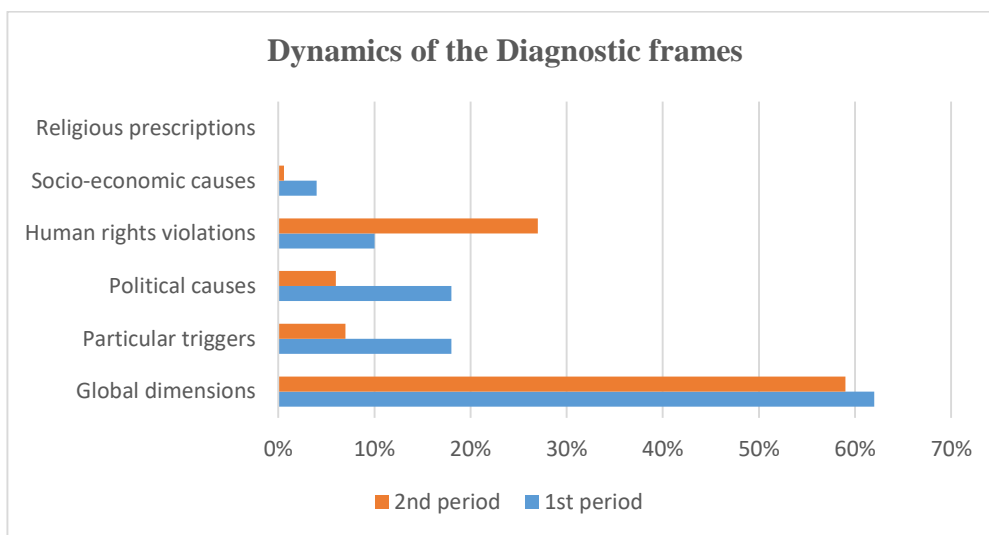


Figure 5. 9. 1

Quite a different interpretation was given by *The Moscow Times* which dedicated 82% of its diagnostic frames to elucidating that the worsened Ukraine conflict including the Crimean annexation was the result of Russia's regional ambition. For example, the newspaper published 1,196-word coverage to discuss President Putin's imperial ambitions in the context of the Crimean Referendum:

As soon as Putin starts devouring a chunk of Ukraine and really savoring it, the more Ukrainian territory he will want. As a harbinger to this

expansion, pro-Kremlin Sergei Aksyonov, who seized power on Feb. 27 and declared himself Crimea's new prime minister, went on television Sunday to address residents in Ukraine's southern and eastern regions, which have Russian-speaking majorities. [...] The imperial euphoria over annexing Crimea will probably last for a month or two (*The Moscow Times*, 14 March 2014).

Following the global dimensions frame that remained the most used diagnosis frame, Figure 5.9.1 illustrates a significant shift in the human rights violations frame with an increased use from 10% to 27%, which *RT* (30 articles) contributed most to. Out of these articles, there were 25 suggesting that the new Ukrainian government revoking the Russian language law violated peoples' rights and this was the main reason for the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine. The point has been manifested in *Pravda.ru* that went further suggesting that the safety of Russian speakers in Ukraine should be taken into consideration. This was also evident in the use of next favoured diagnosis – particular triggers, as both *RT* and *Pravda.ru* attributed the persistent havoc to Ukrainian nationalists' violence seizing local buildings and threatening the lives of people. What *Pravda.ru* endorsed more with regards to the conflict is the political coup in Kyiv conducted by the opposition parties, which forced Yanukovich to flee the country. For instance, *Pravda.ru* talked about how unknown individuals seized and raised Russian flags over the buildings of the Crimean Parliament, and explained the reason for the ongoing turmoil: 'The power in Ukraine was changed on February 22nd, when the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine dismissed President Viktor Yanukovich from power. The coup caused a wave of protests among pro-Russian Ukrainians' (*Pravda.ru*, 27 February 2014).

Table 5. 10: Distribution of Prognostic frames by the Russian media: 27.02. – 20.03.2014
(2nd period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	Total
Military action	15 (79%)	0	3 (60%)	18 (58%)
External co-operation	2 (11%)	2 (29%)	0	4 (13%)
Internal reforms	1 (5%)	2 (29%)	1 (20%)	4 (13%)
Financial intervention	2 (11%)	2 (29%)	0	4 (13%)
Change in government	0	1 (14%)	1 (20%)	2 (6%)
Total	19 (13%)	7 (5%)	5 (5%)	31 (8%)

The preference of the prognostic frames significantly changed among the Russian media over the second time period, although the total percentage of prognosis remained nearly the same (Table 5.10). First of all, as an absent element during the first period, the military action was put onto the news agenda between 27 February and 20 March 2014 (Figure 5.10.1). *RT* in particular made the most outstanding increase, followed by *Pravda.ru*. *The Moscow Times* did not take note of this solution. There were 15 articles suggesting military action to resolve the Ukraine conflict by *RT*, among which 12 invariably followed the rhetoric that Russia could send troops to Eastern Ukraine and Crimea to protect ethnic Russians. Second, the previously often suggested solution of change in government decreased dramatically dropping to the very bottom of the list with only two occurrences. *The Moscow Times* and *Pravda.ru* promoted the solution only once each. Both put a focus on requiring new leaders from different parties to be in power in Kyiv. Third, the external co-operation, internal reforms, and financial intervention frames were used

an equal number of times, with *The Moscow Times* and *RT* employing these frames the most.

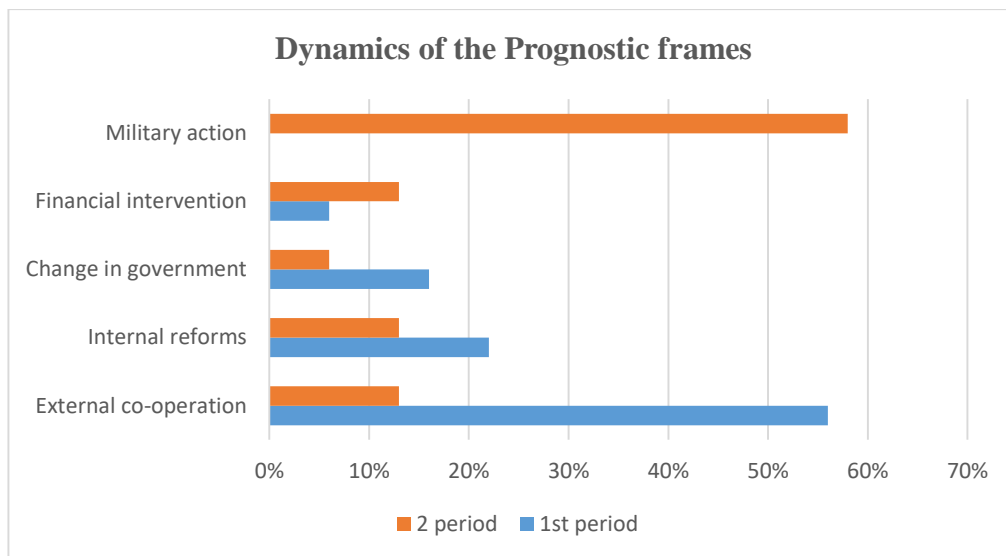


Figure 5. 10. 1

3rd period: 21. 03. – 17. 07. 2014.

Generic news frames.

The subsequent third period encompassed a longer time frame – from 21 March to 17 July 2014 – with a total number of 1,405 pieces of news on the subject. The overall journalistic practice in the generic frames remained identical to that of the previous period, although the use of the human-interest frame noticeably increased from 9% to 15% and became the third most frequently used generic frame (Table 5.11). These frames are outlined in order of significance: the conflict frame (54%), the responsibility frame (20%), the human-interest frame (15%), the economic consequences frame (7%), the morality frame (3%), and the nationalisation frame (1%).

Table 5. 11: Distribution of Generic frames by the Russian media: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	Total
Conflict	284 (52%)	299 (53%)	169 (56%)	752 (54%)
Responsibility	100 (18%)	111 (20%)	69 (23%)	280 (20%)
Human interest	99 (18%)	74 (13%)	37 (12%)	210 (15%)
Economic consequences	27 (5%)	55 (10%)	11 (4%)	93 (7%)
Morality	23 (4%)	19 (3%)	7 (2%)	49 (3%)
Nationalisation	10 (2%)	2 (0.3%)	9 (3%)	21 (1%)
Total	543 (39%)	560 (40%)	302 (21%)	1,405

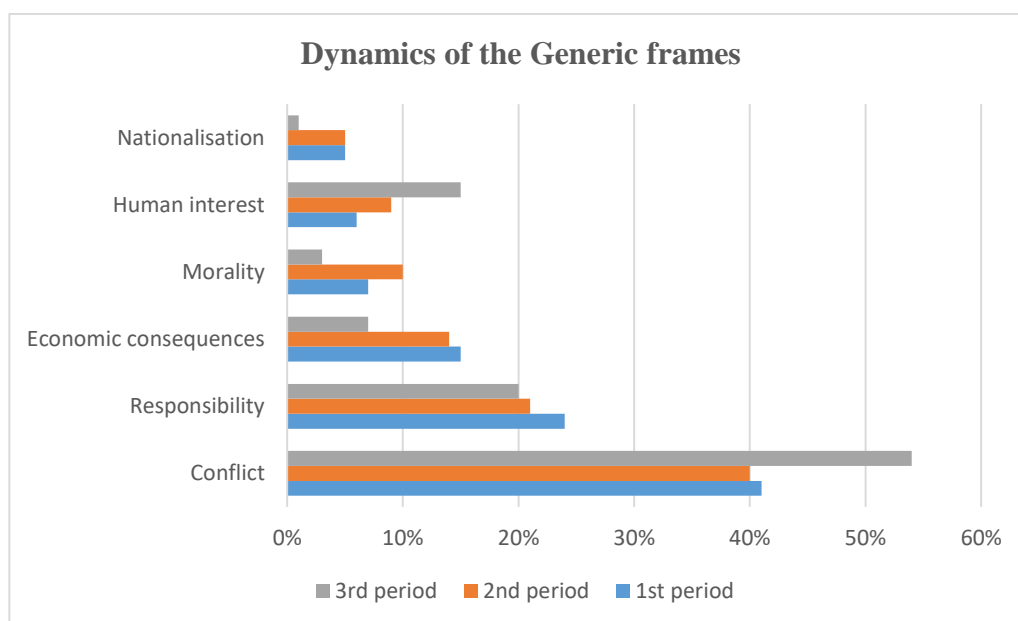


Figure 5. 11. 1

It is also worth noting that while the Russian media increased the use of the conflict frame by 14 percentage points, there was a major drop in the uses of the economic consequence, morality, and nationalisation frames, by an average of 6 percentage points. With regards to change in focus, first of all, *The Moscow Times*

tended to divert attention from the implications of the fall of the Russian economy, to multiple-dimensional analyses including the cost of Crimean integration, the anabatic economic downturn in Ukraine, and the financial aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Second, *RT* and *Pravda.ru* in particular, showed less interest in the use of the morality frame, although the general message in the media remained critical of the new Kyiv's behaviour and the West's involvement. Third, the media that most applied the nationalisation frame during the last two periods, *Pravda.ru* significantly reduced its use in this period, by 9 percentage points. Last but not least, *RT* used the human-interest frame three times more, whilst *Pravda.ru* doubled its usage, and *The Moscow Times* remained unchanged at 13% of the coverage attention.

Table 5. 11. 1: The use of the responsibility frame by *The Moscow Times*: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

Blames on	Percentage (out of 111 items)
Russia	54%
The West	7%
The Ukrainian political elites	3%
Yanukovych	3%
Pro-Russian gunmen	3%
Fascists in Ukraine	1%
Suggestions of solutions and requiring actions	30%

The focus moves to looking at the three media individually in terms of the generic frames. To begin with, *The Moscow Times* as a media that offered the most coverage remained critical of the issues regarding the Ukraine crisis. For example, as shown in Table 5.11.1 above, out of the 111 articles that used the responsibility

frame, 60 (54%) put the blame on Russia as responsible for the ongoing conflict. The rest of the articles placed blame on the West in 8 pieces (7%), the Ukrainian political elites in 3 articles (3%), Yanukovych in 3 articles (3%), pro-Russian gunmen in 3 articles (3%), and the fascists in Ukraine in 1 piece of news (1%). The media continued to provide various perspectives in its uses of the human interest, economic consequences, and morality frames. The nationalisation frame was used in only 2 of its total sample of 560 articles.

Table 5. 11. 2: The use of the responsibility frame by *Pravda.ru*: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

Blames on	Percentage (out of 69 items)
Kyiv	26%
The West	23%
The western media	10%
The U.S.	10%
Suggestions of solutions and requiring actions	30%

Pravda.ru tended to use most the responsibility frame (Table 5.11.2), with 18 out of 69 articles (26%) blaming the Junta in new Kyiv for the political coup and the constant attacks on their own people. 16 articles (23%) accused the West (NATO, US, EU) of irresponsibly supporting what had been happening in Ukraine and the extremist party Red Sector. Seven articles (10%) were critical of Western media in terms of their irresponsible and what the media considered to be ‘unreal’ reporting. In another 7 articles (10%) the media expressed strong discontent particularly with the United States.

In addition, the media doubled the use of the human-interest frame in comparison with the last period. *Pravda.ru* highlighted the coverage of mistreated Russian journalists and victims in Eastern Ukraine due to the 'Kyiv junta' ordering an Anti-Terrorism Operation (2 July 2014). In a report regarding 7,000 Ukrainian refugees that had been settled and transported across cities in Russia, following the new Kyiv's punitive operation in Donbass, *Pravda.ru* contended: 'The flow of refugees from the South-East of Ukraine to Russia has increased dramatically since June against the backdrop of combat clashes in Donbass' (*Prvda.ru*, 7 July 2014). Later, the media referring to the new Kyiv's shelling in Donetsk where people had been forced to take refuge, wrote: 'Constant attacks on checkpoints on the border with Russia seriously complicate the condition of refugees. Checkpoints do not work during attacks, and many refugees have to wait, while staying in the zone of fire' (*Pravda.ru*, 10 July 2014).

Despite the lesser use of the economic consequences frame by the media, the articles remained positive regarding the Western sanctions caliming that the Russian economy would improve in the long run. On the other hand, the media described the 'rescue packages' from the IMF in a negative light in 3 articles:

Ukraine will never see one dollar of the IMF money. What the IMF is going to do is to substitute Ukrainian indebtedness to the IMF for Ukrainian indebtedness to Western banks. The IMF will hand over the money to the Western banks, and the Western banks will reduce Ukraine's indebtedness by the amount of IMF money. Instead of being indebted to the banks, Ukraine will now be indebted to the IMF (*Pravda.ru*, 31 March 2014).

Pravda.ru also implied that the conditional financial aid from the IMF would not benefit Ukraine:

The IMF conditions that will be imposed on the struggling Ukraine population will consist of severe reductions in old-age pensions, in government services, in government employment, and in subsidies for basic consumer purchases such as natural gas. Already low living standards will plummet. In addition, Ukrainian public assets and Ukrainian owned private industries will have to be sold off to Western purchasers (*Pravda.ru*, 31 March 2014).

With regard to the morality frame, *Pravda.ru* described the West and new Kyiv as immoral evils while worshipping Russia for protecting its people.

What was the most noteworthy change in *RT*'s use of the generic frames, was the tripling of the human-interest frame from 6% to 18% in the coverage (Table 5.11.3): with 99 articles using the frame, 31 articles (31%) giving details about how foreign journalists especially Russian ones were severely victimised and killed in Ukraine; 29 articles (29%) concentrating on the viciously affected sufferers and refugees in Eastern Ukraine due to the brutality carried out by the new Kyiv authority including the far-right wing. Another 25 pieces (25%) focused on different stories but all placed Ukraine in a negative light. For example, allegations of massacre/genocide by the new Kyiv forces were significantly underlined by the *RT*, painting a picture of what was a volatile and intricate actuality on the ground. In reporting the shelling in the South-Eastern city of Slavyansk, *RT* wrote:

Many of the people gathering in central Slavyansk told Phillips [RT's stringer] that they are frightened for their lives and do not want any Ukrainian military sent by the “*Kyiv junta*” in their city. One woman interviewed by Phillips appealed to Russia and personally to President Vladimir Putin for help, saying the people are getting desperate. The others had a message for US President Barack Obama, whom they blame for the chaotic developments in Ukraine (RT, 2 May 2014).

Table 5. 11. 3: The use of the human-interest frame by RT: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

	Percentage (out of 99 items)
Foreign journalists	31%
Eastern sufferers and refugees	29%
Negative descriptions of Ukraine	25%
Other individuals	14%

The message remained critical of the West and Ukraine and was demonstrated in the RT's responsibility frame (100) where the media blamed Ukraine's new authority (illegitimate) in 22 articles (22%):

Following months of deadly protests, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich was ousted and replaced by a self-appointed government on February 22. Russia slammed the coup-appointed government as illegitimate and said it had violated the Ukrainian constitution by setting elections for May 25 (RT, 16 April 2014).

As Table 5.11.4 below shows, *RT* also suggested that the West should take the responsibility for the devastation in 21 articles (21%). Quite like *Pravda.ru*, *RT* published 13 articles (13%) to specifically blame the US. The blame was also attributed to the nationalists in Kyiv in 7 articles (7%), and in 1 article (1%) discontentment was expressed over Poland for following the West and stirring the Ukraine conflict.

Table 5. 11. 4: The use of the responsibility frame by *RT*: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

Blames on	Percentage (out of 100 items)
New Kyiv	22%
The West	21%
The U.S.	13%
Nationalists in Ukraine	7%
Poland	1%
Suggestions of solutions and requiring actions	36%

Diagnostic and prognostic framing.

Compared to the second period, the diagnostic framing offered by the Russian media slightly increased from 39% to 49% (683 out of 1,405 articles). Table 5.12 clearly shows that the particular triggers frame came first occupying 50% of the coverage, with *RT* contributing the most to it, while *The Moscow Times* devoted the least attention with 55 out of 339 articles. The second most used diagnosis was the global dimensions frame with 222 articles and *The Moscow Times* contained half of them (Figure 5.12.1). The third most common diagnostic frame was the human rights

violations one, followed by the political causes, socio-economic causes, and religious prescriptions frames.

Table 5. 12: Distribution of Diagnostic frames by the Russian media: 21.03. – 17.07.2014
(3rd period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	Total
Particular triggers	196 (63%)	55 (31%)	88 (45%)	339 (50%)
Global dimensions	53 (17%)	113 (63%)	56 (29%)	222 (33%)
Human rights violations	42 (14%)	6 (3%)	32 (16%)	80 (12%)
Political causes	18 (6%)	6 (3%)	29 (15%)	53 (8%)
Socio-economic	15 (5%)	0	11 (6%)	26 (4%)
Religious	0	0	2 (1%)	2 (0.3%)
Total	309 (57%)	180 (32%)	194 (64%)	683 (49%)

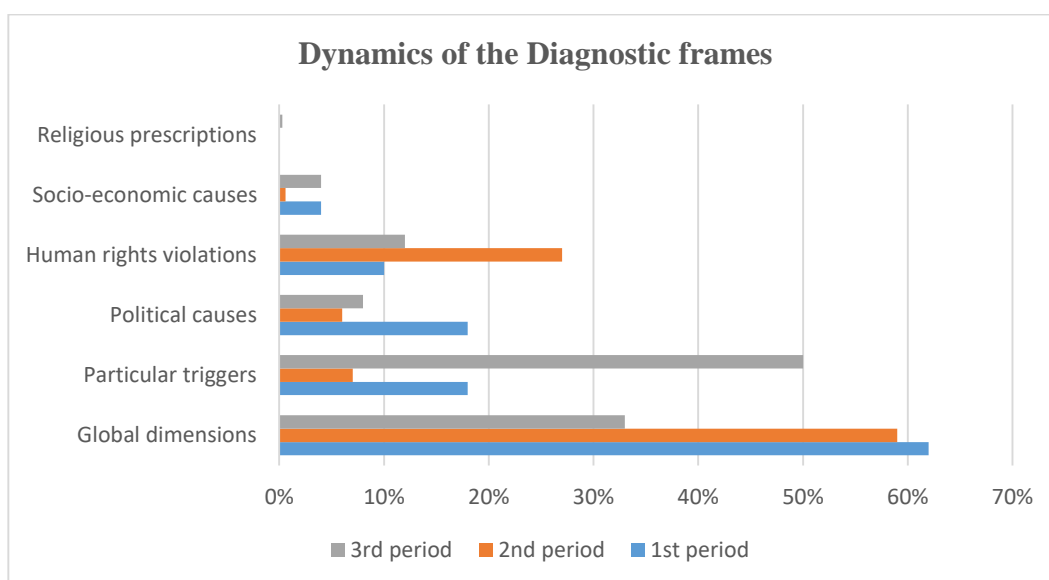


Figure 5. 12. 1

Among the three media outlets, *Pravda.ru* dedicated more of its space (64%) to suggesting diagnosis compared to *RT* and *The Moscow Times*, with a rise in the

use of particular triggers to explain the Ukraine conflict. *The Moscow Times* came last offering least diagnosis frames, preferring the global dimensions frame over the particular triggers. 57% of the *RT* sample offered diagnosis to explain the cause of the Ukraine conflict, 2/3 of which contained particular triggers. In line with the responsibility frame, both *RT* and *Pravda.ru* pointed fingers primarily towards the new Kyiv regime for ordering an Anti-Terrorism Operation, the Ultrationalists for fascist violence, and the Nazi Kyiv junta for the escalation of the Ukraine crisis. Conversely, *The Moscow Times* used the frame to suggest that pro-Russia separatists and eastern anti-Maidan protesters who shaped the unrest and violence, were the main reason for the chaotic developments in Ukraine.

The second diagnostic frame – global dimensions – was mainly favoured by *The Moscow Times* which used it in 62 out of 113 cases (55%) implying that Russia's regional ambitions were the roots of the Ukraine crisis. These included annexing the Crimean Peninsula, expanding the border via military threat to the region, and keeping its influence over 'next doors' which would this way stay in the Russian orbit. 43 articles (38%) spoke to the tug-of-war between the West and the East (e.g., the tit-for-tat sanctions between the EU and Russia) because of their own geo-political interests. *RT* and *Pravda.ru* used the frame to suggest that the Western expansionism was the main goal with regard to the Ukraine crisis. For example, alongside criticisms of Putin's attempt to rebuild influence over the region, *RT* also voiced strong condemnation of NATO and the EU:

[A]gainst promises that were given during the time of German reunification, the further expansion of NATO towards the east took place so that Russia slowly would become encircled. Then there were missiles stationed in Poland and Czech Republic...the Russian side has said that it

reduces its security, but the Western side was not interested in hearing that (*RT*, 25 March 2014).

Another example comes from *Pravda.ru*: ‘NATO enlargement, particularly to Ukraine, remains “an emotional and neuralgic” issue for Russia, but strategic policy considerations also underlie strong opposition to NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia’ (13 May 2014).

RT and *The Moscow Times* decreased the use of the human rights violations frame, although the overall tone remained the same. *RT* clearly focused on actions by the Ukrainian government, in terms of revoking Russian language, banning Russian TV and Russian journalists’ entrance to Ukraine, and conducting criminal Anti-Terrorism Operations in Eastern Ukraine. *Pravda.ru* kept in line with *RT*, but with harsher language calling the Western bodies and Kyiv ‘war criminals’ (*Pravda.ru*, 30 May 2014) due to their wrongdoings such as Anti-Terrorism Operations and the revoking of the Russian language. *The Moscow Times*, on the other hand, was critical of the country arguing that Russia violated Ukraine’s territorial sovereignty, thus breaking international law (*The Moscow Times*, 26 March 2014).

The political causes used by *Pravda.ru* underlined the political coup by the ‘coup-appointed junta in Kiev, designed, engineered and controlled from Washington’ (*Pravda.ru*, 3 May 2014) that triggered the long-lasting conflict in Ukraine. *RT* explained the political coup the same way, and further pointed out the fear that the riot could spread to Crimea. The two media also presented the socio-economic element to explain the conflict. For instance, *RT* made clear in 9 out of its 15 cases that due to Ukraine’s unpaid gas bill to Russia, the on-going battling (gas price negotiation) between the two countries continued. This directly affected the

overall situation of the Ukraine crisis. Additionally, people's safety and poverty in the region were another issue identified as causing the unrests in 7 articles.

Table 5. 13: Distribution of Prognostic frames by the Russian media: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	Total
Internal reforms	20 (45%)	6 (23%)	9 (43%)	35 (38%)
Military action	16 (36%)	3 (12%)	11 (53%)	30 (33%)
External co-operation	3 (7%)	8 (31%)	3 (14%)	14 (15%)
Financial intervention	1 (2%)	9 (35%)	0	10 (11%)
Dismantling weapons	8 (18%)	0	1 (5%)	9 (10%)
Change in government	6 (14%)	0	0	6 (7%)
Total	44 (8%)	26 (5%)	21 (7%)	91 (6%)

Table 5.13 above shows the use of the prognostic frames by the Russian media during the third time period: 21 March – 17 July 2014. Two key observations are stressed here: a rise in the use of the internal reforms frame and the first time use of the dismantling of weapons frame (Figure 5.13.1). Firstly, the internal reforms came on top appearing in 35 out of 91 articles (38%). *RT* and *Pravda.ru* in particular encouraged constitutional reform/federalisation, which would take into consideration the interests of all Ukrainian regions. Secondly, the dismantling weapons frame during this period was largely used by the *RT*. The media called all sides to disarm, with specific emphasis on Ukrainian nationalists who had been active in the battles on the ground.

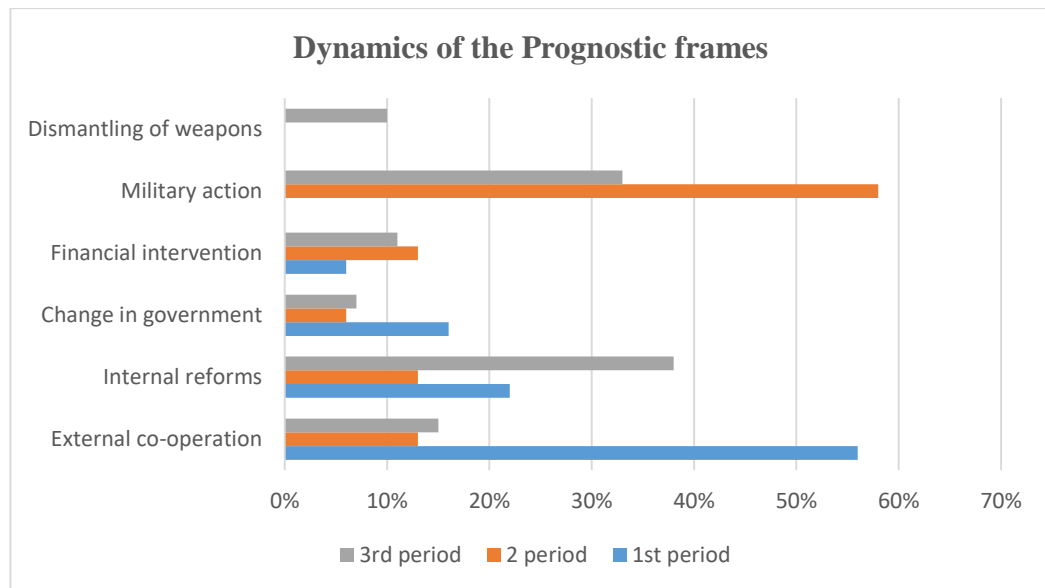


Figure 5. 13. 1

The second most suggested prognosis was military action. Again, *RT* and *Pravda.ru* contributed a large part to it. While *Pravda.ru* generally resisted any potential military action as a solution to the conflict in its 7 out of 11 cases (64%), *RT* simplified the solution encouraging the new Kyiv government to annul the army Anti-Terrorism Operations in Eastern Ukraine, in its 12 out of 16 articles (75%). The other prognostic frames that the Russian media tended to use were the external co-operation and the financial intervention ones, which featured predominantly in *The Moscow Times*. Lastly, change in government came occurred only 6 times, all of which nevertheless were offered by the *RT*, identified at its fourth most desired solution. For instance, having supported the referenda in Lugansk and Donetsk regions which took place on 11 May 2014, the media wrote: ‘Kyiv Nazi authorities are the only obstacle to peace in Ukraine [...] which must be removed from power’ (*RT*, 18 May 2014).

4th period: 18. 07. 2014 – 28. 02. 2015.

Generic news frames.

The final time period covered seven months' worth of news coverage of the Ukraine conflict from 18 July 2014 to 28 February 2015, with a total number of 1,540 articles. The general trend in the use of the generic frames slightly differed from the third period (Figure 5.14.1). First and foremost, the morality frame surpassed the economic consequences frame, occupying third and fourth place respectively in the ranking (Table 5.14). While the ratio remained unchanged in *The Moscow Times* that condemned the Kremlin's lack of moral stance, *RT* and *Pravda.ru* used the morality frame 5% more often compared to the previous period. The spearhead of the attacks from the latter two media were aimed directly at the US for covering up the truth with regards to Ukraine's wrongdoings including chemical attacks in the South-Eastern region. An example of this frame is the following piece by *RT* titled 'Lavrov: US must stop acting like global prosecutor, judge and executioner':

Washington relies on unconfirmed reports or spins facts on purpose. Once they claimed the footage showed a helicopter downed in Ukraine while in reality it happened in Syria. There were multiple cases when false data was used to back up a public statement or a call for action. [...] Some use lies on purpose, some make statements based on unconfirmed online reports. (*RT*, 28 September 2014).

Table 5. 14: Distribution of Generic frames by the Russian media: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015
(4th period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	Total
Conflict	191 (33%)	242 (49%)	167 (39%)	600 (40%)
Responsibility	211 (36%)	128 (26%)	143 (33%)	482 (32%)
Human interest	94 (16%)	56 (11%)	53 (12%)	203 (13%)
Morality	55 (9%)	14 (3%)	31 (7%)	100 (7%)
Economic consequences	17 (3%)	45 (9%)	15 (4%)	77 (5%)
Nationalisation	15 (3%)	8 (2%)	19 (4%)	42 (3%)
Total	583	493	428	1,504

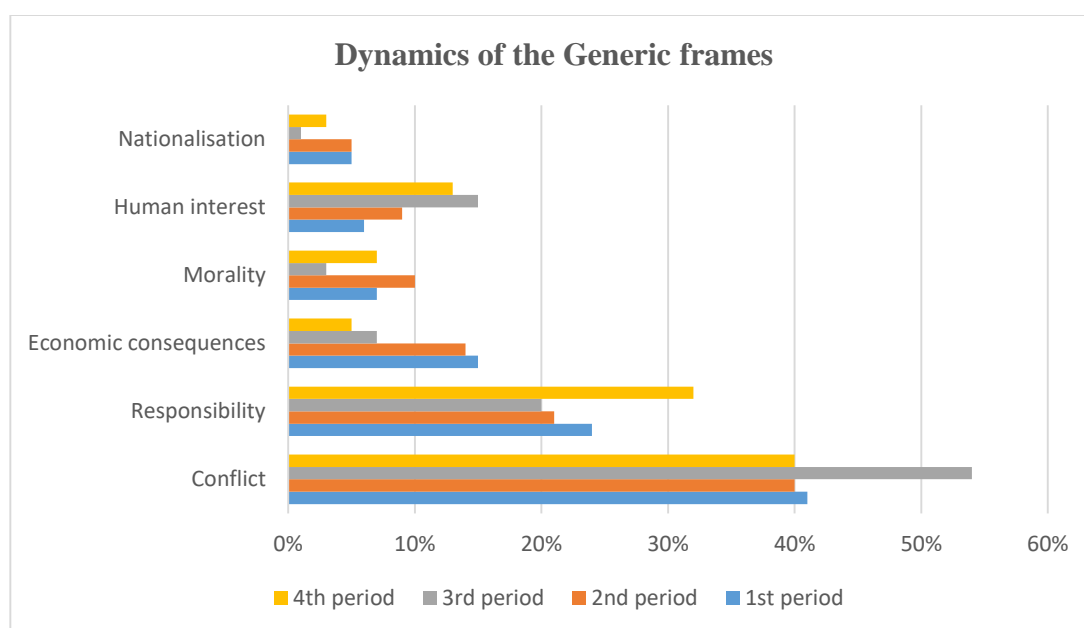


Figure 5. 14. 1

Moreover, although the position of the conflict and responsibility frames persisted, there was an intensification of the responsibility frame from 20% of the coverage attention in the previous period to 32% now, whereas the use of the conflict frame plunged to 40% from 54%. This is mainly due to the fact that *RT* doubled the

use of the responsibility frame in the blame game against Ukraine, followed by *Pravda.ru* that used the frame to lay accusations on the Western bodies and Ukraine. Days after the downing of MH17, *RT* claimed that the Ukraine crisis was a civil war with death toll of 1,100 and over 3,500 wounded. This was due to Poroshenko's administration continued bloody campaign including chemical threat: 'Human Rights Watch alleged that Kyiv is using indiscriminate Grad missiles to attack densely populated areas in Donetsk, which violates international humanitarian law, and also blames the militia for taking cover in the same areas' (*RT*, 28 July 2014). *The Moscow Times* continued to be critical of the crisis and offered various perspectives on the topic. The overall uses of the human interest, economic consequences, and nationalisation frames remained identical to the previous period, but with minor changes in individual media.

In addition to *RT*'s upsurge in the use of the morality frame during the fourth period, there was another change in the use of a generic frame: the responsibility frame overtook the conflict frame with 211 articles (36%) making it the most prominent frame. *RT* (Table 5.14.1) continued the trend set in the previous period – being resentful towards Ukraine's misconducts – 65 out of the 211 cases (31%), the West's interference in Ukraine and their double-standard policy against Russia – 51 articles (24%). The media drew attention to calling for an end to the conflict in 53 articles (25%) with focus on peace proposals and cease fire talks. Another practice that remained identical to the previous period was the blaming of the US, in particular for interfering in the conflict (9 articles) at 4%.

Table 5. 14. 1: The use of the responsibility frame by *RT*: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

Blames on	Percentage (out of 211 items)
New Kyiv	31%
The West	24%
Require an end to the war	25%
The U.S.	4%
Suggestions of solutions	16%

The next most frequently used generic frame by *RT* was the human-interest frame in 94 articles (16%). The items gave extensive coverage to the victims in South-Eastern Ukraine where the new Kyiv had been carrying out military shelling. A smaller portion of items focused on badly mistreated Russian journalists. In the case of the less frequently used economic consequences frame, 7 out of 17 articles (41%) stressed that EU sanctions would backfire and potentially cause a new economic crisis. In relation to the situation of the Russian economy, *RT* continued to be positive, with only 2 articles describing the negative effect on the markets. The nationalisation frame came last with only 3% of articles in the sample using it. *Pravda.ru* still contributed the most to it.

Similar to *RT*, *Pravda.ru* increased the number of times the responsibility and the morality frames were used (Table 5.14.2). Firstly, *Pravda.ru* largely placed the blame on both the Western establishments and the new Kyiv in 34 out of its 143 pieces (40%). This included their policies against Russia and the bias of the Western mainstream media against Russia. Secondly, *Pravda.ru* articulated strong messages particularly towards the new Kyiv for the shelling in the South-East and the shooting

down of the MH17 in 25 cases (17%), and towards the U.S. in 16 cases (11%).

Finally, the accusations against particular groups such as the West and NATO were respectively documented in 15 (11%) and 7 items (5%).

Table 5. 14. 2: The use of the responsibility frame by *Pravda.ru*: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015
(4th period)

Blames on	Percentage (out of 143 items)
New Kyiv and the West	24%
New Kyiv	17%
The U.S.	11%
The West	11%
NATO	5%
Suggestions of solutions	32%

In the use of the morality frame, *Pravda.ru* directed attention to what it referred to as the Washington's propaganda and Ukraine's fascist behaviour in 31 out of 428 articles (7%). The economic consequences frame came last following the nationalisation frame. Two ideas were highlighted by the media: Western sanctions could backfire; and Russia has a promising future in the long run as it has several other stronger economic ties such as those with the BRICS countries – Brazil, India, China, and South Africa.

The economic consequences frame was relatively favoured by *The Moscow Times* over the morality and nationalisation frames. The focus was first of all on Russia's economic loss – 33 out of 45 articles (73%). Seven items (16%) demonstrated that Western sanctions had minimal impact on Russian economy and could backfire. Although *The Moscow Times* followed the overall trend of using

more the responsibility frame in the final period, the media was critical of Russia's involvement in the conflict with Ukraine. Only 13 articles from the media spoke directly to the West's responsibility and ability to stop the new Kyiv from being aggressive to its own people. The media's critical message was reflected in the uses of the human interest and morality frames, where *The Moscow Times* offered diverse understandings in relation to the Ukraine conflict.

Diagnostic and prognostic framing.

In contrast to the third period, the Russian media during the final period generally offered fewer diagnostic frames with only 602 out of the 1,504 articles between 18 July 2014 and 28 February 2015. This was despite the longer timespan of this period (Table 5.15). This is largely due to the visible reduction of diagnosis from *RT* and *Pravda.ru*, whilst *The Moscow Times* marginally increased the use of them. One observable change lies in the political causes frame, which the three media used more than during the last period (Figure 5.15.1).

Table 5. 15: Distribution of Diagnostic frames by the Russian media: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	Total
Particular triggers	139 (59%)	72 (39%)	98 (54%)	309 (51%)
Global dimensions	57 (24%)	82 (45%)	76 (42%)	215 (36%)
Human rights violations	29 (12%)	14 (8%)	30 (16%)	73 (12%)
Political causes	19 (8%)	10 (5%)	37 (20%)	66 (11%)
Socio-economic	11 (5%)	9 (5%)	10 (5%)	30 (5%)
Total	236 (40 %)	183 (37%)	183 (43%)	602 (40%)

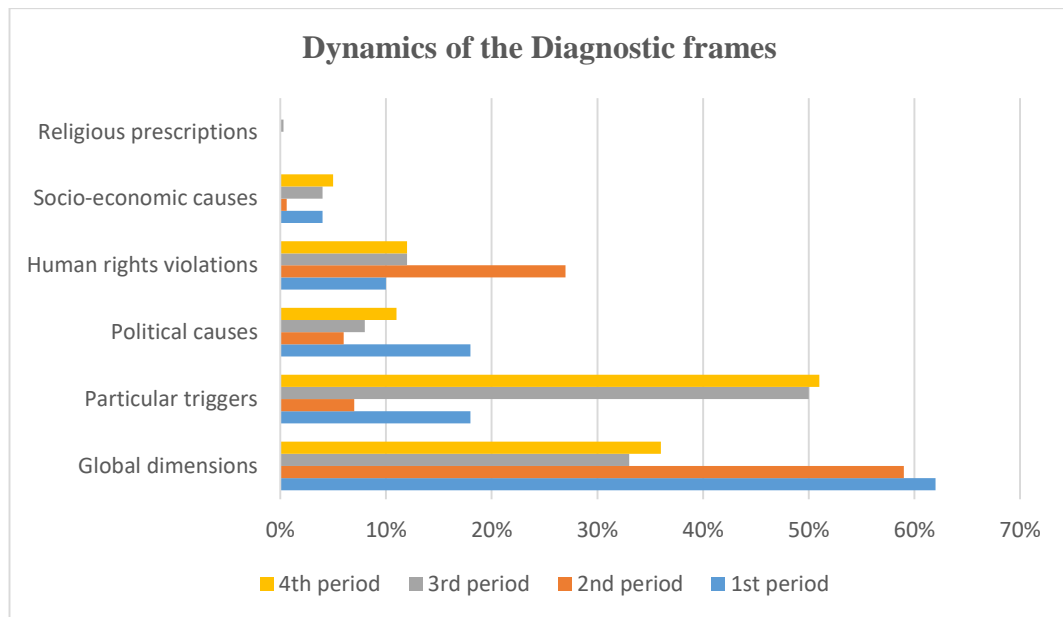


Figure 5. 15. 1

Pravda.ru used this frame the most, with 30 out of the 37 occurrences mentioning that the coup backed by the West was the main reason of the continuing conflict in Ukraine. For instance, *Pravda.ru* stated that ‘The United States and the EU actively support the new, coup-installed Ukrainian government, accusing Russia of interfering in internal affairs of the neighboring country. The support is primarily expressed in wiring huge funds to Kiev’ (*Pravda.ru*, 1 October 2014). The view was also shared by *RT* in 11 out of 19 articles (58%). In 8 articles (42%) the media talked about the help from the Western countries especially the US. In contrast, *The Moscow Times* used the political causes frame to imply the referenda that took place in the South-Eastern region were reasons for the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

The most used diagnosis overall was the particular triggers frame with a total of 309 articles. *RT* was behind 139 items (45%), among which 87 articles (63%) explained that new Kyiv’s shelling escalated the Ukraine conflict, 50 articles (36%) suggested that the fighting between the new Kyiv and the local militia was the main reason for the escalation of the Ukraine conflict. Similar to *RT*, *Pravda.ru* also

suggested that the new Kyiv's shelling triggered the continuation of the Ukraine conflict, in 56 out of its 98 articles (57%). As Table 5.15.1 below shows, this was followed by what *Pravda.ru* believed to be the reason for escalating the Ukraine crisis in its 14 articles (14%): fighting in the region between new Kyiv and militias. To explain the conflict, another 14 articles (14%) were focused on the downing of MH17, while 14 articles (14%) talked about the violence by the new Kyiv and the far-right groups in November 2013 and February 2014.

Table 5. 15. 1: The use of the particular triggers frame by *Pravda.ru*: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

Particular triggers	Percentage (out of 98 items)
Kyiv's shelling	57%
Fighting between Kyiv and militias	14%
Downing of MH17	14%
Violence by Kyiv and far-right groups	14%

The Moscow Times (Table 5.15.2) used all the explanations that occurred in the other two media, however it privileged the account of fighting in Eastern Ukraine between the new Kyiv and the pro-Russian separatists, in 49 out of the 72 articles (68%). Only 5 articles (7%) referenced the shelling as a cause of the crisis, while 10 articles (14%) put an emphasis on the rebels who started the fighting. The downing of MH17 was suggested as a reason for the continuing Ukraine conflict in another 5 articles (7%).

Table 5. 15. 2: The use of the particular triggers frame by *The Moscow Times*: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

Particular Triggers	Percentage (out of 72 items)
Fighting between Kyiv and separatists	68%
Rebels	14%
Kyiv's shelling	7%
Downing of MH17	7%

The second preferred diagnosis was the global dimensions frame which was predominantly endorsed by *The Moscow Times* in 82 pieces of its news. The newspaper (Table 5.15.3) offered 38 items (46%) criticising Russia's expansionism as the root of the Ukraine conflict. 35 articles (43%) were published by the media to suggest that the specific geo-political interests from the West and the East were the reason for the long-lasting conflict in Ukraine. In 9 articles (11%) *The Moscow Times* used the frame to highlight NATO's expansionism to explain the conflict.

Table 5. 15. 3: The use of the global dimensions frame by *The Moscow Times*: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

Global Dimensions	Percentage (out of 82 items)
Russia's expansionist	46%
The West vs. The East	43%
NATO's expansionism	11%

Opposite interpretations were offered by *RT* and *Pravda.ru* who believed that the reason behind the conflict was the US and NATO's interests to expand their controllable borders.

The human rights violations frame was mainly utilised by *Pravda.ru* which strongly explained the conflict by highlighting the new Kyiv's use of chemical weapons to conduct ethnic cleansing/genocide, in 32 articles. *RT* offered the same diagnosis frame as *Pravda.ru*, along with stressing the importance of several specific issues in 29 out of its 236 articles (12%). As Table 5.15.4 below shows, these are Ukraine's use of chemical weapons (19 articles) at 66%, curbing of Russian language (2 articles) at 7%, banning of Russian journalists and Russian media (2 articles) at 7%, West's illegal sanctions on Russia (1 article) at 4%, and their financial and military support to Ukraine (3 articles) at 10%. *RT* regarded the EU and Ukraine as those who conducted war crimes in 2 articles. *The Moscow Times*, on the other hand, provided nearly half of the frame by referring to the Russia's crime of shooting down MH17, in 6 out of its 14 items.

Table 5. 15. 4: The use of the human rights violations frame by *RT*: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015
(4th period)

Human rights violations	Percentage (out of 29 items)
Using of Chemical weapons	66%
Supporting of finance and military	10%
Curbing of Russian language	7%
Banning of Russian journalists and media	7%
West's illegal sanctions	4%

The socio-economic causes frame was mentioned by all three media with similar quantities. *RT* and *Pravda.ru* again aligned together in their use of the frame by pointing out the Ukraine's economic blockade to Eastern cities, the energy cut in Crimea, as well as the country's gas debt to Russia, which were exacerbating the situation in Ukraine. Although *The Moscow Times* used the frame the least, the newspaper was in line with the other two media outlets (*RT* and *Pravda.ru*) with the same facts being highlighted.

The table below (Table 5.16) presents the general breakdown of the prognostic frames used by the Russian media during the final period with 90 articles available for analysis. The use of the dismantling weapons frame was identified as the third most recommended solution to the crisis; compared with the previous period when the frame was the fifth with a contribution solely from *RT*'s coverage (Figure 5.16.1). In the final period, *RT* maintained its major contribution to the frame with 11 out of a total of 15 occurrences. *The Moscow Times* offered 3 items suggesting this prognosis, while *Pravda.ru* used it once. There was a minor difference evident among the three media in terms of the prognosis frames. *RT* and *Pravda.ru* suggested that both sides should withdraw the heavy weapons, whereas *The Moscow Times* clearly resisted the inflow of military supplies from Russia. With the most used internal reforms frame, *RT* and *Pravda.ru* repeatedly suggested decentralisation/autonomy/federalisation as the ideal solution to the Ukraine conflict, giving special status to the South-Eastern region of Donbass for example, thus catering to all Ukrainians' interests. *The Moscow Times* rarely recommended the terms of decentralisation, autonomy, or federalisation, rather it underlined the ideas of equal rights for minorities, and the help from the West for a reform in Ukraine.

Table 5. 16: Distribution of Prognostic frames by the Russian media: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	Total
Internal reforms	16 (43%)	11 (34%)	9 (43%)	36 (40%)
Military action	9 (24%)	10 (31%)	11 (53%)	30 (33%)
Dismantling weapons	11 (30%)	3 (9%)	1 (5%)	15 (17%)
External co-operation	4 (11%)	6 (19%)	3 (14%)	13 (14%)
Financial intervention	2 (5%)	6 (19%)	0	8 (9%)
Change in government	1 (3%)	4 (13%)	0	5 (6%)
Total	37 (6%)	32 (6%)	21 (7%)	90 (6%)

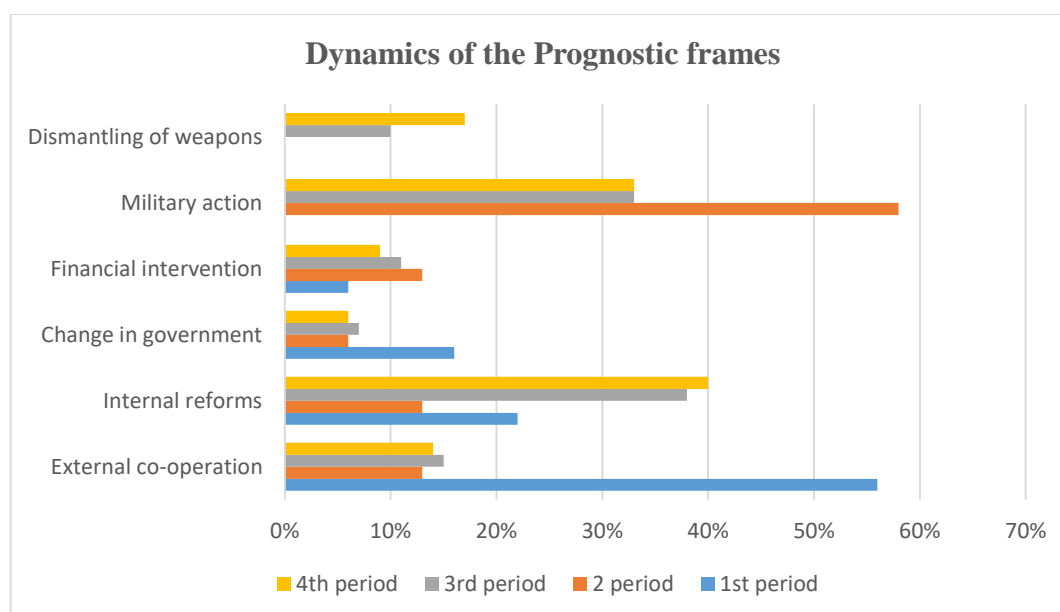


Figure 5. 16. 1

The military action frame was uniformly promoted by all the three media resisting any inflow of weaponry and soldiers to Ukraine, or intervention from outsiders. The external co-operation came up as the fifth preferred solution especially

by the *RT* and *The Moscow Times*. The two suggested a collaboration between Russia and the West including the US. *Pravda.ru* offered a detailed solution to the crisis, in terms of global monitoring group residing in the conflict zone (*Pravda.ru*, 8 September 2014) and humanitarian cargos delivering to victimised area from international community (*Pravda.ru*, 3 September 2014).

RT and *The Moscow Times* also suggested the financial intervention prognosis with 8 occurrences. While the former provided 2 of them suggesting Ukraine should restore its economic bond with the attacked South-Eastern region; the latter called for financial assistance to Ukraine from the West (2 out of its 6 articles) at 33%. *The Moscow Times* (Table 5.16.1) also recommended economic sanctions on Russia to refrain the country from supporting pro-Russian separatists (3 out of 6) at 50%. One (17%) focused on the settling of the gas price between Ukraine and Russia.

Table 5. 16. 1: The use of the financial intervention frame by *The Moscow Times*:
18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

Financial intervention	Percentage (out of 6 items)
Financial assistance to Ukraine	33%
Economic sanction on Russia	50%
Settling of the gas price	17%

Lastly, the change in government was relatively favoured by *The Moscow Times* with 4 articles, which used the frame to describe decentralisation and autonomy. This is what *RT* and *Pravda.ru* regarded as internal reforms as illustrated

above. The different interpretation perhaps can be best explained by what President Putin stated and was cited by *RT*:

It's extremely important that the authorities in Kyiv have agreed to carry out a deep constitutional reform, to satisfy a desire for self-rule in certain regions – whether that reform is called decentralization, autonomization or federalization. This is the deeper meaning of the Minsk accords (*RT*, 17 February 2015).

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the coverage of the Ukraine crisis during the 15-month period from 30 November 2013 to 28 February 2015 by the selected Russian news media outlets. The first part answered the second research question about the press attention to the Ukraine conflict and provided evidence of the clear increase in press attention during the second (27 February – 20 March 2014) and the third (21 March – 17 July 2014) time periods. These were the times when Russia appeared in headlines globally, as Western powers condemned Putin for annexing Crimea and for militarily and financially supporting the rebels in Eastern Ukraine. The following section answered the third research question looking at the actual frames used in the mediation of the Ukraine crisis. Clear patterns were identified. The Russian media used extensively the economic consequences, morality, and human-interest frames. Overall, *The Moscow Times* and the *RT* seemed to be the ones that used the economic impact (generic), global dimensions and political causes (diagnoses), and external co-operation (prognosis) frames the most, especially during the first period. *RT* alongside *Pravda.ru* tended to use more morality frames especially from the end

of the first to the second time periods when human rights violations diagnostic frame and military actions prognostic frame received higher attention. All the three media favoured human-interest generic frame during the last two periods although with different perspectives. This can be explained by their uses of the diagnosis and prognosis frames. On the one hand, *RT* and *Pravda.ru* suggested that particular triggers (new Kyiv's Anti-Terrorism Operations) and human rights violations were the factors escalating the Ukraine crisis and strongly recommended to stick to the Minsk accords (by using the internal reforms prognosis frame) in terms of decentralisation, autonomisation, or federalisation. On the other hand, *The Moscow Times* explained the root of the Ukraine crisis by pointing out Putin's global ambitions and his involvement leading to the deepening of the crisis. Consequently, the newspaper often suggested preventing the inflow of weapons from Russia and conducting internal reforms. A particularly important finding in terms of the theoretical development of the generic frames is the fact that the study did not find frequent use of the religious frame (diagnosis). As explained earlier, religion was not the dividing factor. The Ukraine crisis was a fundamentally political one. Having presented and answered the research questions 2 and 3 regarding the Russian media, now the focus moves onto the British media.

Chapter 6

Findings – British Media

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the selected British media coverage of the Ukraine crisis from 30 November 2013 to 28 February 2015. Following the structure of analysis of the Russian media from Chapter five, the findings from the framing analysis of the British media are outlined. The four periods as outlined and explained in Chapter four are: 30 November 2013 – 26 February 2014, 27 February – 20 March 2014, 21 March – 17 July 2014, and 18 July – 28 February 2015.

The chapter begins with a quantitative assessment of the media coverage exploring quantity and mean length of coverage in order to answer the second research question about the attention paid to the Ukraine crisis by the selected British media. This is followed by a second evaluation – to answer the third research question about the adopted frames – uncovering the actual frames used by the British media during the Ukraine crisis. Through both a quantitative and a qualitative evaluation of the frames, the key characteristics of the coverage will be revealed.

6.2 Press Attention

1st period: 30. 11. 2013 – 26. 02. 2014.

The second research question that aims to explore the attention paid to the Ukraine crisis was addressed through a look at the overall quantities and average length of coverage by the examined media outlets. The generated resulting descriptive statistics – quantitative differences – are shown in Table 6.1. First, the British media reported the Ukraine crisis between 30 November 2013 and 26 February 2014, with a number of 243 articles and a mean length of 729 words. *Mail*

Online tended to publish longer articles than the other two media outlets – the *BBC* and *The Guardian*. The differences in length ranged from 157 words (*BBC*, 30 January 2014) discussing how the Ukrainian riot police mistakenly attacked a group of bloodied government supporters due to their bus registration number suggesting being from Western Ukraine; to 3,008 words (*Mail Online*, 19 February 2014) noting the escalated violence in Kyiv between protesters and the Yanukovich administration, and the role of Russia who was seen by the media as the winner for the time being in the battle for influence in Ukraine. The media quoted Robert Brinkley – the UK’s ambassador to Ukraine – laying accusations against Yanukovich and Russia explaining the roots of the upheaval in Kyiv:

This has roots which go back further than the last three months. Every Ukrainian government since independence in 1991 has accepted the importance of bringing Ukraine closer to the EU [...] [W]hen [Yanukovich’s] government suddenly [suspended] talks with the EU it came as a huge shock to a great many people in Ukraine [...] [EU’s] single market [is] eight times bigger than the Russian market [...] They were offering Ukraine a route to modernisation of its economy – bigger markets and becoming a freer and better society (*Mail Online*, 19 February 2014).

Among the three media outlets, the *BBC* offered the most coverage with 110 articles available for analysis highlighting the use of tear gas by riot police to force back the crowds. *The Guardian* offered less attention to the Ukraine conflict with 78 articles and an average of 684 words. The tabloid-style media – *Mail Online* during these early stages of the Ukraine conflict paid the least attention, with 55 articles, but with the longest mean length of 1,004 words.

Table 6. 1: Press attention by the British media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014

	Quantity	Mean Length
BBC	110 (45%)	623
The Guardian	78 (32%)	684
Mail Online	55 (23%)	1,004
Total	243	

2nd period: 27. 02. – 20. 03. 2014.

The overall press attention paid by the British media during the second period slightly decreased to 236 pieces of news covering 22 days of deepened conflict in Ukraine (Table 6.2). In spite of the reduction, the British media provided an average quantity of 11 reports per day and a mean length of 908 words. This time all the three British media offered more extended coverage than during the previous period. The emphasis was put largely on Russia's illegal involvement in the crisis and its military movement in the Crimean Peninsula. The shortest and the longest length of coverage on the subject were provided by *The Guardian* and the *BBC* with 148 words and 6,535 words respectively. For example, *The Guardian* on 3 March 2014 published an 148-word piece on the opposing views on Crimea of Barack Obama who insisted that Putin violated 'Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity which is a breach of international law', and Vladimir Putin who responded that 'the US-backed interim Ukraine administration was threatening "the lives and health of Russian citizens and the many compatriots" in Crimea' (*The Guardian*, 3 March 2014). The speech of Putin on 19 March 2014 on Crimea's returning home was covered extensively by the *BBC* (6,535 words), containing critical annotations by the *BBC* diplomatic

correspondent Bridget Kendall. For instance, Kendall was sceptical about what Putin announced as ‘more than 82% of the electorate took part in the vote. Over 96% of them spoke out in favour of reuniting with Russia’:

Was the turnout really 82% of all Crimea's voting population? The result suggests most of those who voted wanted to rejoin Russia. But what about the many Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians and some Russians who didn't take part and don't want to leave Ukraine? Mr Putin ignores them (*BBC*, 19 March 2014).

Table 6. 2: Press attention by the British media: 27.02. – 20.03.2014

	Quantity	Mean Length
BBC	82 (35%)	757
The Guardian	85 (36%)	751
Mail Online	69 (29%)	1,281
Total	236	

3rd period: 21. 03. – 17. 07. 2014.

The third period covered a longer duration of almost 4 months' worth of news coverage from 21 March to 17 July 2014. A total of 616 articles were selected for analysis. The ranking of reporting quantity in the third period among the British media came with the *BBC* on top with 264 articles, followed by *Mail Online* and *The Guardian* with 186 and 166 items respectively. The three media labelled what had been going on in the South-Eastern Ukraine in similar terms: firm belief in Putin's military and financial backing for pro-Russian separatists on the ground. Again, the

shortest article (92 words) among the British media came from *The Guardian*. The newspaper discussed Russia's severely affected economy in terms of capital flight due to the sanctions imposed by the West, yet without hurting Vladimir Putin's poll ratings which in reality soared more than 20% (*The Guardian*, 28 March 2014). *Mail Online* contributed the lengthiest article among the three media on the downing of MH17 with a particular focus on victims. The media attributed the cause to the pro-Russian rebels:

Russian President Vladimir Putin has blamed Ukraine for the tragedy that claimed the lives of all 298 people on board, including about 100 children - but did not deny Russian-backed separatists were to blame for shooting it out of the sky. Ukrainian authorities laid the blame for the attack on the rebels by denying any responsibility for the missile launch, with President Petro Poroshenko called the downing an act of terrorism as he called for an international investigation into the crash (*Mail Online*, 17 July 2014)

Table 6. 3: Press attention by the British media: 21.03. – 17.07.2014

	Quantity	Mean Length
BBC	264 (43%)	615
The Guardian	166 (27%)	726
Mail Online	186 (30%)	915
Total	616	

4th period: 18. 07. 2014 – 28. 02. 2015.

The media attention paid to the Ukraine crisis during the final time period reached 815 out of 2,319 articles, responsible for 35% of the whole coverage (Table 6.4). The *BBC* remained first among the British outlets offering 372 pieces (46%) of news on the topic, while *Mail Online* came second with 294 articles (36%). There was a noticeable reduction in coverage attention on the subject in *The Guardian* – the Ukraine crisis only appeared in 149 articles (18%), as the topic completely faded away from the news agenda in October 2014. *The Guardian*'s less significant attention was also evident in it offering the shortest piece (99 words) that discussed gas crisis fears among European countries as 'Russia could once again turn off the tap on gas supplies to Ukraine, as it did in 2006 and 2009' (*The Guardian*, 9 September 2014). The most extensive news article (5,558 words) was from the *Mail Online* on 18 July 2014 presenting an emotional narrative about the downing of MH17. The report laying the blame on the Kremlin for supporting the pro-Russian rebels, was titled: 'This baby's death is on your conscience, Putin – damn you for centuries: Ukrainian government releases horrific picture of infant lying in a field that it says was killed when rebels shot down MH17'. The media quoted statements from several world leaders such as Stephen Harper, the Canadian prime minister, in relation to the Russian aggression that was believed to be 'the root of the ongoing conflict [...] While we do not yet know who is responsible for this attack, we continue to condemn Russia's military aggression and illegal occupation of Ukraine' (*Mail Online*, 18 July 2014).

The overall narrowed interest in the subject shown by the British media is predominantly attributed to the disappearance of the story from *The Guardian*; although the newspaper dedicated most of its coverage to condemning Putin for his

direct involvement in Ukraine thus causing the catastrophe there. The *BBC* continued to accuse pro-Russian rebels of exacerbating the conflict and Russia of its involvement. The final observation is that the *Mail Online* tended to offer lengthier articles.

Table 6. 4 Press attention by the British media: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015

	Quantity	Mean Length
BBC	372 (46%)	631
The Guardian	149 (18%)	703
Mail Online	294 (36%)	1,038
Total	815	

6.3 Framing of the Ukraine Crisis

1st period: 30. 11. 2013 – 26. 02. 2014.

Generic news frames.

To answer the third research question scrutinising the frames used by the media during the crisis, the subsequent interpretative analysis follows what was established in the previous chapter structure. Within each period the set of frames consisting of generic, diagnostic and prognostic frames are quantitatively and qualitatively displayed and analysed. This section is structured chronologically starting with the first time period: 30 November 2013 – 26 February 2014.

Table 6.5 shows the overall picture in the UK with regard to the use of generic frames during the first period. The three media tended to describe the Ukraine conflict through the lens of conflict (54% of coverage), 24% of the overall coverage used the responsibility frame while the human-interest frame was evident in

15% of the articles. This is followed by a marginally smaller use of the economic consequences frame (5%), whereas the morality and nationalisation frames stood at 1% each.

Table 6. 5: Distribution of Generic frames by the British media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014 (1st period)

	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Conflict	63 (57%)	40 (51%)	29 (53%)	132 (54%)
Responsibility	26 (24%)	20 (26%)	12 (22%)	58 (24%)
Human interest	14 (13%)	12 (15%)	10 (18%)	36 (15%)
Economic consequences	6 (5%)	3 (4%)	3 (5%)	12 (5%)
Morality	0	2 (3%)	1 (2%)	3 (1%)
Nationalisation	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	2 (1%)
Total	110	78	55	243

Looking at each British media outlet more closely, the *BBC* used the conflict frame most in 63 out of its 110 articles (57%). *Mail Online* came second using the conflict frame in 29 out of its 55 articles (53%); while *The Guardian* offered 40 out of its 78 articles (51%). As the table shows, the responsibility frame was the second favoured frame used by the British media, with *The Guardian* offering 20 articles – 26% of the overall coverage suggesting that the Yanukovych government and Putin should be responsible for the Ukraine crisis. The *BBC* and *Mail Online* provided 24% and 22% of their overall coverage respectively.

What *Mail Online* used more than the other two media outlets was the human-interest frame. The media distributed 18% of its whole sample of 55 articles to the frame focusing on the Maidan protestors and the Yanukovych family circle

with a high level of corruption. The ratio was followed by *The Guardian* which used the frame in 15% of its coverage. The *BBC* came last with 13% of its coverage using the frame. In the use of the economic consequences frame, the *BBC* and *Mail Online* offered 5% of their overall coverage each, while *The Guardian* provided 4%. The *BBC* discussed the Ukraine crisis through the lens of economic deals offered by the EU and Russia, and offered multiple views. *Mail Online*, on the other hand, discussed the impact the economic situation in Ukraine would have on the UK. For instance, the media used the economic consequences frame in an article, talking about the UK's position:

New government says it needs \$35 billion aid in next two years.

[...] The plea was issued within hours of George Osborne saying that British taxpayers' money would be available - and saying: "We should be there with a chequebook to help the people of Ukraine rebuild their country." But the Polish foreign minister cautioned against unconditional help, saying the new government had to strike a proper agreement with the [IMF] and stick by it (*Mail Online*, 23 February 2014).

The British media devoted minimal space – 3 and 2 articles respectively – to the morality and nationalisation frames. The *BBC* did not use the morality frame and *Mail Online* during this period showed zero interest in the nationalisation frame.

Diagnostic and prognostic framing.

The British media during the first period offered diagnostic frames explaining why and how the crisis occurred and developed. A total number of 186 diagnostic frames were identified occupying 77% of the whole of 243 articles from the British

media. Table 6.6 shows the general trend by the British media in terms of offering diagnosis. The three media outlets showed a great interest in explaining the Ukraine crisis through global dimensions. *Mail Online* in particular favoured the frame in 59% of its coverage, implying Russia's involvement: Russia offered financial aid in an attempt to keep Ukraine in its orbit. The media also used Poland as a demonstrative example of a country that had dramatically benefited from being a member of the EU block. For instance, *Mail Online* regarded the Ukraine crisis as a conflict between the West and the East, and the EU deal as an opportunity for Ukraine to benefit from:

The deal would have given Ukraine access to Western Europe's vast market of more than 500 million people and helped modernise what is a relatively backward and predominantly agricultural country. [...] Those in the west of the country [...] were desperate to take advantage of the chances offered by the European Union [...] But if Ukraine allied itself to Western Europe, Putin's idea of a revived Soviet empire would be in tatters, given the country's importance to that empire (*Mail Online*, 19 February 2014).

Mail Online was also aligned with the *BBC* in the news coverage of the leaked phone call, focusing on Nuland and UN's role in the attempts to search for a solution to the Ukraine crisis. For instance, *Mail Online* stressed the importance of Russia's dangerous role throughout the article, and stated that: 'Mr Pyatt adds that he fears if their plan starts taking shape "the Russians will try to do something behind the scenes to torpedo it". The US last night accused Russia of leaking the tape to do precisely that' (*Mail Online*, 7 February 2014). Likewise, in explaining the US's

effort to reach a peaceful solution, the *BBC* diplomatic correspondent Jonathan Marcus said:

The clear purpose in leaking this conversation [by Russia] is to embarrass Washington and for audiences susceptible to Moscow's message to portray the US as interfering in Ukraine's domestic affairs [...] The US is clearly much more involved in trying to broker a deal in Ukraine than it publicly lets on [...] [I]s the interception and leaking of communications really the way Russia wants to conduct its foreign policy? [A]fter Wikileaks, Edward Snowden and the like could the Russian government be joining the radical apostles of open government? I doubt it (*BBC*, 7 February 2014).

Table 6. 6: Distribution of Diagnostic frames by the British media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014 (1st period)

	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Global dimensions	35 (45%)	27 (35%)	24 (59%)	86 (46%)
Particular triggers	19 (24%)	20 (26%)	8 (20%)	47 (25%)
Political causes	15 (19%)	12 (15%)	4 (10%)	31 (17%)
Human rights violations	8 (10%)	8 (10%)	5 (12%)	21 (11%)
Socio-economic	1 (1%)	0	0	1 (1%)
Religious prescriptions	0	0	0	0
Total	78 (71%)	67 (86%)	41 (75%)	186 (77%)

Following the global dimensions frame, the British media tended to use the particular triggers frame, with a total of 47 out of the whole 186 items (25%). *The Guardian* used the frame the most. The newspaper mainly suggested that the

Yanukovych government's crackdowns were the main reasons for the escalation of the Ukraine crisis. Like *The Guardian*, the *BBC* and *Mail Online* used the frame to specifically stress the importance of Yanukovych's crackdowns on the protesters. For example, the *BBC* published an article titled 'Ukraine unrest: Nato condemns crackdown on protesters' in the beginning of the Ukraine crisis (*BBC*, 3 December 2013). Ten days later, the *BBC* described Ukraine as a divided country due to the continuing protests, and wrote: 'The violent crackdown energised the pro-EU protesters, who are now camped out in the capital's Independence Square' (*BBC*, 14 December 2013).

The political causes was the second commonly used diagnosis frame by the British media to explain the roots of the Ukraine crisis. The *BBC*, *The Guardian*, and *Mail Online* all expressed the opinion that the Yanukovych regime's corruption and abuse of power that impacted on people were the dominant roots of the continually deepening conflict.

The fourth diagnosis frequently used by the British media was the human rights violation frame, with the *BBC* and *The Guardian* giving 10% of the attention respectively. *Mail Online* dedicated 12% of its sample to the frame for the most part criticising Yanukovych's anti-protest law. The least referred to diagnosis in the British media was the socio-economic causes one discussed only once by the *BBC*. The media pointed out that people from Eastern Ukraine resented the pro-EU protests in Kyiv due to the poor economic reality in the region where the existing economic and social connections with Russia would be a better choice than with the EU:

[A] housewife said that "before joining any international organisations, Ukraine should first develop our own economy. Look at our poor pensioners surviving on the breadline. I am against joining the EU".

[...] [M]ost of Donetsk's inhabitants remain unconvinced that Ukraine's future lies in Europe. After all, local industries are hugely dependent on Russian supplies and markets, with Russia itself closer than the Ukrainian capital, Kiev (*BBC*, 3 December 2013).

Table 6. 7: Distribution of Prognostic frames by the British media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014
(1st period)

	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Change in government	20 (54%)	14 (44%)	10 (62%)	44 (52%)
Internal reforms	10 (27%)	5 (16%)	0	15 (18%)
Financial intervention	4 (11%)	4 (13%)	6 (38%)	14 (16%)
External co-operation	3 (8%)	9 (28%)	0	12 (14%)
Total	37 (34%)	32 (41%)	16 (29%)	85 (35%)

The British media delivered 85 prognoses in a total of 243 articles (35%). Table 6.7 above shows that the change in government frame came on top dominating the whole ranking. The British media suggested this solution in 44 out of the 85 articles (52%). The second mostly recommended prognosis was internal reforms. The British media articulated the prognosis to reflect what they previously considered the Yanukovich administration's notorious issues such as the lack of freedom, democracy, abuse of power, and persistent corruption. The subsequent financial intervention prognosis was largely promoted by *Mail Online* dealing with

the promising future for Ukraine after Kyiv restructures its financial system with help from the EU. The external co-operation is identified as the least favoured solution by the British media coming solely from *The Guardian* and the *BBC*. The latter two media focused mainly on the EU and the US that could fix the anti-democratic disease in Ukraine.

2nd period: 27. 02. – 20. 03. 2014.

Generic news frames.

The general breakdown of the use of generic frames by the British media in the second time period – 27 February-20 March 2014 – is shown in Table 6.8 below. Overall, the positions remained identical to those in the previous period. The conflict frame led solidly among all the generic frames used by the British media. However, the researcher found a visible decline in the frame in *The Guardian*'s coverage – from 51% to 34% as compared to the first period (Figure 6.8.1). Unlike the conflict frame, the use of the responsibility frame enjoyed an overall increase in the British media outlets – from 24% to 30%. Especially the *BBC* which used the frame in 32% of its whole sample of 82 articles, compared to the first period when the media devoted 24% of space to the frame. This was followed by *Mail Online* and *The Guardian* that increased the uses of the frame by 6 and 5 percentage points respectively. Overall, the three media outlets used the frame to suggest that Russia should be responsible for the crisis. This was mostly evident in the *BBC* and *Mail Online*. For example, out of the 26 occurrences in the *BBC* using the responsibility frame, 22 items (85%) were accusing Russia of breaking global order through Putin's illegitimate actions in Ukraine including the Crimean Peninsula. *Mail Online*

published 15 out of 19 (79%) responsibility frames alluding to the fact that Russia should be punished.

Table 6. 8: Distribution of Generic frames by the British media: 27.02. – 20.03.2014 (2nd period)

	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Conflict	42 (51%)	29 (34%)	39 (57%)	110 (47%)
Responsibility	26 (32%)	26 (31%)	19 (28%)	71 (30%)
Human interest	4 (5%)	15 (18%)	4 (6%)	23 (10%)
Economic consequences	3 (4%)	9 (11%)	1 (1%)	13 (6%)
Morality	5 (6%)	3 (4%)	5 (7%)	13 (6%)
Nationalisation	2 (2%)	3 (4%)	1 (1%)	6 (3%)
Total	82	85	69	236

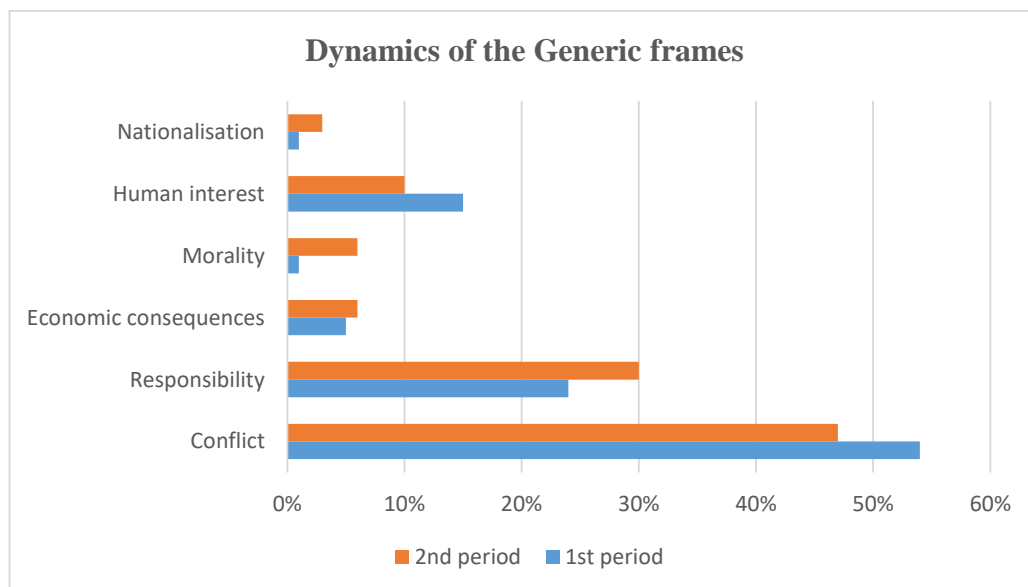


Figure 6. 8. 1

The third generic frame the British media persistently preferred over the two periods was the human-interest frame, with a slight intensification in the frame from *The Guardian* offering diverse point of views. The *BBC* and *Mail Online*, on the other hand, reduced the use of this frame. The common point shared by these three media outlets was the articulation of fears from different communities such as Tatars, the former Soviet Union countries, and those small and vulnerable neighbouring countries of Russia. For example, *Mail Online* put it: ‘Many in Crimea’s ethnic Tatar minority were wary of the referendum, fearing that Crimea's break-off from Ukraine will set off violence against them’ (*Mail Online*, 18 March 2014).

The *BBC* and *Mail Online* again showed a generally aligned tendency in the uses of the economic consequences and morality frames. This trend was different from that displayed by *The Guardian*. On the one hand, the economic consequences frame was featured in *The Guardian* with a growth of 7 percentage points in comparison with the previous period, whilst the *BBC* and *Mail Online* decreased the use of the frame. In similar vein, whereas the *BBC* and *Mail Online* showed an observable increase in the use of the morality frame during the second period, *The Guardian* increased its use only subtly – from 2 to 3 pieces. The three British media used the morality frame less, mainly accentuating on the immoral Russia. One demonstrative example can be found from the *BBC* citing Charles Lane from the *Washington Post*:

Mr Putin's speech started with a lie - that the Crimean referendum was legitimate - and continued down that track for the next 40 minutes or so: “Putin presented a legal and historical argument so tendentious and so logically tangled - so unappealing to anyone but Russian nationalists such as those who packed the Kremlin to applaud him - that it seemed intended less

to refute contrary arguments than to bury them under a rhetorical avalanche”
(*BBC*, 20 March 2014).

Another example of a tougher tone came from *Mail Online* comparing Vladimir Putin to Adolf Hitler with references to Putin’s fascist behaviour towards Crimea, by repetitively quoting political officials from the US and the UK such as Hilary Clinton and Malcolm Rifkind. The media wrote:

Whatever the historic arguments for Crimean secession from Ukraine - and some exist - Putin’s act of armed aggression, with threats of more to come, relies on exactly the same arguments that Hitler deployed to justify his 1938-39 lunges into Czechoslovakia and Poland. Russia’s brutish president plays golf abroad with only one club in his bag — force, or the threat of it (*Mail Online*, 19 March 2014).

Diagnostic and prognostic framing.

The British media during the second period provided less diagnostic frames than during the first period, with a total of 140 out of the 236 articles (59% of coverage). Table 6.9 illustrates the media engaging with the Ukraine crisis predominately via the global dimensions frame. This diagnosis was particularly favoured by *Mail Online* in 27 out of its 36 articles (75%) offering diagnoses. The *BBC* paid marginally less attention to the frame in 33 out of its 45 diagnoses (73%). *The Guardian* was the one that tended to give various and diverse explanations of the Ukraine conflict, with the global dimensions coming on top (71%) out of 59 diagnostic frames. The *BBC* and *Mail Online* believed that the Russian military movements at the Western border and in Crimea reflecting Putin’s regional

ambitions caused the Ukraine conflict. A less commonly noted factor was the battle between the West and Russia, which the *BBC* and *The Guardian* focused on in 5 articles each. For example, the *BBC* used the frame and disapproved of the comparison between Crimea's secession and Kosovo's:

[A]ccording to international precedent, it cannot simply secede unilaterally, even if that wish is supported by the local population in a referendum. [...] [I]nternational law does not recognise a divorce at gunpoint. Crimea cannot proceed with a possible secession or even incorporation into Russia while Moscow holds sway on the ground. In this way the situation differs from Nato's armed action in Kosovo in 1999. The Kosovo Albanians were exposed to extreme repression and subsequently forced expulsion by Serb forces. Nato intervened for genuine humanitarian purposes. (*BBC*, 7 March 2014).

Table 6. 9: Distribution of Diagnostic frames by the British media: 27.02. – 20.03.2014 (2nd period)

	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Global dimensions	33 (73%)	42 (71%)	27 (75%)	102 (73%)
Human rights violations	8 (18%)	13 (22%)	4 (11%)	25 (18%)
Particular triggers	3 (7%)	1 (2%)	3 (8%)	7 (5%)
Political causes	1 (2%)	0	2 (6%)	3 (2%)
Socio-economic	0	1 (2%)	0	1 (1%)
Religious	0	2 (3%)	0	2 (1%)
Total	45 (55%)	59 (69%)	36 (52%)	140 (59%)

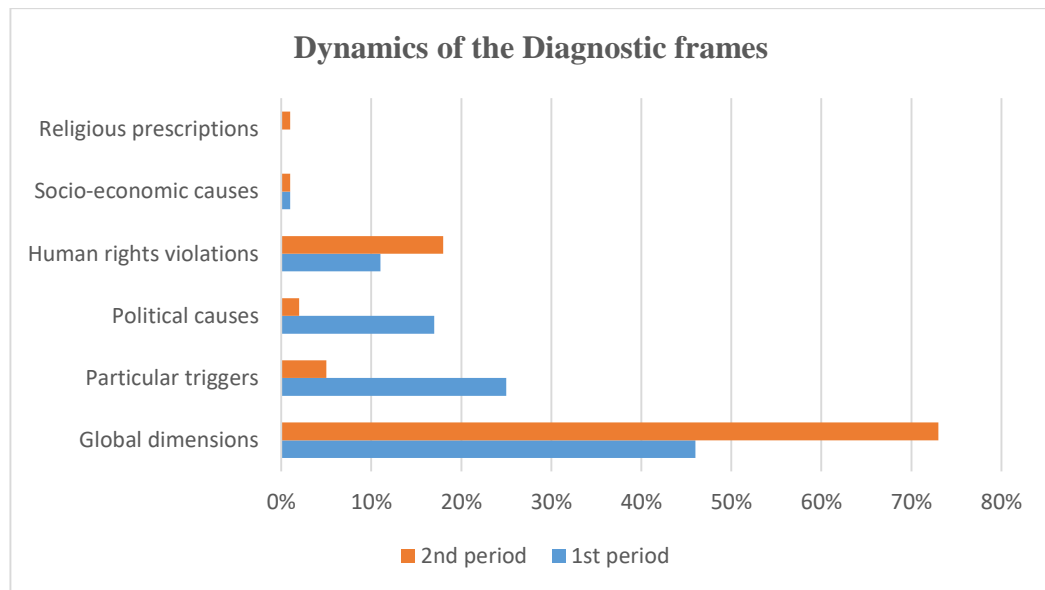


Figure 6. 9. 1

The second commonly suggested diagnosis was the human rights violations frame during the second time period. As Figure 6.9.1 shows, this frame enjoyed an overt increase in the British media compared with that in the first period. The British media used the frame in 25 out of the 140 articles (18%). The *BBC* and *The Guardian* used the diagnostic frame to label Putin as violating international law due to his illegal annexation of Crimea thus aggravating the Ukraine conflict. For instance, *The Guardian* published a news article prior to the referendum taking place in the Crimean Peninsula, and quoted David Cameron:

We are all clear that any referendum vote in Crimea this week will be illegal, illegitimate and will not be recognised by the international community [...] We must stand up to aggression, uphold international law, and support the Ukrainian government and the Ukrainian people who want the freedom to choose their own future (*The Guardian*, 11 March 2014).

What the British media tended to use less were the particular triggers (7 articles) and political causes (3 articles) diagnoses. Again, the *BBC* and *Mail Online* contributed most of these. For example, the two media outlets maintained that the toppling of Russian-backed Yanukovych regime had triggered the subsequent chaos in Eastern Ukraine, leading up to Russia's annexation of Crimea. The socio-economic causes (1 item) and religious prescriptions (2 items) were only mentioned by *The Guardian*; the *BBC* and *Mail Online* paid zero attention to these diagnoses.

The overall use of prognostic frames by the British media dropped from 35% to 19% during the second time period. In addition to the decrease, there were apparent shifts in preferences of the prognoses (Table 6.10). The third favoured prognosis by the British media during the first period, the financial intervention solution, became the first prognosis highly recommended by all the three media during the second (Figure 6.10.1). *The Guardian* suggested the prognosis in 6 out of its 9 diagnoses (67%), the ratio was the same to the *BBC* that used the frame in 12 out of 18 prognoses (67%). Notably, *Mail Online* offered 17 prognoses, all of which recommended the financial intervention solution (100%). What the media specifically supported was a financial isolation of Russia from the international community and the imposition of further economic sanctions on the country. The second frequently recommended solution was the external co-operation mainly coming from the *BBC* and *The Guardian*. This consisted of diplomatic negotiation and assistance from international community. Lastly, the military action solution came at the bottom with 4 occurrences solely from the *BBC*. Among the 4 items, 2 (50%) suggested the US to send troops to fight with the Russian militaries in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea. The other 2 articles (50%) resisted any military action arguing that it would only exacerbate the Ukraine conflict. None of the internal reforms,

change in government, and dismantling weapons frames were brought up by the British media.

Table 6. 10: Distribution of Prognostic frames by the British media: 27.02. – 20.03.2014 (2nd period)

	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Financial intervention	12 (67%)	6 (67%)	17 (100%)	35 (80%)
External co-operation	4 (22%)	3 (33%)	0	7 (16%)
Military action	4 (22%)	0	0	4 (9%)
Internal reforms	0	0	0	0
Change in government	0	0	0	0
Dismantling weapons	0	0	0	0
Total	18 (22%)	9 (11%)	17 (25%)	44 (19%)

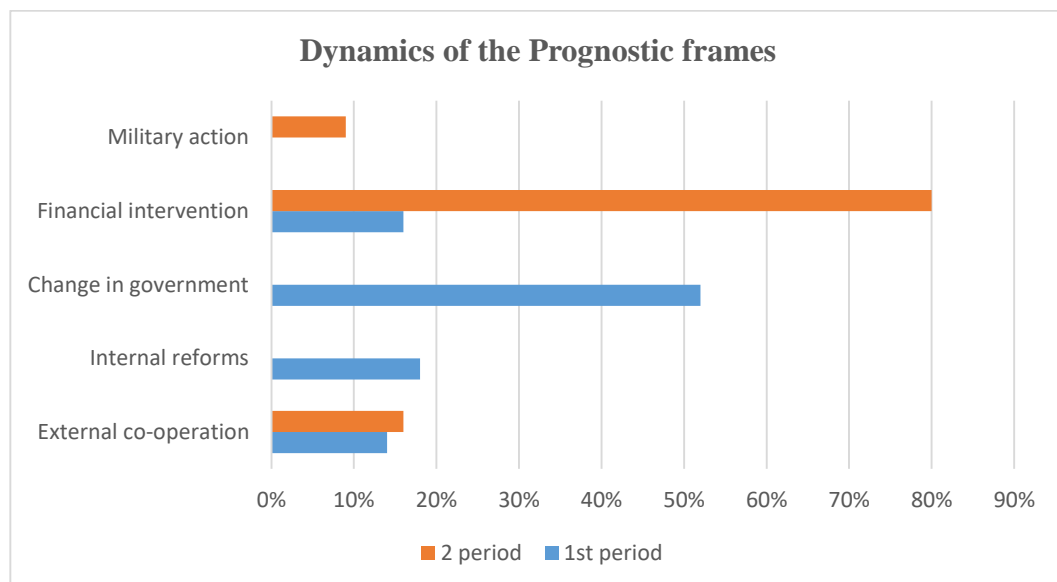


Figure 6. 10. 1

3rd period: 21. 03. – 17. 07. 2014.

Generic news frames.

The third period is characterised by longer timespan of nearly four months from 21 March to 17 July 2014, including 616 articles on the Ukraine conflict in the British media. The overall use of the generic frames did not change with the conflict frame coming first (Table 6.11). This period manifested a common trait for all the three media where they experienced a sharp increase in the conflict frame (Figure 6.11.1). Especially *The Guardian* with a notable increase by 26 percentage points over the two periods. As shown in Table 6.11, the responsibility frame came second among the generic frames from all the British media outlets, although there was a decline in the overall quantity of the frame. *The Guardian* decreased significantly the use of the frame, from the previous 31% of coverage to 23% during this period. The *BBC* and *Mail Online* meanwhile dropped moderately. In spite of the decline in quantities, the three media – like the previous period – used the frame to continually accuse Russia of backing the violent separatists in South-Eastern Ukraine. For instance, out of a total of 78 responsibility frames from the *BBC*, 44 occurrences (56%) were focused on blaming Russia for its involvement. *The Guardian* used the frame to accuse Putin in 26 out of its 38 items (68%); while *Mail Online* attributed the blame directly to Putin in 22 out of its 44 responsibility frames (50%), suggesting that Russia could de-escalate the crisis in 6 items (14%). In contrast, *The Guardian* contributed a small number of 6 articles (16%) to the frame with blame being laid on the West and the US. The same can be seen from *Mail Online* on 2 occasions (5%).

Table 6. 11: Distribution of Generic frames by the British media: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Conflict	141 (53%)	99 (60%)	123 (66%)	363 (59%)
Responsibility	78 (30%)	38 (23%)	44 (22%)	160 (26%)
Human interest	36 (14%)	13 (8%)	16 (9%)	65 (11%)
Economic consequences	5 (2%)	6 (4%)	3 (2%)	14 (2%)
Morality	2 (0.7%)	10 (6%)	0	12 (2%)
Nationalisation	2 (0.7%)	0	3 (2%)	5 (1%)
Total	264	166	186	616

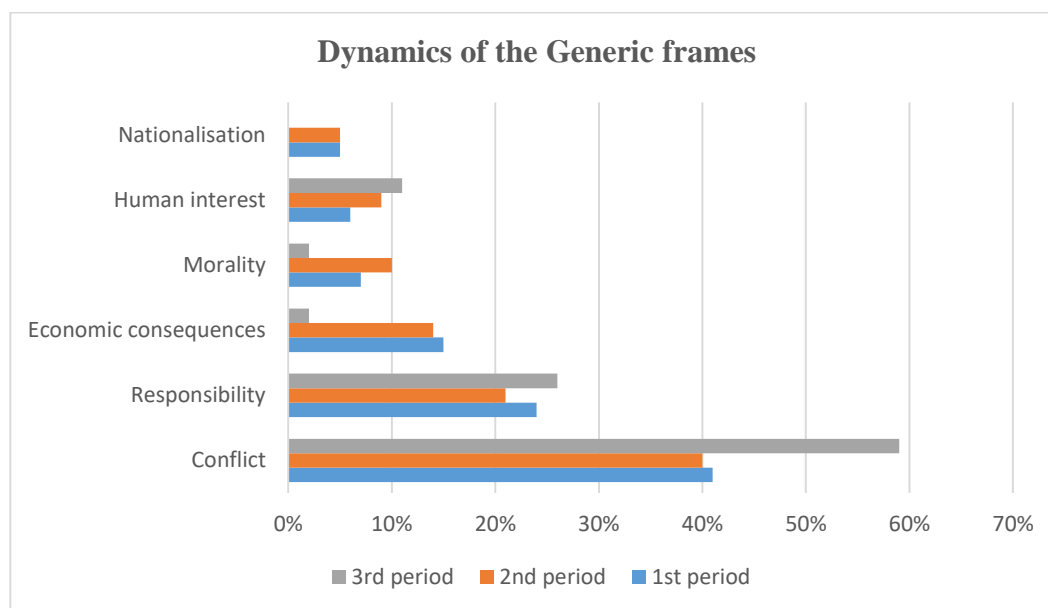


Figure 6. 11. 1

The third commonly used generic frame – the human-interest frame enjoyed a clear overall growth from the British media during the third period. The three media published 65 out of 616 articles (11%) using the frame to give voice to various groups of people. For example, the *BBC* presented different views and opinions from the Eastern city of Odessa (but with an overall message of Ukraine being victimised)

where bloody clashes broke out between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian demonstrators that left over 40 people killed:

[M]any believe that the victims were Ukrainian citizens. Some people are crying, many are angry. “They took our own city from us. Fascists!” one woman shouts [...] “We are not pro-Russian, we are from Odessa. It's just about Odessa, about peace.” [...] “They [pro-Russian activists] are terrorists, brought here from elsewhere. And the people of Odessa defended themselves, saved the city. The police just did nothing,” she says (*BBC*, 4 May 2014).

After the human-interest frame, the British media paid less attention to the economic consequences and morality considerations, offering 14 and 12 instances respectively. The *BBC* and *The Guardian* contributed the majority to the economic frame, talking about economic sanctions by the Western bodies, as well as the impact mainly on Russia. The *BBC* for example, sketched out the economic sanctions on Russia in 4 out of 5 occurrences (80%), while simultaneously explained the EU Agreement with Ukraine in 2 articles (40%). *The Guardian*, with a total quantity of 6 articles devoted 3 of them (50%) to the negatively affected economy in Russia. Two articles (33%) were focused on the deteriorating Ukrainian economy, whilst one article (17%) reflected on how British enterprises such as BP were directly affected by the economic sanctions. What *Mail Online* was interested in was demonstrating increased gas prices.

The least used generic frame by the British media during this period was the nationalisation frame with a total occurrence of 5 out of 616 articles (1%). The *BBC*

and *Mail Online* used the frame 2 (40%) and 3 (60%) times respectively, with *The Guardian* not using it at all.

Diagnostic and prognostic framing.

With the radically intensified conflict particularly in the South-Eastern part of Ukraine over the third period, the trend of providing diagnosis continued in the British media with a total number of 348 out of 616 articles (56%) available for analysis. The overall focus in increasing the use of diagnostic frames remained significant. The particular triggers frame came on top among the diagnoses (Table 6.12). The *BBC* and *Mail Online* had the same percentage of stories using the frame – 63%, whereas *The Guardian* was slightly behind with 57% diagnosis stories in explaining the Ukraine crisis.

Table 6. 12: Distribution of Diagnostic frames by the British media: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Particular triggers	86 (63%)	45 (57%)	83 (63%)	214 (61%)
Global dimensions	33 (24%)	27 (34%)	40 (30%)	100 (29%)
Human rights violations	6 (4%)	1 (1%)	7 (5%)	14 (4%)
Political causes	11 (8%)	4 (5%)	10 (8%)	25 (7%)
Socio-economic	1 (0.7%)	2 (3%)	6 (5%)	9 (3%)
Religious prescriptions	0	0	1 (1%)	1 (0.2%)
Total	137 (52%)	79 (48%)	132 (71%)	348 (56%)

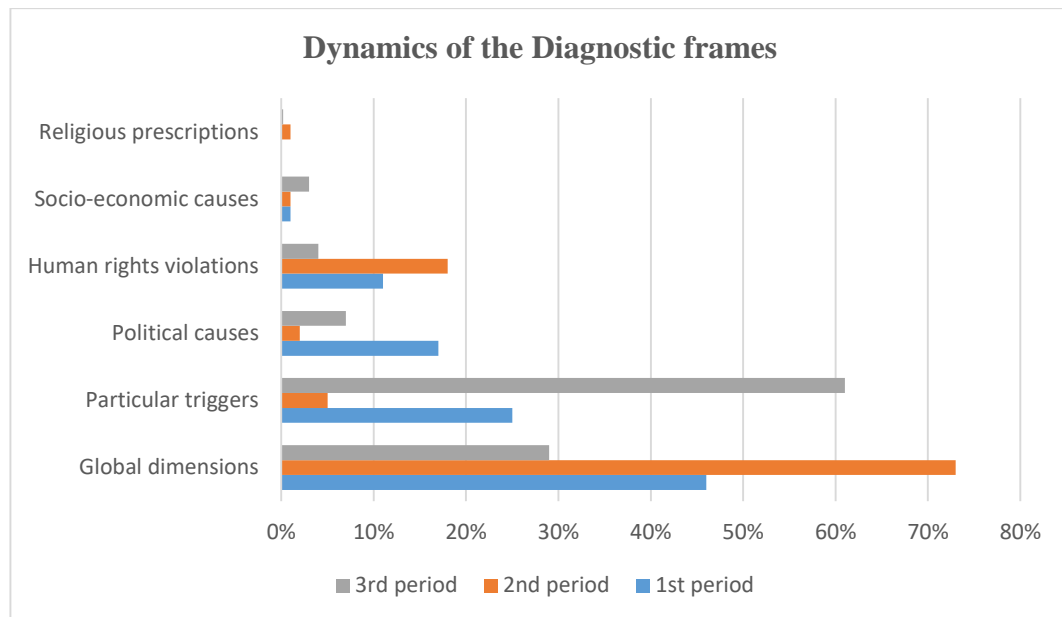


Figure 6. 12. 1

First, the *BBC* used 67 out of the 86 particular triggers framed stories (78%) to suggest that the violent unrest in Eastern Ukraine with support from Russia behind the scene was responsible for the deterioration of the Ukraine crisis. A smaller number of 14 framed stories (16%) regarded the Anti-Terrorism Operations carried out by the Ukrainian military from new Kyiv as the reason for the conflict. Second, similar to the *BBC*, *Mail Online* used this particular triggers frame in 55 out of its 83 frames (66%) to explain the worsened conflict by pointing out the eastern unrest between the new Kyiv government and the pro-Russian separatists. Three articles (4%) put emphasis on the violence of the Ukrainian nationalists, whilst 13 items (16%) suggested that the Anti-Terrorism Operations were the main reason for the conflict but in an attempt to calm down the unrest. For example, *Mail Online* wrote: ‘Government forces used aircraft, helicopters and artillery in a fierce attack to try to root out the separatists who have controlled Slaviansk and surrounding areas since early April’ (4 June 2014). Third, *The Guardian* differed slightly from the other two media, extensively stressing the importance of the fact that the Anti-Terrorism

Operations launched by the new Kyiv against the pro-Russian protestors were the main factor exacerbating the conflict in Ukraine, in 25 out of its 45 items (56%). The newspaper suggested the unrest in Eastern Ukraine as the reason in 16 items (36%). This explanation was essentially used by the *BBC* and *Mail Online*.

The previously most preferred diagnosis – global dimensions, came second with 100 items offered by the British media. The critical attitude towards Russia continued. As Table 6.12.1 below shows, in the case of the *BBC* out of the 33 items using the frame, 21(64%) presented Russia as sowing discord in the East by illegally annexing Crimea, militarily threatening Ukraine at the border, and aiming to boost its economic and political influence in Ukraine, the region, as well as globally. The media published 6 articles (18%) suggesting that the battle between NATO and Russia caused and continued the chaos in Ukraine. Five articles (15%) published by the *BBC* pointed directly to the referenda introduced by the separatists in the South-Eastern region of Ukraine. Only 1 article (3%) spoke to the West’s meddling being responsible for triggering and worsening the crisis.

Table 6. 12. 1: Use of the global dimensions frame by the *BBC*: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

Global Dimensions	Percentage (out of 33 items)
Russia’s interest	64%
NATO vs. Russia	18%
Separatists’ referenda	15%
West’s meddling	3%

For its part, *Mail Online* used global dimensions in 32 out of 40 cases (80%) to suggest Russia's imperialist mind-set as the main motivation. Five articles (13%) from *Mail Online* illuminated the conflict through a struggle lens of the West versus East. *The Guardian* (Table 6.12.2) talked about Russia's aggressive mentality in 12 out of its 27 articles (44%), followed by the battle between the West and East articulated in 6 articles (22%). Five articles (19%) believed that the referenda in Eastern cities aggravated the conflict in Ukraine. *The Guardian* published another 4 articles (15%) with a particular focus on the role of NATO and US who were argued to have ambitiously intervened in the region. Overall, for the most part the British media held opposite views on the root of the Ukraine conflict from the Russian media.

Table 6. 12. 2: Use of the global dimensions frame by *The Guardian*: 21.03. – 17.07.2014
(3rd period)

Global Dimensions	Percentage (out of 27 items)
Russia's aggression	44%
West vs. East	22%
Separatists' referenda	19%
NATO and the U.S.' intervention	15%

The third and fourth diagnosis employed by the British media were the political causes frame and the human rights violations frame during the third period. The *BBC* in particular used the political causes frame 9 times (out of 11) suggesting that the on-going conflict in Ukraine was initially caused by Yanukovych who

decided to terminate the political and economic package with the EU. For example, the media in reporting the battle on the ground in Donetsk region between Ukrainian forces and rebels, stated that: ‘The current crisis started last November when then President Viktor Yanukovich decided not to sign an agreement with the EU. The decision led to street protests in Kiev, and Mr Yanukovich was eventually overthrown’ (*BBC*, 7 July 2014).

The human rights violations diagnosis was mostly used by the *BBC* and *Mail Online* which accused Russia of breaking international law by annexing Crimea, thus intensifying the whole situation in Ukraine. For instance, *Mail Online* expressed concern over France’s continued business deal with Russia by quoting President Obama:

Mr Obama emphasised the importance of the G7 allies marching in ‘lockstep’ [...] “I have expressed some concerns - and I don't think I'm alone in this - about continuing significant defence deals with Russia at a time when they have violated basic international law and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of their neighbours” (*Mail Online*, 5 June 2014).

The final diagnoses used by the British media were the socio-economic causes and the religious prescriptions frames, which were mainly offered by *Mail Online*. The media highlighted the fact of Ukraine’s unpaid debt for the gas from Russia, which was equally suggested by the Russian media as a key element in the conflict.

Table 6. 13: Distribution of Prognostic frames by the British media: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Financial intervention	17 (61%)	4 (29%)	9 (82%)	30 (57%)
Military action	4 (15%)	5 (35%)	2 (18%)	11 (21%)
Dismantling weapons	4 (14%)	2 (14%)	0	6 (11%)
Internal reforms	3 (11%)	2 (14%)	0	5 (9%)
External co-operation	0	1 (7%)	0	1 (2%)
Change in government	0	0	0	0
Total	28 (11%)	14 (8%)	11 (6%)	53 (9%)

Table 6.13 specifies the preferred solutions to the Ukraine crisis offered by each media in the UK from 31 March to 17 July 2014. Compared with the previous period, the British media reduced the use of the prognostic frames, and suggested solutions in 9% of the sample (53 out of 616 articles). In addition, the overall preference from the British media changed slightly (Figure 6.13.1). The financial intervention prognosis remained on top. Especially the *BBC* and *Mail Online* together used the prognosis in 26 out of 30 items, while *The Guardian* showed less interest in the solution with 4 occurrences. Nevertheless, what the three media commonly suggested was to continue the economic sanctions on Russia because of the country's destructive involvement in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

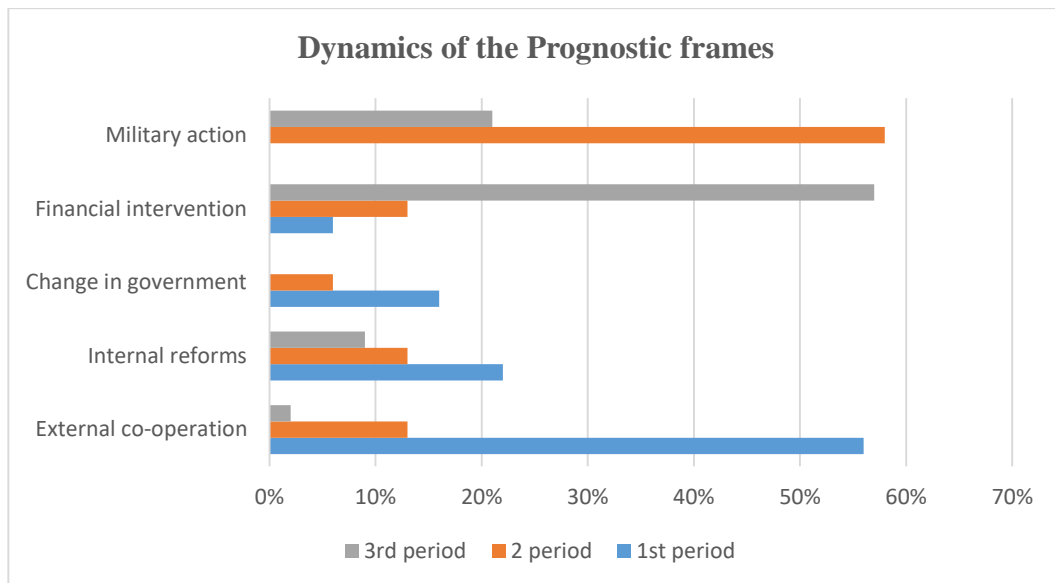


Figure 6. 13. 1

The second prognosis frame the British media tended to use was the military action referring to the use of military action to assist Ukraine. It is important to reiterate here that the military action diagnosis has been broken into three categories. They included the suggestion to use the military to intervene in the crisis, the suggestion of using the military to assist Ukraine, and the suggestion of not using any military action. The *BBC* (Table 6.13.1) dedicated 4 articles to the solution, 2 of them (50%) however supporting the view that Ukraine should resort to Anti-Terrorism Operations. One article (25%) published by the media discussed NATO's military readiness to enter the conflict region to fight with Russia. Another piece (25%) from the *BBC* rejected the notion of conducting any military crackdown. The position from *Mail Online* once again resonated with that of the *BBC*, with 1 out of 2 military action frames being supportive of Ukraine's suppression of the riots in the Eastern cities. One article made references to NATO that could provide Ukraine with military support. *The Guardian* on the one hand, shared the prognostic solution of sending troops to the Eastern Baltic in 2 out of its 5 articles (40%). On the other

hand, the newspaper used the prognostic frame in 3 articles (60%) to argue that any military action would only deteriorate the Ukraine conflict.

Table 6. 13. 1: Use of the military action frame by the *BBC*: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

Military action	Percentage (out of 4 items)
ATO	50%
NATO's military readiness	25%
No military crackdown	25%

The next prognosis recommended by the British media was the dismantling of weapons with a total number of 6 news items. Four of them came from the *BBC*, and two from *The Guardian*. The *BBC* demanded pro-Russian rebels to disarm in 3 out of 4 stories, with 1 item explicitly stating that there should be no inflow of weapons from Russia. What *The Guardian* suggested in its two prognoses was that rebels disarm and both sides remove weapons. The last two prognoses recommended by the British media during this period were the internal reforms with 5 occurrences in total presented by the *BBC* and *The Guardian*, and the external co-operation frame coming from *The Guardian*. The change in government frame that was highly recommended during the first period, has not been touched upon by the British media since the start of the second period.

4th period: 18. 07. 2014 – 28. 02. 2015.

Generic news frames.

The British media during the final time period reported the Ukraine conflict in 815 news items. The *BBC* published 372 articles (46%), *Mail Online* – 294 pieces (36%), and 149 (18%) came from *The Guardian* (Table 6.14). The overall use of the generic frames by the British media remained similar to the third period, but with a worth-noting increase in the economic consequences frame from *The Guardian* by 11 percentage points (Figure 6.14.1). This was regardless of the fact that the press dramatically reduced attention to the Ukraine crisis over the period. The *BBC* and *Mail Online* used minimally the economic consequences frame monopolising the narration of the fact that Russian economy appeared to fall and the negative effect that would occur if the economic sanctions on Russia are not continued. *The Guardian* tended to provide multiple perspectives while using the economic consequences frame. These consisted of the positive and the negative impacts on both EU countries and Russia caused by the economic sanctions. For example, *The Guardian* used the frame showing how the sanctions have impacted the German economy in one article titled ‘German economic morale falls’, quoting the polling firm GfK from Germany:

Referring to the situation in Ukraine and the effect of EU sanctions against Russia, GfK added: “Given that no long-term solutions appear to be on the cards yet for any of the crises, uncertainty is rising in the population on the potential consequences for the German economy. In particular, the sanctions against Russia, which are already significantly impacting exports, could become a real risk for the German economy” (*The Guardian*, 28 August 2014).

Table 6. 14: Distribution of Generic frames by the British media: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015
(4th period)

	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Conflict	168 (45%)	45 (30%)	118 (40%)	331 (41%)
Responsibility	139 (37%)	60 (40%)	125 (43%)	324 (40%)
Human interest	58 (16%)	18 (12%)	35 (12%)	111 (14%)
Economic consequences	7 (2%)	22 (15%)	2 (1%)	31 (4%)
Nationalisation	0	0	10 (3.4%)	10 (1%)
Morality	0	4 (3%)	4 (1.3%)	8 (1%)
Total	372 (46%)	149 (18%)	294 (36%)	815

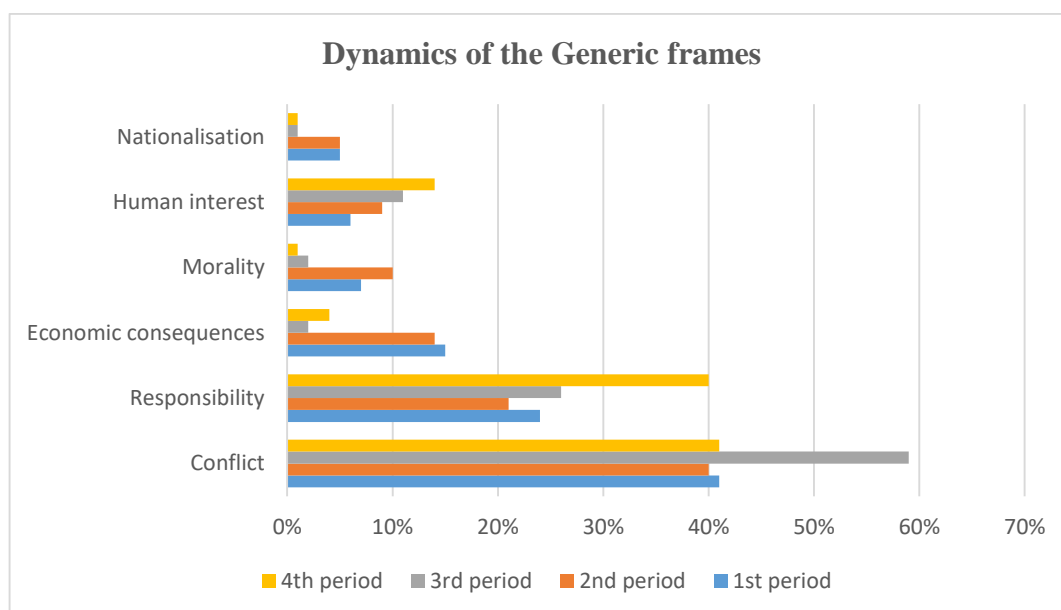


Figure 6. 14. 1

There was also a tendency of increasing the use of the responsibility frame by the British media during the final period. As Table 6.14 clearly indicates, the increased use of the responsibility frame (324 in total) was almost the same as the

conflict frame – 331 articles. There was an observable rise in the number of articles using the frame from *The Guardian* by 17 percentage points. Out of 60 occurrences, the newspaper published 25 articles (42%) blaming Russia for destabilising the Eastern region. Nine items (15%) accused the pro-Russian rebels of shooting down flight MH17 and shelling the areas of the Eastern region. The media implied that Russia could make peace in its 6 articles (10%). Two articles (3%) laid the blame directly on the West in terms of their economic sanctions on Russia and the political meddling in Ukraine. Likewise, the *BBC* used the frame blaming Russia in 67 out of 139 items (48%), and accusing Russian-backed separatists of shooting down MH17 and shelling in 15 items (11%). The *BBC* used 25 times the responsibility frame (18%) to express that Russia could alleviate the chaos in Ukraine.

The use of the responsibility frame by *Mail Online* slightly differed, with the media extensively focusing on blaming Russia in 71 out of 125 articles (57%). 22 articles (18%) were concentrated on accusations against Russian-backed separatists, while 13 articles (10%) pointed out that Russia had the ability to improve the deteriorating situation in Ukraine. In responding to Putin's denial of involvement in the catastrophe, *Mail Online* implied Russia's responsibility for the MH17 tragedy by reminding the readers of the shooting down of Korean Airlines flight 007 'by a Russian fighter in 1983 [...] Initially the Soviet Union denied the responsibility' (*Mail Online*, 18 July 2014). Overall, the British media showed a high interest in the blame game towards Russia, the Russia-backed separatists, and especially President Putin. For instance, the *BBC* highlighted Putin's ambitions and military threat towards Ukraine in an article titled: 'Russia "to alter military strategy towards Nato"' (2 September 2014). After having described the presence of Russian troops in Ukraine, the *BBC* quoted Putin as saying: 'If I want to, I can take Kiev in two

weeks'. *Mail Online* too quoted the words in an article titled: "' If I want to I can take Kiev in a fortnight": Putin's threat to Europe revealed by EU boss as Ukraine loses control of key airport' (*Mail Online*, 1 September 2014). This salient indicator was also shared by *The Guardian* in an article titled with 'Nato summit: EU leaders' meeting: Don't appease Putin like we did Hitler in 1938, warns Cameron'. The newspaper continued: 'Nato says there are at least 1,000 Russian forces on the wrong side of the border. The Ukrainians put the figure at 1,600. "The problem is not this, but that if I want I'll take Kiev in two weeks," Putin said, according to La Repubblica' (*The Guardian*, 3 September 2014).

The overall use of the human-interest frame that came third in the British media also enjoyed an increase as compared to the previous time period. Out of the total of 111 human-interest framed stories, the *BBC* used the frame 58 times (52%). The *BBC* focused on suffering refugees and victims from severely hit areas in Eastern Ukraine in 17 articles (29%). 11 articles (19%) described the rebels as mistreating the MH17 crash site, and as being led by Russian leaders.

Following the conflict, responsibility, human-interest, and economic consequences frames, the British media used the nationalisation and morality frames in 10 and 8 articles respectively. The tabloid-style *Mail Online* used the nationalisation frame the most. But the morality frame was not of significant interest to the British media with *The Guardian* and *Mail Online* contributing each 4 news items. The two media outlets used the frame critiquing the lies from Kremlin propaganda and again likening Vladimir Putin to Adolf Hitler. For example, *The Guardian* in one article with a title using the Prime Minister David Cameron's appeal during an EU leaders' meeting: 'Don't appease Putin like we did Hitler in 1938', claimed:

[T]he prime minister told an EU summit that Putin had to be stopped from seizing all of Ukraine [...] Cameron likened the west's dilemma with Putin to the infamous conduct of the British prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, with Hitler in Munich in 1938, when Anglo-French appeasement encouraged the Nazi leader to invade Poland the following year, sparking world war [...] The European commission president [...] told the summit that Putin had told him his forces, if ordered to do so, could conquer Kiev in a fortnight (*The Guardian*, 3 September 2014).

Table 6. 15: Distribution of Diagnostic frames by the British media: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Global dimensions	119 (47%)	83 (82%)	126 (64%)	328 (60%)
Particular triggers	158 (63%)	45 (45%)	99 (51%)	302 (55%)
Human rights violations	8 (3%)	3 (3%)	13 (7%)	97 (18%)
Political causes	15 (6%)	4 (4%)	3 (2%)	88 (16%)
Socio-economic	3 (1%)	5 (5%)	0	38 (7%)
Religious prescriptions	0	0	0	0
Total	252 (68%)	101 (68%)	196 (67%)	549 (67%)

Diagnostic and prognostic framing.

The British media during the final period paid significant attention to the Ukraine conflict with a total of 815 articles, and provided 67% of the space to diagnosis. Among the 549 occurrences of the prognostic frame offered by the British

media, the global dimensions (328 articles) frame came on top, followed by the particular triggers (302 articles) frame (Table 6.15).

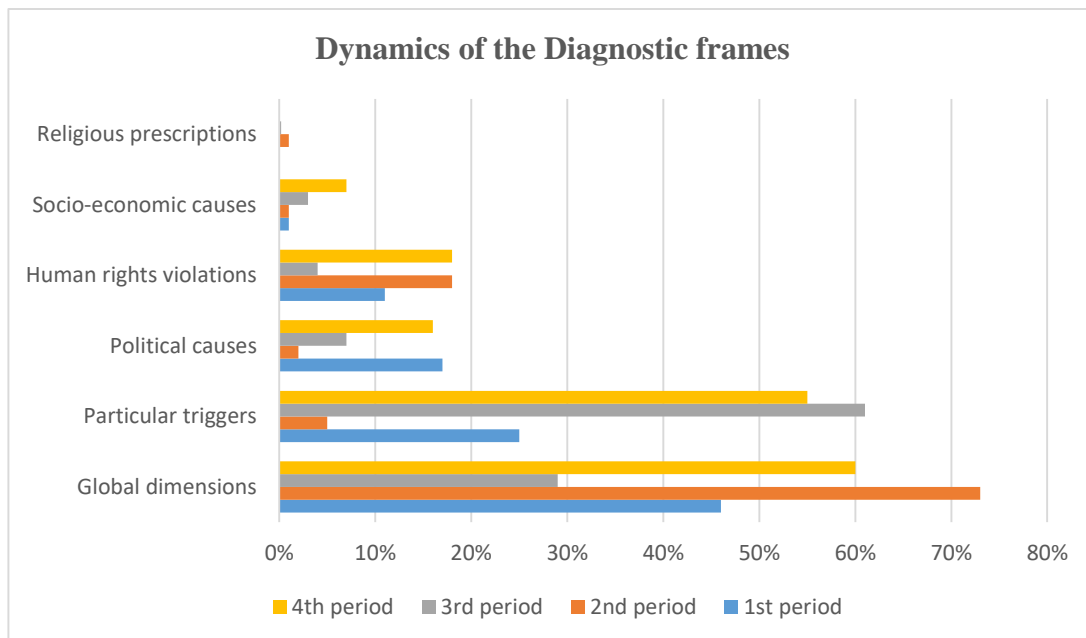


Figure 6. 15. 1

What the British media mostly articulated by using the global dimensions frame was Russia's direct and indirect involvement in the battles next door. For example, the table below (Table 6.15.1) shows that *The Guardian* with its 83 occurrences of the diagnosis, distributed 58 of them (70%) to explain the root of unceasing conflict in South-Eastern Ukraine by highlighting the fact that rebels received weapons from Russia. 21 articles (25%) from the press specifically pointed out Russia's mentality of building and revitalising an empire. The power struggle between the West and the East as a main reason behind the Ukraine crisis was suggested in 3 articles (4%), while the notion of NATO's expansionism was mentioned in 2 items (2%). Following the pattern from *The Guardian*, the *BBC* and *Mail Online* offered similar explanations with a major part revealing Russia's geopolitical interests in the region. What was different was that in spite of the

insignificant reference to the battle between the West and East, the *BBC* and *Mail Online* did not interpret the NATO's expansionism as a direct diagnosis.

Table 6. 15. 1: Use of the global dimensions frame by the *BBC*: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

Global dimensions	Percentage (out of 83 items)
Inflow of weapons from Russia	70%
Russia's ambition	25%
West vs. East	4%
NATO's expansionism	2%

The second diagnosis the British media tended to use was the particular triggers frame. The *BBC* in particular used the frame (158 items) in 63% of its coverage, contributing the greatest quantity to the whole of 302 items. The media manifested this diagnosis in 67 out of 158 items (42%) by noting that the fighting between pro-Russian separatists and Kyiv forces worsened the Ukraine conflict. Another 64 articles (41%) specified that the fighting between the two sides with the rebels starting the attacks and the shelling led to the aggravated crisis. Eight articles (5%) suggested the Ukrainian forces initiated attacks. In the same vein (Table 6.15.2), *Mail Online* suggested the fighting between parties as the cause without specifically pointing out which side started it, in 39 out of its 99 items (39%). A smaller number of 26 items (26%) identified the role of rebels in leading to violence and shelling as the specific reason for the unending conflict. Eight articles (8%) from

Mail Online gave details on the shelling in South-Eastern Ukraine, as the Ukrainian forces attempted to retake some of the cities there.

Table 6. 15. 2: Use of the particular triggers frame by *Mail Online*: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015
(4th period)

Particular triggers	Percentage (out of 99 items)
Fighting between rebels and Kiev	39%
Violence from rebels	26%
Shelling from Kiev	8%

The Guardian highlighted the fighting without identifying the initiators, whilst offering more space to pointing at the new Kyiv's shelling than to the rebel-led violence. Additionally, *The Guardian* argued that rebels shot down the flight MH17 in 14 articles, and that Russia caused the tragedy in 6 articles. Generally, the British media put forward the idea that the violence between the two sides escalated the Ukraine conflict.

After the particular triggers frame, the British media tended to use the human rights violation and political causes frames. First, *Mail Online* and the *BBC* together published 21 out of 24 articles to describe Russia's involvement and so-called humanitarian convoy as an invasion that broke international law. A smaller number of articles suggested that rebels conducted crimes as they shot down the MH17. Second, the *BBC* and *The Guardian* published 19 out of 22 items that used the political causes frame to explain the on-going Ukraine conflict. The *BBC* in particular stressed Yanukovich's corruption and his one-sided ending of the EU deal

in 15 articles. *The Guardian* used little of the frame, but mainly pointing out Yanukovich's corruption, and discussing such facts as corruption in current government, US backed coup, and communist party members being abused by Poroshenko's administration. *The Guardian's* characteristic of offering various views, was also evident in its use of the socio-economic causes frame, where the newspaper talked about Ukraine's gas debt, its falling economy, Putin's 'humanitarian' convoy to Eastern Ukraine, as well as Russia's cutting off of gas supply to Ukraine. None of the media from the UK engaged with the religious prescriptions diagnosis during the final period.

The use of the prognostic frames by the British media over the final period remained exactly the same as during the third period, with 72 out of 815 (9%) items selected for analysis. In Table 6.16, the financial intervention prognosis continued to be the first choice in relation to the Ukraine conflict, recommended by the British media, with a total number of 45 items.

Table 6. 16: Distribution of Prognostic frames by the British media: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Financial intervention	15 (56%)	12 (75%)	18 (62%)	45 (63%)
Military action	6 (23%)	4 (29%)	12 (41%)	22 (31%)
Dismantling weapons	9 (33%)	0	3 (10%)	12 (17%)
Internal reforms	3 (11%)	2 (13%)	0	5 (7%)
External co-operation	2 (7%)	0	0	2 (3%)
Change in government	0	0	0	0
Total	27 (7%)	16 (11%)	29 (10%)	72 (9%)

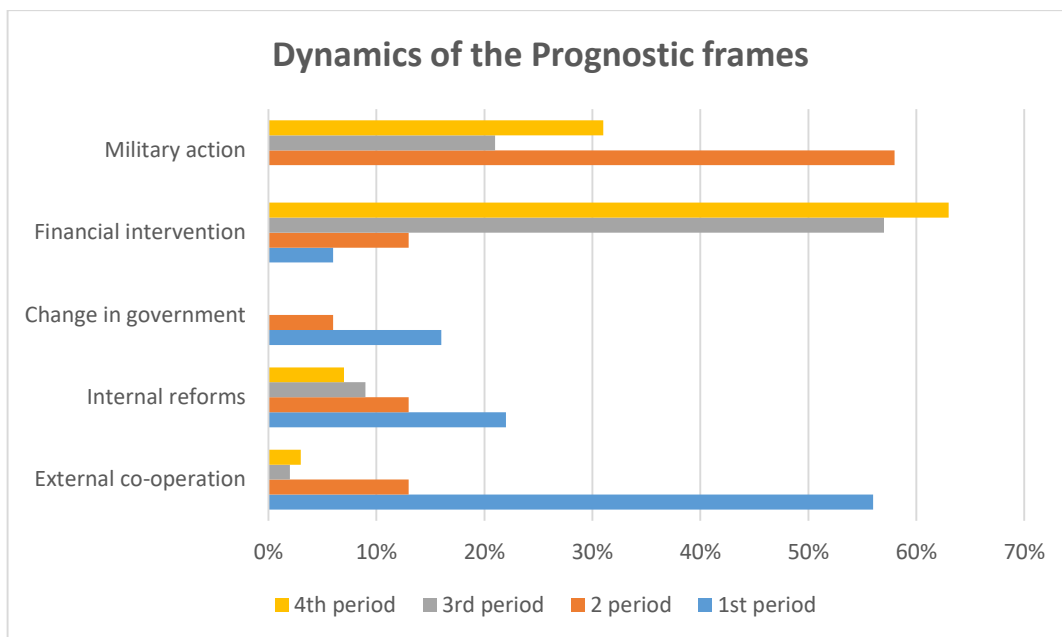


Figure 6. 16. 1

Specifically, *The Guardian* contributed 10 items (83%) to the solution (financial intervention) by suggesting economic sanctions on Russia (Table 6.16.1), followed by 3 occurrences (25%) of calling for help for Ukraine's economy, and 2 items (17%) of supporting the EU to cut the import of Russia's gas.

Table 6. 16. 1: Use of the financial intervention frame by *The Guardian*: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

Financial intervention	Percentage (out of 12 items)
Economic sanction on Russia	83%
Assistance to Ukrainian economy	25%
Termination to Russia's gas	17%

The focus on economic sanctions on Russia was also what the *BBC* mostly suggested, in 11 out of 15 articles (73%), whilst the other 4 articles (27%) suggested the need to help Ukraine's economy. *Mail Online* held the same opinion by promoting EU sanctions on Russia, in 14 out of 18 occurrences (78%). Apart from appealing for economic aid to Ukraine from IMF in 1 item (6%), *Mail Online* also issued 2 articles (11%) being supportive of further investing in NATO in order to confront Russia. For example, *Mail Online* covered NATO's summit where the world leaders prepared to tell Russia to retreat from Ukraine's borders, quoting the then UK Defence Secretary Michael Fallon:

“It's time now to toughen up so that Nato can deal with the aggression and the threats that we face [...] It means the first ever public commitment to increase defence spending. That will demonstrate to all those who threaten us that the state of our transatlantic bond is strong”. His comments reflected Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond” (*Mail Online*, 3 September 2014).

The military action was second frequently recommended solution by the British media over the third and fourth time periods. All the British media without exception highly recommended the idea that NATO should combat directly with Russia to assist Ukraine. This was evident in 19 out of 22 articles. The remaining 3 articles (from the *BBC* and *Mail Online*) rejected the solution of military action.

The third commonly suggested solution by the British media was dismantling weapons. What the media implied was firstly a removal of heavy weaponry by both sides; secondly a call for Russia to stop supplying weapons to rebels. The internal reforms was the next solution the British media preferred (the *BBC* and *The*

Guardian in particular); although they expressed the solution in different terms. For instance, the *BBC* used the term of ‘decentralisation’ (9 February 2015), while *The Guardian* articulated it as ‘federal autonomy’ (4 September 2014). Finally, the external co-operation was mentioned two times by the *BBC*, suggesting to co-operate with Russia, and to form a global monitoring group.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the performance of the British media outlets in terms of their news coverage of the Ukraine crisis between 30 November 2013 and 28 February 2015. The second research question that scrutinises the attention paid to the Ukraine crisis was answered, which disclosed a gradually reduced focus for each time period. Generally speaking, what the British media tended to emphasise was human-focused reporting. This resonated with the media’s featured engagements with the blame game (responsibility generic frame) and human-interest generic frames, alongside their preferences for the diagnostic frames in terms of global dimensions and particular triggers. During the first period, particular triggers signified Yanukovych’s crackdowns on his people at the Maidan. This led to the recommendation (prognostic frame) for change in government through broad focus on the direct quotes from politicians and the protests’ voice to topple the Yanukovych regime and have a snap election. During the subsequent three periods, the majority of the coverage pointed fingers directly at Russia due to its involvement in the crisis. As a result, the financial intervention (prognostic frame) – economic sanctions on Russia – was largely recommended as a solution to the Ukraine conflict. The British media barely used religions and nationalisation frames to explain the root of the Ukraine crisis. As explained in Chapter five, religion was not the dividing

factor. The rare usage of nationalisation frame could be explained by the fact that the UK was not militarily involved in the crisis. So far the press attention and the frames used by the British media outlets have been identified thus answering the research questions 2 and 3. The focus next moves to the qualitative comparison between the Russian and British media coverage of the Ukraine crisis.

Chapter 7

Comparison between the Russian and the British Media Coverage of the Ukraine Crisis

7.1 Introduction

As Entman (1990) has previously suggested ‘genuine empirical accuracy demands going beyond the numbers to qualitative data and informed speculation’ (p. viii). This chapter aims to compare the findings about the media coverage of the Ukraine crisis in Russia and the UK as outlined in Chapter five and Chapter six. The analysis is based on a comparative approach combining the quantitative findings, the qualitative elements and an overall in-depth qualitative analysis.

To answer the proposed questions about the differences between the news framing of the Ukraine crisis from hybrid and liberal regimes, and to assess the extent to which their news coverage of the Ukraine crisis reflected or refuted the media systems models, the chapter focuses on a comparison between the two countries’ media coverage of the crisis. It brings together the data from all studied Russian and British media, thus making it possible to answer the fourth research question about the differences between the Russian and British media characterising the narrative of the Ukraine crisis. The analysis follows the structure of the previous two chapters highlighting firstly the press attention and secondly the use of generic, diagnostic and prognostic frames.

7.2 Press Attention

1st period: 30. 11. 2013 – 26. 02. 2014.

As the findings in Chapters five and six suggest at the early stage of the Ukraine crisis, between 30 November 2013 and 26 February 2014 (Table 7.1), the British media offered less attention to the Ukraine crisis than the Russian media. However, the second measure used – that of mean length – showed more interest in the British media compared to the Russian with 729 words on average per news item. *Mail Online* tended to publish longer articles than the other media outlets under examination in this study, especially its counterpart – *Pravda.ru*. Both the *BBC* and *The Guardian* showed less interest compared to their analogues in the Russian media – *RT* and *The Moscow Times*. Firstly, the *BBC* issued 110 pieces focusing on freedom and democracy while its Russian counterpart *RT* published 128 articles distancing Russia from the conflict. Secondly, *The Guardian* like its analogue *The Moscow Times*, offered less attention to the Ukraine conflict with 78 articles and an average of 684 words.

Table 7. 1: Press attention by media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014

	Quantity	Mean Length
BBC	110	623
The Guardian	78	684
Mail Online	55	1,004
UK	243 (44%)	729
RT	128	741
The Moscow Time	117	702
Pravda.ru	67	491
Russia	312 (56%)	673
Total	555	

2nd period: 27. 02. – 20. 03. 2014.

During the second time period (22 days), the British media decreased the quantity of news coverage of the Ukraine crisis to 236 pieces, while the Russian media intensified their coverage on the topic to 401 pieces (Table 7.2). Despite the reduction, the British media provided an average of 11 reports per day and a longer mean length of 908 words compared to the Russian media. The latter offered 18 pieces per day on average with a mean length of 679 words. This time all the three British media outlets offered more extended coverage than their Russian counterparts.

Table 7. 2: Press attention by media: 27.02. – 20.03.2014

	Quantity	Mean Length
BBC	82	757
The Guardian	85	751
Mail Online	69	1,281
UK	236 (37%)	908
RT	146	747
The Moscow Time	155	685
Pravda.ru	100	572
Russia	401 (63%)	679
Total	637	

Putin's speech on the 19th of March 2014 on Crimea's returning home was covered extensively by both the *RT* (5,259 words) and the *BBC* (6,535 words), the latter containing critical annotations by the *BBC* diplomatic correspondent Bridget Kendall. The comparison between *RT* and the *BBC* here was quite revealing. While the former frequently linked the case of 1999 Kosovo crisis to the legitimacy of Crimea's reunification, the latter held completely different views on the two cases.

This will be further explained in more detail in the later section focusing on the results of the framing analysis.

3rd period: 21. 03. – 17. 07. 2014.

As Table 7.3 below displays, the British media produced 31% of the whole coverage, whereas the Russian media published more than two times that – 69%. The British media labelled what had been going on in South-Eastern Ukraine in similar terms: firm belief in Putin’s military and financial backing for pro-Russian separatists on the ground. In contrast, the Russian media’s attitudes remained different, disentangling Russia from the violence in Eastern Ukraine whilst claiming to resettle the refugees from severely hit areas in that part of the country due to the new Kyiv’s ongoing Anti-Terrorism Operations.

Table 7. 3: Press attention by media: 21.03. – 17.07.2014

	Quantity	Mean Length
BBC	264	615
The Guardian	166	726
Mail Online	186	915
UK	616 (31%)	735
RT	543	588
The Moscow Time	560	652
Pravda.ru	302	536
Russia	1,405 (69%)	602
Total	2,021	

4th period: 18. 07. 2014 – 28. 02. 2015.

The British media’s attention paid to the Ukraine crisis during the final time period reached 815 out of 2,319 articles (35%), with the Russian media responsible

for the remaining 65% of the total coverage (Table 7.4). Quite similar to *The Moscow Times* was the noticeable reduction in coverage attention on the subject in *The Guardian* – the Ukraine crisis only appeared in 149 articles, as the topic completely faded away from the news agenda in October 2014.

Table 7. 4: Press attention by media: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015

	Quantity	Mean Length
BBC	372	631
The Guardian	149	703
Mail Online	294	1,038
UK	815 (35%)	791
RT	583	614
The Moscow Time	493	677
Pravda.ru	428	561
Russia	1,504 (65%)	619
Total	2,319	

In comparison with the examined Russian media, the overall narrowed interest in the subject shown by the British media was predominantly attributed to the disappearance of the story from *The Guardian*; although the newspaper dedicated most of its coverage to condemning Putin for his direct involvement in Ukraine thus causing the subsequent catastrophe (e.g., *The Guardian*, 1 September 2014). Meanwhile its Russian counterpart *The Moscow Times* discussed various perspectives regarding the ongoing conflict in South-Eastern Ukraine (e.g., 18 February 2015). While *RT* devoted a lot of attention to the Anti-Terrorism Operations carried out by new Kyiv using chemical weapons (e.g., 9 February 2015), the *BBC* hardly regarded this as an important issue but continued to accuse pro-Russian rebels of exacerbating the conflict and Russia for its involvement (e.g., 5

February 2015). The final observable comparison is that while *Pravda.ru* tended to have the least and the shortest articles among the studied Russian media, among the British media the *Mail Online* also devoted relatively less attention but had the lengthiest articles. Table 7.5 summarises the number of articles from each media outlet over the four periods.

Table 7. 5: Number of articles from media outlets for each time-period

	1st	2nd	3rd	4 th
BBC	110	82	264	372
The Guardian	78	85	166	149
Mail Online	55	69	186	294
UK	243 (44%)	236 (37%)	616 (31%)	815 (35%)
RT	128	146	543	583
The Moscow Time	117	155	560	493
Pravda.ru	67	100	302	428
Russia	312 (56%)	401 (63%)	1,405 (69%)	1,504 (65%)
Total	555	637	2,021	2,319

Generally, what this study uncovered is that the Russian media outlets dedicated more attention in terms of quantity to the Ukraine crisis, most likely reflecting the geopolitical interest of the Russian government. Although tabloid-style *Pravda.ru* published the shortest articles compared especially with *Mail Online* that offered the lengthiest ones, the former provided more stories on the topic than the latter. Furthermore, the Russian media published longer stories only during the first time period, especially *RT* and *The Moscow Times*. This could be explained by the fact that the Russian media framed the Ukraine crisis from various perspectives. For example, during the first period while *The Moscow Times* and *Pravda.ru* explained the roots of the Ukraine crisis through a socio-economic lens in their 9 articles in

total, the British media mentioned this only once by the *BBC*. This will be explained and discussed further in the next section where the use of frames is the main focus. The British media tended to offer longer articles from the second to the final time period. This can be connected to the fact that overall the British media devoted more attention to the roots of and the solutions to the Ukraine crisis than the Russian media. Next, the focus shifts to a qualitative and analytical comparison between the Russian and the British media in relation to their uses of generic, diagnostic and prognostic frames.

7.3 Framing the Ukraine Crisis

1st period: 30. 11. 2013 – 26. 02. 2014.

Generic news frames.

Table 7.6 shows the overall picture relating to the use of generic frames by the Russian and British media outlets during the first time period. All the media outlets from both countries tended to describe the Ukraine conflict through the lens of conflict (47% of coverage), 24% of the overall coverage used the responsibility frame, while the economic consequences frame was evident in 11% of the articles. This was followed by a marginally smaller use of the human-interest frame (10%), whereas the morality and nationalisation frames stood at 5% and 3% respectively. Importantly, the *BBC* was the media that used the conflict frame the most, among all the studied media including the Russian ones.

Table 7. 6: Distribution of Generic frames by media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014 (1st period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda. ru</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Conflict	42 (33%)	55 (47%)	32 (48%)	63 (57%)	40 (51%)	29 (53%)	261 (47%)
Responsibility	39 (30%)	24 (21%)	12 (18%)	26 (24%)	20 (26%)	12 (22%)	133 (24%)
Economic consequences	20 (16%)	21 (18%)	7 (10%)	6 (5%)	3 (4%)	3 (5%)	60 (11%)
Human Interest	6 (5%)	11 (9%)	3 (5%)	14 (13%)	12 (15%)	10 (18%)	56 (10%)
Morality	15 (12%)	1 (1%)	7 (10%)	0	2 (3%)	1 (2%)	26 (5%)
Nationalisation	6 (5%)	5 (4%)	6 (9%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	19 (3%)
Total	128	117	67	110	78	55	555

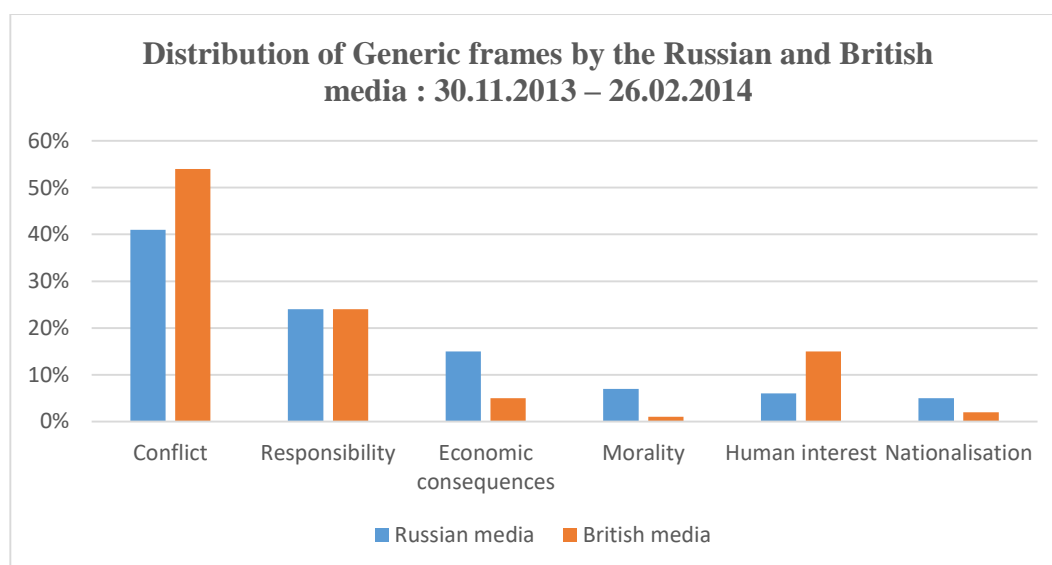


Figure 7. 6. 1

The differences between the two countries' media revealed first a noteworthy gap between the uses of the human-interest frame. The British media favoured it – it was its third most commonly used frame after the economic consequences and

morality frames which, on the contrary, were the preferred ones by the Russian media. For example, one notices that *The Moscow Times* during this period employed more economic frames, in 21 out of 117 articles (18% of the total) highlighting the positive and negative sides of each offer from the EU and Russia, compared to *The Guardian* with only 3 articles representing 4% of the total of 78 articles. The same pattern is true for the *BBC* and *RT*, and *Mail Online* and *Pravda.ru*.

There were no statistically significant differences between the two countries' media outlets in their uses of the conflict frame. The British media devoted slightly more coverage with 132 occurrences compared to the Russia media – 129 items. The second most commonly used frame was the responsibility frame. The frame was evident in 58 and 75 articles in the British and Russian media respectively. It is worth noting that while the self-claimed independent media – *RT* (30%) used more of the frame than *The Moscow Times* (21%) and *Pravda.ru* (18%); among the British media the centre-left press – *The Guardian* dedicated more space (26%) to the frame than the *BBC* (24%) and *Mail Online* (22%).

The third overall most frequently used generic frame – the human-interest frame – was more pronounced in the British media with 36 out of 56 articles using it, compared to the Russian media where it was present only in 20 articles. Compared to *Mail Online* (18%), the tabloid-style *Pravda.ru* used the frame only in 5% of its coverage. Apart from the economic consequences frame, the morality and nationalisation frames were both also favoured by the Russian media, whereas the British media devoted minimal space – three and two articles respectively – to each frame.

Two observations are worth highlighting here. First, *RT* was the media that used the morality frame the most, while its British counterpart the *BBC* did not use the frame at all. Second, *Pravda.ru* – as highlighted in Chapter six – was characterised by its tendency to use the nationalisation frame, whereas *Mail Online* during this period showed zero interest in the frame.

Diagnostic and prognostic framing.

Despite the fact that the Russian media generally paid more attention to the Ukraine conflict compared to the British media during the first period, the latter offered slightly more diagnostic frames explaining why and how the crisis occurred and developed. A total number of 186 diagnostic frames were identified amounting to 77% of the whole of 243 articles from the British media, compared to the Russian media offering diagnosis in 71% of its coverage.

Table 7. 7: Distribution of Diagnostic frames by media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014 (1st period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda. ru</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Global dimensions	46 (52%)	49 (42%)	15 (5%)	35 (45%)	27 (35%)	24 (59%)	196 (48%)
Particular triggers	26 (30%)	13 (11%)	1 (3%)	19 (24%)	20 (26%)	8 (20%)	87 (21%)
Political causes	9 (10%)	25 (21%)	6 (20%)	15 (19%)	12 (15%)	4 (10%)	71 (17%)
Human rights violations	7 (8%)	9 (8%)	7 (23%)	8 (10%)	8 (10%)	5 (12%)	44 (11%)
Socio-economic	0	8 (7%)	1 (3%)	1 (1%)	0	0	10 (2%)
Religious	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	88 (69%)	104 (89%)	30 (45%)	78 (71%)	67 (86%)	41 (75%)	408

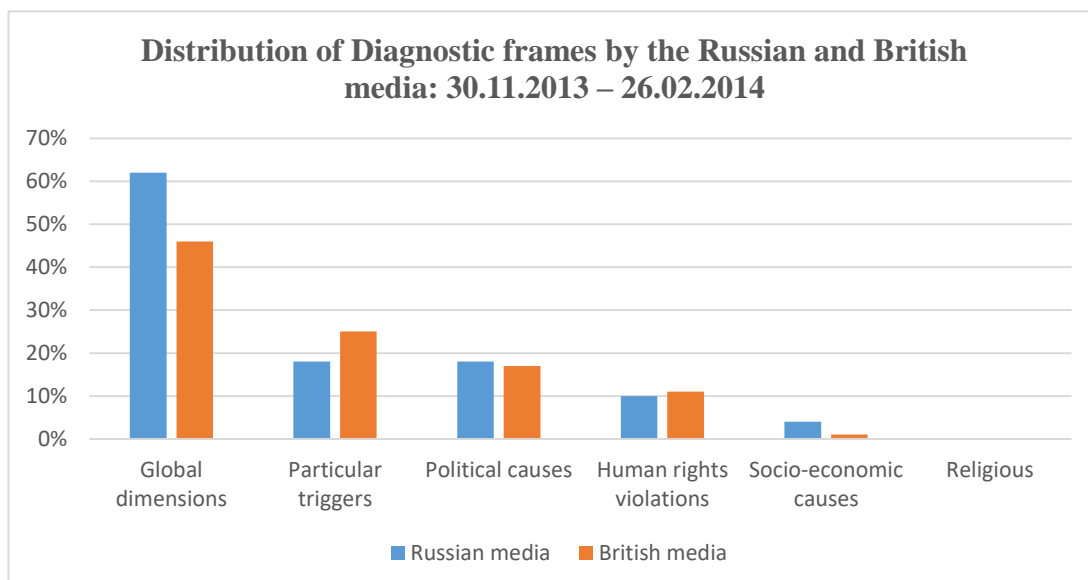


Figure 7. 7. 1

Similar to the Russian media, the British media expressed a great interest in explaining the Ukraine crisis through global dimensions (Figure 7.7.1). However, the two held different views. While the British media highlighted the positive role of the West (the EU and the US) in helping Ukraine; the Russian media saw the West (especially the US) as an aggressor. As exemplified in Chapter five and Chapter six, the leaked conversation between the U.S. Assistant Secretary Victoria Nuland and the US ambassador to Ukraine – Geoffrey Pyatt was covered by the *BBC* and *Mail Online* on 7 February 2014, highlighting the West’s constructive role in trying to find and negotiate a solution to the Ukraine crisis. *The Guardian* did not report this issue until 25 February 2014 mentioning the leaked call in only few words. The Russian media, on the other hand, expressed strong discontent with the West. *RT* reported the issue first on 6 February 2014 believing that the leaked phone conversation had further proved Washington’s meddling in Ukraine. *Pravda.ru* covered the issue on 8 February 2014 and accused the U.S. and the EU of being unprofessional while

denying Russia's involvement. Similar to *The Guardian*, *The Moscow Times* only covered the issue several days later (13 February 2014), but sending an overall message of a Cold War between the U.S. and Russia.

The second diagnostic frame the British media tended to use was the particular triggers frame. This frame was the third favoured one among the Russian media. The British media used this frame (as the second favoured one) to specifically stress the importance of Yanukovich's crackdown on the protesters at Maidan (e.g., *BBC*, 3 December 2013). This view was also reflected by *The Moscow Times* (13 February 2014), while *RT* (24 February 2014) and *Pravda.ru* (2 December 2013) used the frame to indicate that the protesters, the radical groups, and the interim government's attacks had led to the chaotic developments in Kyiv.

The *BBC* (11 December 2013), *The Guardian* (12 December 2013), and *Mail Online* (31 January 2014) all used the political causes frame to express the opinion that the Yanukovich regime's corruption and abuse of power had caused the Ukraine crisis. The Russian media outlets, in contrast, used this diagnostic frame to suggest that this was an internal/domestic issue. This included discussing the protest in Kyiv (*RT*, 24 February 2014), the power struggles between political parties (*Pravda.ru*, 2 December 2013), and Yanukovich's refusal to sign the country's EU Association Agreement (*The Moscow Times*, 17 February 2014). The least referred among the diagnoses in the British media were the socio-economic causes discussed only once by the *BBC* (3 December 2013). In comparison, the Russian media had 9 occurrences coming from *The Moscow Times* (8 times) and *Pravda.ru* (once, 12 December 2013).

Table 7.8 and Figure 7.8.1 show the use of prognostic frames by the Russian and the British media. While the Russian media offered only 32 prognoses out of its 312 articles (10%), focusing primarily on external co-operation; the British media in

addition to providing larger sets of diagnoses, delivered 85 prognoses out of 243 articles (35%). The British media suggested the change in government solution (44 articles) more often than the Russian media (5 articles).

The second most recommended prognosis was internal reforms. Both the Russian and the British media suggested the frame as their second favoured solution to the Ukraine conflict. The Russian media suggested the internal reforms as an ideal solution to the crisis, which was coherent to their uses of the political causes frame (diagnosis) that indicated the Ukraine crisis as domestic/internal issues. In contrast, the British media articulated the same prognosis as a solution to what they previously considered the Yanukovych administration's notorious issues such as the lack of freedom, democracy, abuse of power, and persistent corruption. The external co-operation was identified as the most favoured solution by the Russian media, but as the least preferred solution from the British media coming only from *The Guardian* and the *BBC*.

Table 7. 8: Distribution of Prognostic frames by media: 30.11.2013 – 26.02.2014 (1st period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda. ru</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Change in government	1 (17%)	2 (11%)	2 (29%)	20 (54%)	14 (44%)	10 (62%)	49 (42%)
External co-operation	3 (50%)	13 (68%)	2 (29%)	3 (8%)	9 (28%)	0	30 (26%)
Internal reforms	1 (17%)	3 (16%)	3 (43%)	10 (27%)	5 (16%)	0	22 (19%)
Financial intervention	1 (17%)	1 (5%)	0	4 (11%)	4 (13%)	6 (38%)	16 (14%)
Total	6 (5%)	19 (16%)	7 (10%)	37 (34%)	32 (41%)	16 (29%)	117

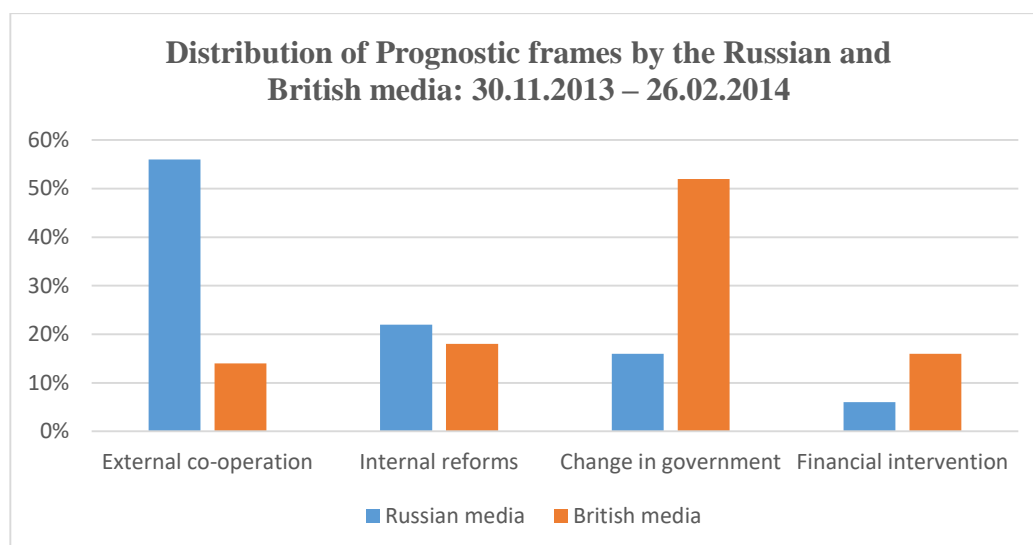


Figure 7. 8. 1

2nd period: 27. 02. – 20. 03. 2014.

Generic news frames.

The general breakdown of the use of generic frames by the British and the Russian media in the second time period: 27 February – 20 March 2014, is shown in Table 7.9 below. The conflict frame was the most popular out of all the generic frames used by the British media. This went in line with the Russian media offering extensive descriptions of the Ukraine crisis through the conflict lens. However, there was a visible decline in the frame in the *The Guardian*'s coverage – from 51% to 34% as compared to the first period. Interestingly, the tendency also applied to its Russian comparable counterpart – *The Moscow Times*.

Unlike the conflict frame, the use of the responsibility frame enjoyed an overall increase in the British media outlets – from 24% to 30%. This was different from the Russian media. Initially, *RT* was the only media that increased marginally the use of the responsibility frame from 30% to 31%, while *The Moscow Times* and *Pravda.ru* in contrast reduced the use of the frame. Whereas the Russian media – *RT*

(2 March 2014) and *Pravda.ru* (27 February 2014) in particular – laid blame on the West and new Kyiv, the British media used the responsibility frame to suggest that Russia should be responsible for the crisis. This was mostly evident in the *BBC* (17 March 2014) and *Mail Online* (1 March 2014).

Table 7. 9: Distribution of Generic frames by media: 27.02. – 20.03.2014 (2nd period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda. ru</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Conflict	62 (42%)	62 (40%)	38 (38%)	42 (51%)	29 (34%)	39 (57%)	272 (43%)
Responsibility	45 (31%)	25 (16%)	15 (15%)	26 (32%)	26 (31%)	19 (28%)	156 (24%)
Economic consequences	6 (4%)	42 (27%)	7 (10%)	3 (4%)	9 (11%)	1 (1%)	68 (11%)
Human interest	9 (6%)	20 (13%)	6 (6%)	4 (5%)	15 (18%)	4 (6%)	58 (9%)
Morality	17 (12%)	6 (4%)	17 (17%)	5 (6%)	3 (4%)	5 (7%)	53 (8%)
Natoinalisation	7 (5%)	0	12 (12%)	2 (2%)	3 (4%)	1 (1%)	25 (4%)
Total	146	155	100	82	85	69	637

The Russian media preferred the morality frame over the human-interest frame, criticising the manipulative political power of the West, and the deliberate propaganda and misinformation from the Western mainstream media (*Pravda.ru*, 2 March 2014). In contrast, the British media firstly used the morality frame less but accentuating the immoral Russia (*Mail Online*, 20 March 2014). They secondly described Putin as a threat and neo-imperialist who made a wrong parallel between Kosovo's secession from Serbia and Crimea's annexation by Russia. Russia's claim of the new Kyiv as fascists was part of the Kremlin propaganda (*The Guardian*, 19

March 2014). The human-interest frame came third among the British media, highlighting the fears among minority ethnic – Tatars and other ex-Soviet states after Russia’s takeover of the Crimea (*BBC*, 19 March 2014). An ‘invasion’ was also frequently used by the British media to question the legitimacy of the Crimean secession. Russia was blamed for breaking the international law. The Russian media used the economic consequences frame as its third favoured generic frame, highlighting one ‘good’ and one ‘bad’ alternative (*RT*, 5 March 2014). After the West had imposed several rounds of economic sanctions on Russia, the Russian media subtly reduced the promotion of Putin’s deal and turned to describe the country’s economy in a positive light (*RT*, 20 March 2014).

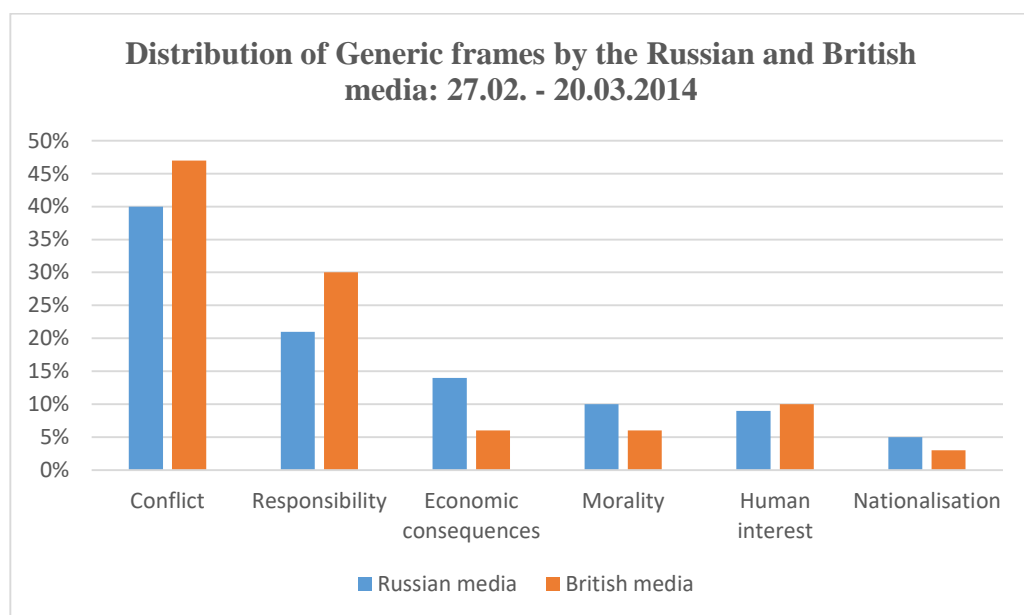


Figure 7. 9. 1

Diagnostic and prognostic framing.

The British media during the second period were similar to the Russian media in providing fewer diagnostic frames than during the first period. But some difference between the two remained with the British media discussing diagnoses in

140 out of 236 articles (59% of coverage), which was more than the Russian media with 39%. Table 7.10 illustrates the second commonality between the two countries' media in terms of engaging with the Ukraine crisis via the global dimensions frame.

Table 7. 10: Distribution of Diagnostic frames by media: 27.02. – 20.03.2014 (2nd period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda. ru</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Global dimensions	24 (38%)	49 (82%)	19 (58%)	33 (73%)	42 (71%)	27 (75%)	194 (75%)
Human rights violations	30 (48%)	7 (12%)	5 (15%)	8 (18%)	13 (22%)	4 (11%)	67 (26%)
Particular triggers	8 (13%)	1 (1%)	2 (6%)	3 (7%)	1 (2%)	3 (8%)	17 (7%)
Political causes	1 (2%)	3 (5%)	6 (18%)	1 (2%)	0	2 (6%)	13 (5%)
Socio-economic	0	0	1 (3%)	0	1 (2%)	0	2 (1%)
Religious	0	0	0	0	2 (3%)	0	2 (1%)
Total	63 (43%)	60 (39%)	33 (33%)	45 (55%)	59 (69%)	36 (52%)	260

RT (28 February 2014) and *Pravda.ru* (27 February 2014) used the global dimensions frame mainly to refer to the NATO's expansionism. In comparison, the *BBC* (28 February 2014) and *Mail Online* (7 March 2014) believed that the Russian military movements at the Western border and in Crimea reflected Putin's regional ambitions and had caused the Ukraine conflict. More importantly, a distinguishably conflicting assessments between *RT* and the *BBC* were uncovered in relation to the parallels drawn between the events in Crimea and the Kosovo crisis. As exemplified

in Chapter five, *RT* (14 March 2014) accused NATO of creating an artificial crisis in Kosovo as a pretext for the intervention. The *BBC* (7 March 2014), on the other hand, disapproved of the comparison between Crimea's secession and Kosovo's, as the latter was based upon a humanitarian dimension.

The third shared characteristic identified between the Russian and the British media was the shift in the human rights violations frame. *RT* (27 March 2014) used the frame to highlight new Kyiv revoking Russian language which caused fears among minorities in Eastern Ukraine. On the contrary, the *BBC* (3 March 2014) and *The Guardian* (15 March 2014) used this diagnostic frame to label Putin as violating international law due to his illegal annexation of Crimea thus aggravating the Ukraine conflict.

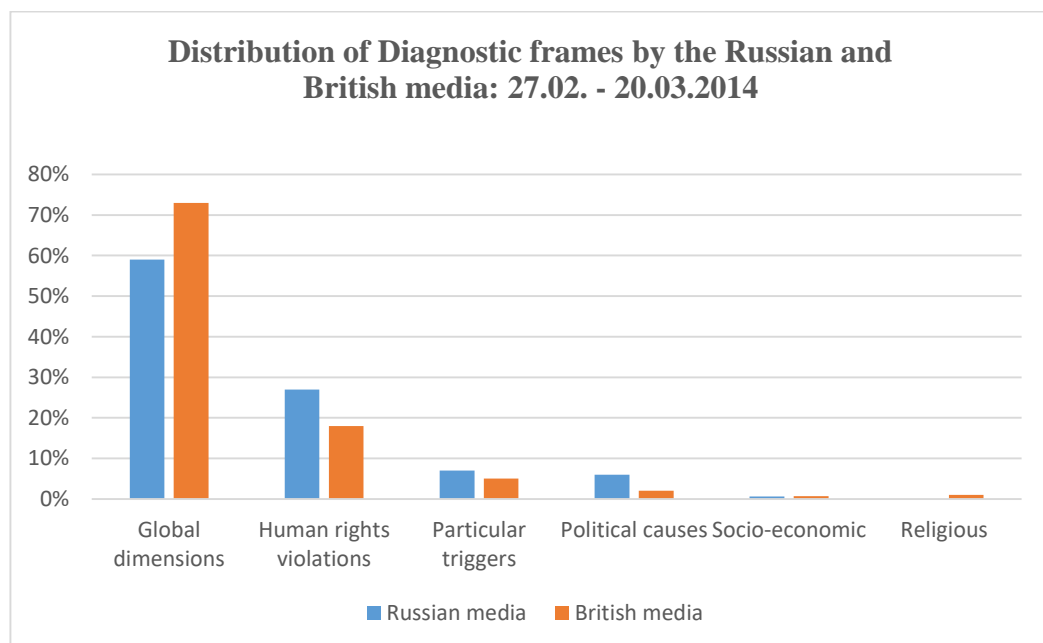


Figure 7. 10. 1

Table 7. 11: Distribution of Prognostic frames by media: 27.02. – 20.03.2014 (2nd period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda. ru</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Financial intervention	2 (11%)	2 (29%)	0	12 (67%)	6 (67%)	17 (100%)	39 (52%)
Military action	15 (79%)	0	3 (60%)	4 (22%)	0	0	22 (29%)
External co-operation	2 (11%)	2 (29%)	0	4 (22%)	3 (33%)	0	11 (15%)
Internal reforms	1 (5%)	2 (29%)	1 (20%)	0	0	0	4 (5%)
Change in government	0	1 (14%)	1 (20%)	0	0	0	2 (3%)
Total	19 (13%)	7 (5%)	5 (5%)	18 (22%)	9 (11%)	17 (25%)	75

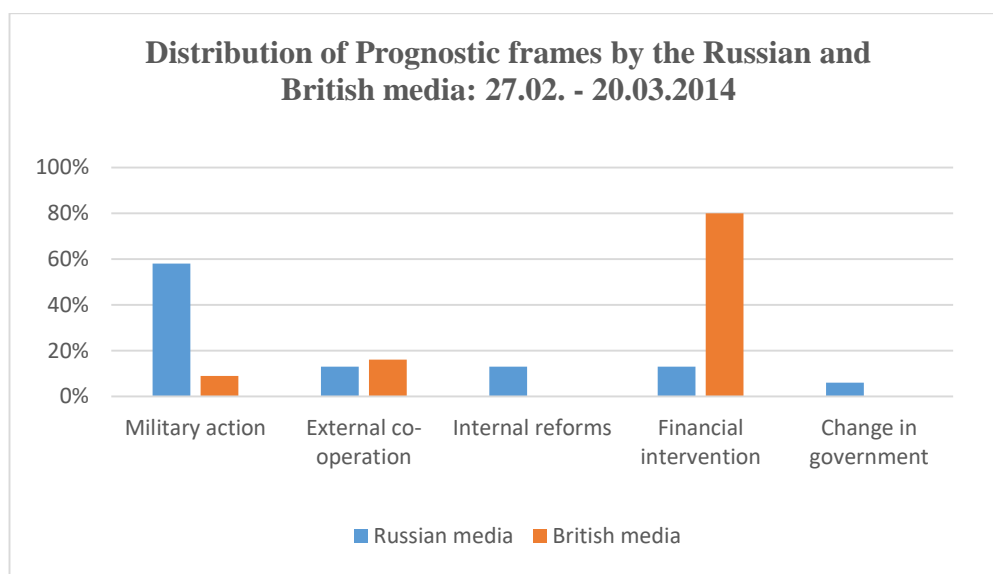


Figure 7. 11. 1

The overall use of the prognostic frames by the British media was still higher than that of the Russian media. The financial intervention came on top used mainly by the British media to suggest financial sanctions on Russia (Table 7.11). Especially the *Mail Online* that offered 100% of its 17 articles using the frame, whilst its

counterpart *Pravda.ru* did not mention this at all. The Russian media preferred the military action frame, while the British media used the frame in 4 articles only from the *BBC*. Among the 4 articles, 2 (50%) suggested the US to send troops to fight with the Russian militaries in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea. The other 2 articles (50%) resisted any military action arguing that it would only exacerbate the Ukraine conflict. This was similar to *RT* which suggested that Russia could send troops to start a military battle with Ukrainian armies in Eastern Ukraine and the Crimea. Unlike the Russian media, none of the internal reforms, change in government, and dismantling of weapons frames were brought up by the British media.

3rd period: 21. 03. – 17. 07. 2014.

Generic news frames.

During the third period, the overall use of generic frames by the British media did not change with the conflict frame coming first, which was in line with the Russian media (Table 7.12). This period manifested a common trait for all of the six media outlets where they experienced a sharp increase in the conflict frame. The responsibility frame came second among the generic frames from all the studied media outlets. However, there was a decline in the overall use of the frame by the British media, while the Russian media remained unchanged. The Russian media (*RT* and *Pravda.ru* in particular) used the frame to predominately blame the West and the US. This however was a marginal view in the British media, with *The Guardian* and *Mail Online* blaming the West and the US in only 6 articles. *The Moscow Times* tended to be critical of Russia, which was in line with the British media.

The human-interest frame enjoyed a clear overall growth from both countries' media during the third period. The British media used this frame to firstly

emphasise the sufferings of Eastern Ukraine due to Putin's intervention (*BBC*, 4 May 2014), secondly to give a voice to various groups of people (*The Guardian*, 7 July 2014). In comparison, the Russian media (*RT* and *Pravda.ru* in particular) highlighted the victims in Eastern Ukraine due to the new Kyiv government launching Anti-Terrorism Operations (*RT*, 16 July 2014). The use of the term 'nationalist' by the Russian media, highlighted the existence of a far-right party in the newly formed government under Petro Poroshenko (*RT*, 22 March 2014). The constant deleterious depiction of the new Kyiv by the Russian media such as *Pravda.ru* (7 July 2014) allowed a coherent moral sensibility via focused reports of refugees fleeing from the conflict zone in Ukraine such as Donetsk.

Table 7. 12: Distribution of Generic frames by media: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda. ru</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Conflict	284 (52%)	299 (53%)	169 (56%)	141 (53%)	99 (60%)	123 (66%)	1,115 (55%)
Responsibility	100 (18%)	111 (20%)	69 (23%)	78 (30%)	38 (23%)	44 (22%)	440 (22%)
Human interest	99 (18%)	74 (13%)	37 (12%)	36 (14%)	13 (8%)	16 (9%)	275 (13%)
Economic consequences	27 (5%)	55 (10%)	11 (4%)	5 (2%)	6 (4%)	3 (2%)	107 (5%)
Morality	23 (4%)	19 (3%)	7 (2%)	2 (0.7%)	10 (6%)	0	61 (3%)
Nationalisation	10 (2%)	2 (0.3%)	9 (3%)	2 (0.7%)	0	3 (2%)	26 (1%)
Total	543	560	302	264	166	186	2,021

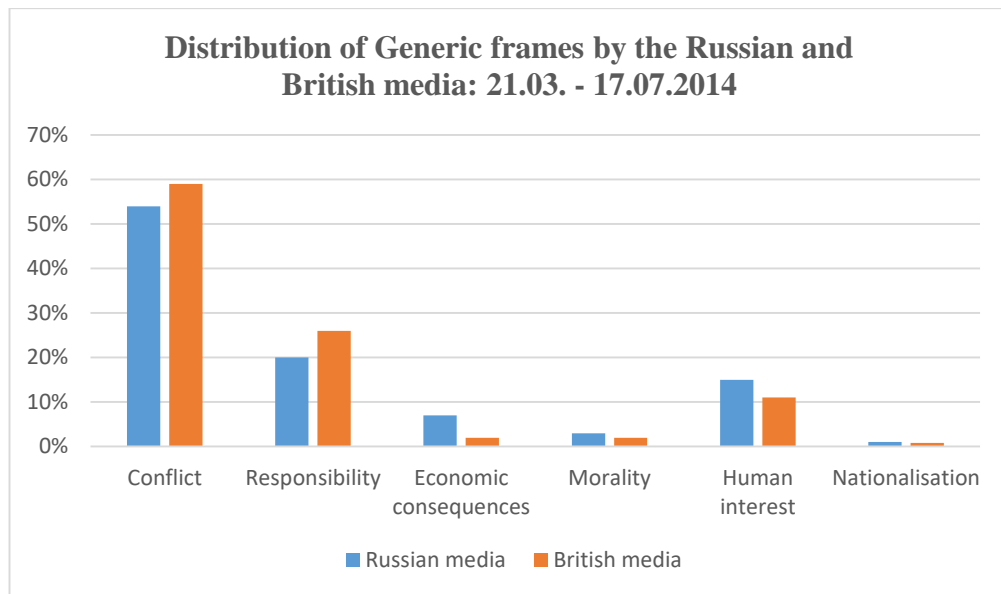


Figure 7. 12. 1

The economic consequences frame was the fourth commonly used generic frame by both countries' media outlets. In the UK, the *BBC* and *The Guardian* contributed the majority to the economic frame, talking about the economic sanctions by the Western bodies, as well as the impact mainly on Russia (*The Guardian*, 1 May 2014). This was especially different from the *RT* which tended to positively describe Russian economy while portraying Ukrainian economy as being worsened largely due to the conditional financial aid from the West (28 March 2014).

Diagnostic and prognostic framing.

Despite the simultaneous increase in using diagnostic frames by both media, the overall focus remained greater in the case of the British media. The most favoured diagnostic frame used by the media from Russia, the particular triggers frame, also came on top among the diagnoses from the British media (Table 7.13).

Table 7. 13: Distribution of Diagnostic frames by media: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda. ru</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Particular triggers	196 (63%)	55 (31%)	88 (45%)	86 (63%)	45 (57%)	83 (63%)	553 (51%)
Global dimensions	53 (17%)	113 (63%)	56 (29%)	33 (24%)	27 (34%)	40 (30%)	322 (30%)
Human rights violations	42 (14%)	6 (3%)	32 (16%)	6 (4%)	1 (1%)	7 (5%)	94 (9%)
Political causes	18 (6%)	6 (3%)	29 (15%)	11 (8%)	4 (5%)	10 (8%)	76 (7%)
Socio- economic	15 (5%)	0	11 (6%)	1 (0.7%)	2 (3%)	6 (5%)	35 (3%)
Religious	0	0	2 (1%)	0	0	1 (1%)	3 (0.2%)
Total	309 (57%)	180 (32%)	194 (64%)	137 (52%)	79 (48%)	132 (71%)	1,083

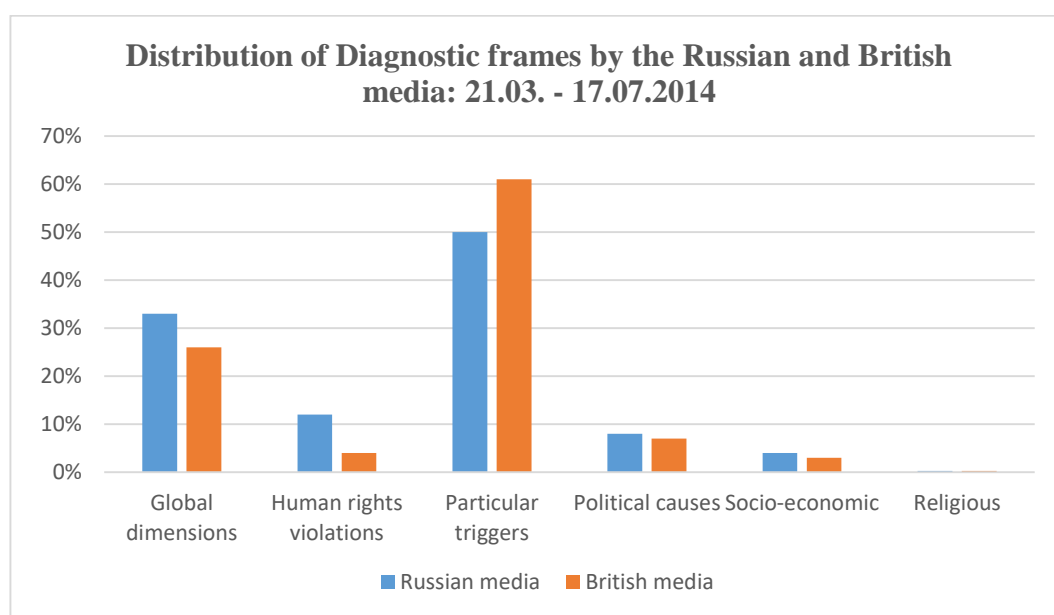


Figure 7. 13. 1

First, the particular triggers frame was used by the British media mainly referring to the violence taking place in Eastern Ukraine between the new Kyiv and separatists. However, what the Russian media (mainly *RT* and *Pravda.ru*) generally articulated was the Anti-Terrorism Operations carried out by the Ukrainian military from new Kyiv, which were seen as the reason for the continuing conflict. The British media, on the other hand, hardly regarded this as the reason. For instance, this was only mentioned in a small number of 14 framed stories out of 86 items from the *BBC*. In fact, the Western media mainly saw separatists as stirring the region thus escalating the tension in Ukraine. The Anti-Terrorism Operations were considered as part of the efforts to calm down and de-escalate the tension caused by pro-Russian rebels (e.g., *Mail Online*, 4 June 2014). Second, *The Guardian* differed slightly from the other two British media. The newspaper spoke of the fact that the Anti-Terrorism Operations launched by new Kyiv against the pro-Russian protestors were the main reason for the exacerbation of the conflict in Ukraine, in 25 out of its 45 items (56%). This explanation was applied by the newspaper over the one (16 items) suggested essentially by the *BBC* and *Mail Online* – the unrest in Eastern Ukraine. This pattern was identical to the Russian media, where the centre-left leaning press – *The Moscow Times* described the roots of the Ukraine conflict differently from the other two media outlets – *RT* and *Pravda.ru*.

The global dimensions frame was the second commonly used diagnosis. Overall, for the most part the British media continued holding opposite views on the root of the Ukraine conflict from the Russian media. Russian media used more of the human rights violations frame highlighting the new Kyiv revoking Russian language and attacking its own people (*RT*, 30 March 2014). The political causes frame was used less in the Russian media pointing out the political coup by current government

imposed by the US (*Pravda.ru*, 24 March 2014). On the other hand, the *BBC* in particular used the political causes frame 9 times (out of 11) suggesting that the on-going conflict in Ukraine was initially caused by Yanukovych who decided to terminate the political and economic package with the EU (24 March 2014). The human rights violations diagnosis was mostly used by the *BBC* (25 March 2014) and *Mail Online* (5 Jun 2014) which accused Russia of breaking international law by annexing Crimea, thus intensifying the whole situation in Ukraine.

Table 7. 14: Distribution of Prognostic frames by media: 21.03. – 17.07.2014 (3rd period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda. ru</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Military action	16 (36%)	3 (12%)	11 (53%)	4 (15%)	5 (35%)	2 (18%)	41 (34%)
Financial intervention	1 (2%)	9 (35%)	0	17 (61%)	4 (29%)	9 (82%)	40 (34%)
Internal reforms	20 (45%)	6 (23%)	9 (43%)	3 (11%)	2 (14%)	0	40 (34%)
External co- operation	3 (7%)	8 (31%)	3 (14%)	0	1 (7%)	0	15 (13%)
Dismantling of weapons	8 (18%)	0	1 (5%)	4 (14%)	2 (14%)	0	15 (13%)
Change in government	6 (14%)	0	0	0	0	0	6 (5%)
Total	44 (13%)	26 (5%)	21 (7%)	28 (11%)	14 (8%)	11 (6%)	119

Compared with the previous period, both the Russian and the British media reduced the use of prognostic frames. While the former suggested solutions in 6% of the whole sample, the latter provided 9%, with 53 out of 616 articles. As Table 7.14 shows, overall the financial intervention prognosis came second, with the *BBC* and

Mail Online using the frame the most. What the three British media commonly suggested was to continue the economic sanctions on Russia because of the country's destructive involvement in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. This solution was the fourth favoured prognosis by the Russian media, predominantly suggested by *The Moscow Times* thus aligning with the British media. What the Russian media mostly articulated was the internal reforms referring specifically to constitutional reforms. The internal reforms prognosis came fourth in the British media.

Both the Russian and the British media tended to use the military action frame during the 3rd time period. While the Russian media used the frame mainly resisting the very idea of any military action, the British media used the prognostic frame referring to using military action to assist Ukraine. Another observable difference came from the use of the dismantling weapons frame. Holding diametrically opposing views from the Russian media (mainly *RT*) which called on all sides and especially nationalists to disarm, the *BBC* demanded pro-Russian rebels to disarm in 3 out of its 4 stories, with one item explicitly stating that there should be no inflow of weapons from Russia (*BBC*, 13 April 2014).

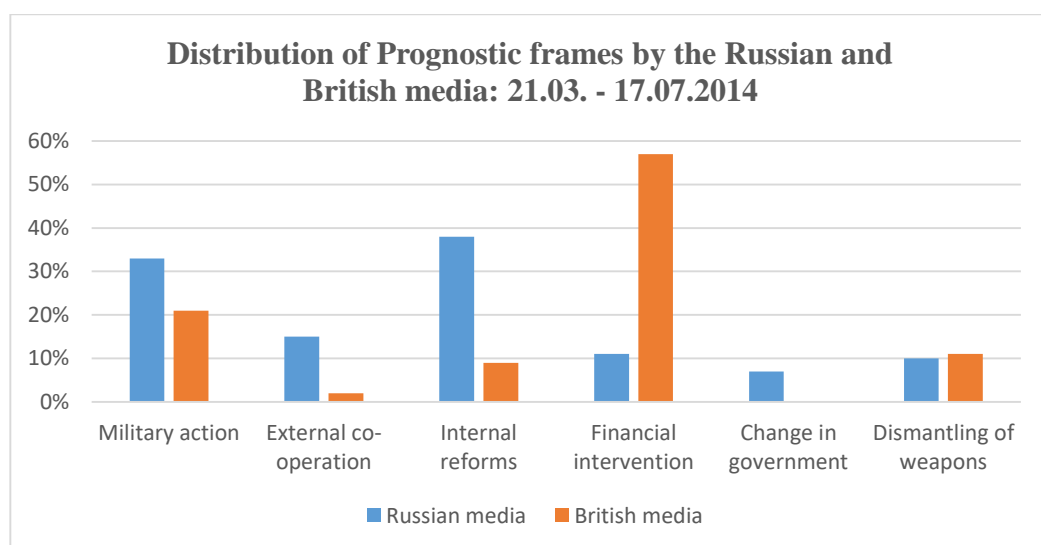


Figure 7. 14. 1

4th period: 18. 07. 2014 – 28. 02. 2015.

Generic news frames.

The British media during the final time period reported the Ukraine conflict in 815 news items, compared to the Russian media's 1,504 pieces (Table 7.15). The overall use of the generic frames by the British media remained similar to the third period, but with a worth-noting increase in the economic consequences frame from *The Guardian*. The *BBC* and *Mail Online* used minimally the economic consequences frame mainly focusing on the fact that the Russian economy appeared to deteriorate as a result of the sanctions (*BBC*, 21 July 2014) as well as the negative result of not imposing economic sanctions on Russia (*Mail Online*, 21 July 2014). The Russian media used the economic frame to offer a contrasting view. For instance, *RT* largely criticised the economic sanctions that would hit EU economies as well (*RT*, 30 July 2014). In comparison, *The Guardian* is identified as the one that tended to provide multiple perspectives by using the economic consequences frame. These consisted of the positive and the negative impacts on both EU countries and Russia caused by the economic sanctions (*The Guardian*, 29 August 2014).

There was also an increase in the use of the responsibility frame by both the Russian and the British media during the final period. The Russian media, especially *RT* and *Pravda.ru*, kept alignment in blaming the new Kyiv for shelling the residential areas in South-Eastern Ukraine and the West for intervening and covering up the truth (*RT*, 26 January 2015); whilst *The Moscow Times* criticised Russia's involvement and offered less space to criticisms of the West. At the same time, the British media showed a high interest in blaming Russia and the Russia-backed separatists for shooting down the MH17 and worsening the situation in Ukraine (e.g.,

Mail Online, 18 July 2014). Putin was seen by the British media as the enemy of Ukraine and the West during the Ukraine crisis.

Table 7. 15: Distribution of Generic frames by media: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda. ru</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Conflict	191 (33%)	242 (49%)	167 (39%)	168 (45%)	45 (30%)	118 (40%)	931 (40%)
Responsibility	211 (36%)	128 (26%)	143 (33%)	139 (37%)	60 (40%)	125 (43%)	806 (35%)
Human interest	94 (16%)	56 (11%)	53 (12%)	58 (16%)	18 (12%)	35 (12%)	314 (14%)
Economic consequences	17 (3%)	45 (9%)	15 (4%)	7 (2%)	22 (15%)	2 (1%)	108 (5%)
Morality	55 (9%)	14 (3%)	31 (7%)	0	4 (3%)	4 (1.3%)	108 (5%)
Nationalisation	15 (3%)	8 (2%)	19 (4%)	0	0	10 (3.4%)	52 (2%)
Total	583	493	428	372	149	294	2,319

The third commonly used frame was the human-interest frame. Regarding the overall use of this frame, the views from the British media were again conflicting to the ones offered by the Russian media that gave extensive coverage to the mistreated journalists and victims from Eastern Ukraine as a result of new Kyiv's military action in the region. Like the tabloid-style Russian media *Pravda.ru*, *Mail Online* used the nationalisation frame the most. But the morality frame was not of interest to the British media with *The Guardian* and *Mail Online* contributing each 4 news items. Compared to the Russian media which (mostly *RT* and *Pravda.ru*) used the morality frame attacking the US and Ukraine, *Mail Online* (3 December 2014) and

The Guardian (3 September 2014) applied the frame critiquing the lies from Kremlin propaganda and again likening Vladimir Putin to Adolf Hitler.

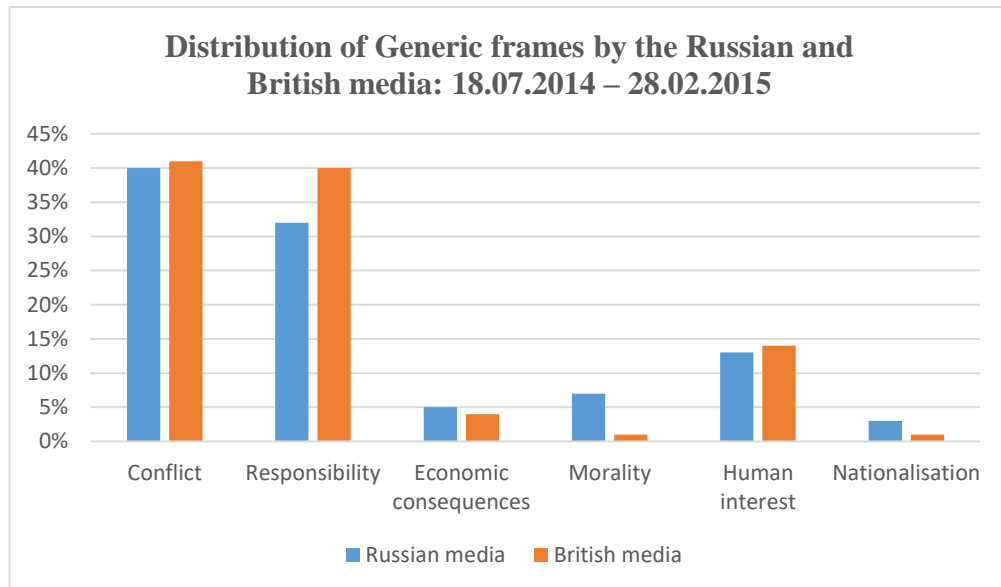


Figure 7. 15. 1

Diagnostic and prognostic framing.

The British media during the final period paid significantly less attention to the Ukraine conflict with a total of 815 articles, compared to 1,504 articles coming from the Russian media. Yet the former provided greater space (67%) to diagnosis, than the latter (40%). Among the 549 occurrences of the diagnostic frames in the British media, the global dimensions (328 articles) frame came on top, followed by the particular triggers (302 articles) frame; whereas the Russian media favoured the particular triggers over the global dimensions frame (Table 7.16).

Table 7. 16: Distribution of Diagnostic frames by media: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Particular triggers	139 (59%)	72 (39%)	98 (54%)	158 (63%)	45 (45%)	99 (51%)	611 (53%)
Global dimensions	57 (24%)	82 (45%)	76 (42%)	119 (47%)	83 (82%)	126 (64%)	543 (47%)
Human rights violations	29 (12%)	14 (8%)	30 (16%)	8 (3%)	3 (3%)	13 (7%)	97 (8%)
Political causes	19 (8%)	10 (5%)	37 (20%)	15 (6%)	4 (4%)	3 (2%)	88 (8%)
Socio-economic	11 (5%)	9 (5%)	10 (5%)	3 (1%)	5 (5%)	0	38 (3%)
Religious	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	236 (40 %)	183 (37%)	183 (43%)	252 (68%)	101 (68%)	196 (67%)	1,151

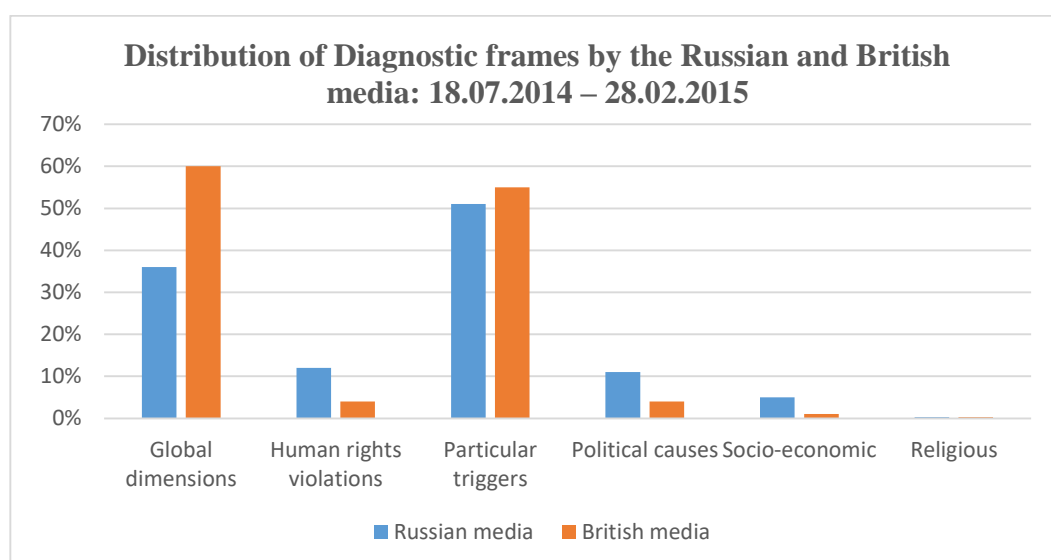


Figure 7. 16. 1

In the use of the global dimensions frame, the three British media outlets offered similar explanations with a major part revealing Russia's geopolitical

interests in the region. What was different was that in spite of the insignificant reference to the battle between the West and the East, the *BBC* and *Mail Online* did not interpret NATO's expansionism as a direct diagnosis. This was comparable to *RT* and *Pravda.ru* that used the global dimensions frame predominantly suggesting the West's expansionist ambitions. However, *The Moscow Times* tended to critically provide various perspectives, which was in line with *The Guardian*.

Overall the particular triggers frame was the first commonly suggested diagnosis. The Russian media contributed the most to it. Generally, the British media put forward the idea that the violence between the two sides escalated the Ukraine conflict, while the Russian media used the frame to address the fact that new Kyiv shelling in the region made it impossible to end the crisis. The fact that the new Kyiv used chemical weapons in the battle was scarcely discussed by the British media, in comparison with the Russian media that used this storyline in most of the human rights violations frames.

After the human rights violations frame, both countries' media also used the political causes frame to explain the roots of the Ukraine crisis. In the UK, the *BBC* in particular stressed Yanukovich's corruption and his one-sided ending of the EU deal in 15 articles, while *The Guardian* continued to provide multiple perspectives in using the frame. On the contrary, the Russian counterparts – *RT* and *Pravda.ru* used the political causes diagnosis to highlight the West-backed political coup in Kyiv. *The Guardian's* characteristic of offering various views, was also evident in its use of the socio-economic causes frame, where the newspaper talked about Ukraine's gas debt, its falling economy, Putin's convoy, as well as Russia's cutting off of gas supply to Ukraine (31 July 2014). The Russian media, however, suggested that

Ukraine's socio and economic blockade of the Eastern region prevented peace development (*RT*, 19 February 2015).

The use of the prognostic frames by the British media was still more than by the Russian media (Table 7.17). The financial intervention prognosis continued to be the first choice in relation to the Ukraine conflict, recommended by the British media. The military action was the second frequently recommended solution by both the British and Russian media over the third and fourth time periods. However, the two countries' media tended to make different suggestions. While the Russian media (as illustrated in Chapter five) used the military action prognosis resisting any military action, all the British media without exception highly recommended the idea that NATO should directly confront Russia to assist Ukraine.

Table 7. 17: Distribution of Prognostic frames by media: 18.07.2014 – 28.02.2015 (4th period)

	<i>RT</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>	<i>Pravda.ru</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Mail Online</i>	Total
Financial intervention	2 (5%)	6 (19%)	0	15 (56%)	12 (75%)	18 (62%)	53 (33%)
Military action	9 (24%)	10 (31%)	11 (53%)	6 (23%)	4 (29%)	12 (41%)	52 (32%)
Internal reforms	16 (43%)	11 (34%)	9 (43%)	3 (11%)	2 (13%)	0	41 (25%)
Dismantling of weapons	11 (30%)	3 (9%)	1 (5%)	9 (33%)	0	3 (10%)	27 (17%)
External co-operation	4 (11%)	6 (19%)	3 (14%)	2 (7%)	0	0	15 (9%)
Change in government	1 (3%)	4 (13%)	0	0	0	0	5 (3%)
Total	37 (6%)	32 (6%)	21 (7%)	27 (7%)	16 (11%)	29 (10%)	162

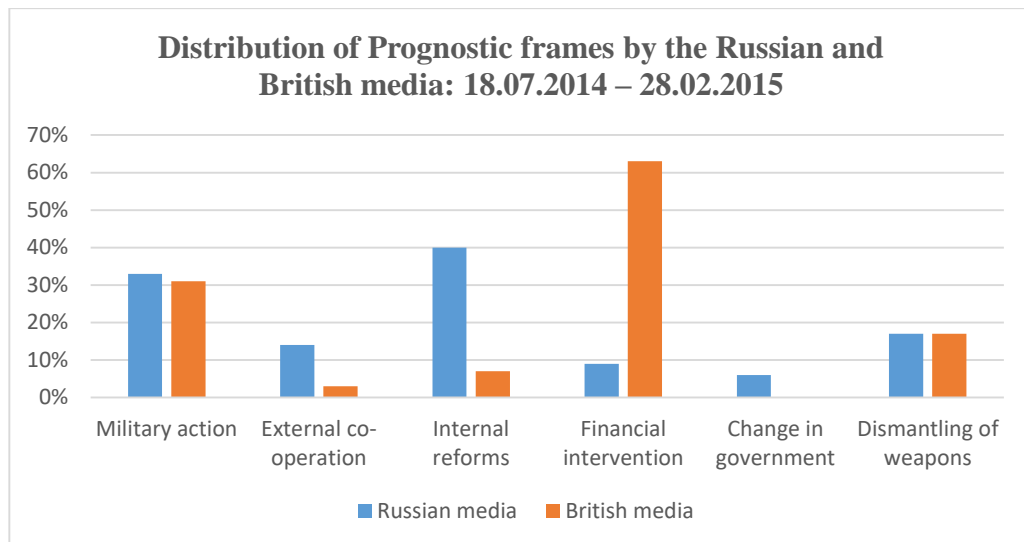


Figure 7. 17. 1

Moreover, there was a minor difference between the British and Russian media with regards to using the solution of dismantling weapons. What the British media implied was firstly a removal of heavy weaponries by both sides; secondly a call for Russia to stop supplying weapons to rebels. On the other hand, the Russian media mostly suggested a withdrawal of weapons by both sides. *The Moscow Times* echoed the *BBC* demanding to prevent Russia's outflow of weapons to Ukraine. The internal reforms were the third solution the British media preferred (the *BBC* and *The Guardian* in particular), which was the first prognosis suggested by the Russian media; although they expressed the solution in different terms. Finally, the external co-operation was mentioned two times by the *BBC*, suggesting co-operating with Russia, and forming a global monitoring group. This was in line with the Russian media.

7.4 Conclusion

Overall, throughout the Ukraine crisis from 30 November 2013 to 28 February 2015, the Russian and the British media first shared certain commonalities

in terms of using the conflict and responsibility generic frames, and the global dimensions and particular triggers diagnostic frames, albeit with key opposing perspectives between the two. Second, while the Russian media (especially *The Moscow Times* and *RT*) constantly reported using the economic consequences generic frame and the external co-operation prognostic frame during the first time period (30 November 2013 – 26 February 2014), the British media highlighted the human-interest perspective alongside the change in government solution to the crisis. Third, during the second time period (27 February – 20 March 2014) the Russian media (*RT* and *Pravda.ru* in particular) increased the use of the morality generic frame and the human rights violation diagnostic frame along with the military actions prognostic frame. In comparison, the British media not only kept their preference in using the human-interest generic frame, but also increased the use of the human rights violation diagnostic frame and the financial intervention prognostic frame. Fourth, the human-interest generic frame and the human rights violations diagnostic frame were frequently used by both countries' media over the last two periods. At the same time, the Russian media suggested the internal reforms as a solution to the crisis; the British counterparts, on the other hand, kept using the financial intervention prognostic frame. Finally, the British media were more likely to offer diagnostic and prognostic frames compared to the Russian media, although overall the former paid less attention to the Ukraine crisis than the latter. These findings clearly illustrate the nature of the differences between the media framing of the Ukraine crisis in Russia and the UK. The focus next moves to an analytical discussion of the news framing between the Russian and British media coverage of the Ukraine crisis in the context of the wider debates about the nature of the media systems of liberal and hybrid regimes and the notion of liberalism and illiberalism.

This will answer the first and main research question about the extent to which the revealed characteristics in Russia and the UK support or refute media systems theory. This discussion also assesses the findings in the context of the wider question of media's role in war and conflict and the contribution that this study has made in this regard.

Chapter 8

Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter offers an analytical comparison between the media system of Russia – a country with a hybrid political regime and the media system of the UK – characterised as liberal democracy. It starts with a theoretical reflection based on the identified features of the two countries' news coverage of the Ukraine crisis – the manufacturing consent thesis. This section covers four features that show the evidence supporting the theory: One good vs. one bad alternative, legitimise 'ours' and delegitimise 'theirs', good vs. evil – including humanitarianism and sovereignty, and both-side construction. The disclosed characteristics of the Russian and UK news framing of the crisis feed into the analysis responding directly to the main research question which will be discussed in the second part of this chapter: To what extent and in what ways does the coverage of the Ukraine crisis support or refute media systems theory as discussed in Chapter one and Chapter two.

8.2 Manufacturing Consent

In this study, as the above comparative account in Chapter seven illustrated, morality and human rights were featured as powerful framing patterns of news coverage of the Ukraine crisis in both Russian and UK media outlets. The frequent use of these frames to shed light on competing political interpretations of the crisis, however, revealed one-sided journalistic practices in both countries serving to justify their political and military involvement. Their self-conceived roles as moral agents and bringers of justice have created 'close proximity' to their respective political power (Robinson, 2018, p. 55), thus making their news products blurry from

government propaganda (O'Shaughnessy, 2004). The media's acquiescence from national foreign policies on Ukraine when defining the news agenda was consistent with what Herman and Chomsky (1988) have claimed of the manufacturing consent thesis.

The British media defined Yanukovich's U-turn – the suspension of the country's EU Association Agreement – as stemming from Russian pressure; the protests at the Maidan as revolutionaries in support of democracy; the Crimean issue as Russian invasion or annexation; the anti-Maidan forces as separatists/rebels; and the Russian aid as intervention. Consequently, the responsibilities were shifted directly to the Yanukovich's regime and Russia, appealing to a particular interpretation of Russia: as the geopolitical enemy of the West (Ojala & Pantti, 2017). The overall disposition to favour one interpretation of the Ukraine crisis and to marginalise any other runs in parallel with British media being uncritical of European politicians' interference, demonising Yanukovich, Putin, and pro-Russian forces whilst promoting the Anti-Terrorism Operations as 'liberators', and exaggerating Putin's political and military ambitions in terms of his 20th-century imperial mind-set. On the other hand, the Russian media defined the same events differently: Yanukovich's U-turn was Ukraine's domestic affair and EU's economic and geopolitical strategy; the protests at Maidan were a well-organised political coup backed by the West (the U.S. in particular); the Crimean issue was about reunification/returning home; the anti-Maidan forces were self-defence forces; Russian aid was humanitarian assistance to heavily victimised people in Eastern Ukraine. A shared weakness between the Russian and the British media, thus, was the failure to go beyond their governments' political lines and into an in-depth investigation of the mentioned events taking place during the Ukraine crisis.

As the primary aim of this study was to assess how the Ukraine crisis has been framed by the media in Russia – a country with a hybrid political regime and the media in the UK – a liberal democracy, the following analytical discussion demonstrates in detail the one-sidedness characteristic of both countries' media. The empirical evidence is provided to support the argument whilst linking back to the theories around the manufacturing consent thesis discussed in Chapter one.

8.2.1 One good vs. one bad alternative: economy.

The one 'good' and one 'bad' alternative was evident in the first time period when the Russian media in general used the economic consequences frame to search for public support for the deepening conflict and the upcoming military campaigns. Despite *The Moscow Times*' mostly aligned position with the West in the coverage of the Ukraine crisis, the Russian media overall (especially *RT* and *Pravda.ru*) showed a great degree of alliance with the national policies on the topic. As shown in Chapter five, there was an emphasis on the prevalence of descriptions of Putin's financial offer to Ukraine. This suggests the media were active in justifying and naturalising Russia's geopolitical involvement. The Russian coverage largely explained how Ukraine would benefit from Putin's deal to recover from the present economic crisis, while the EU offered no full membership with little financial aid for the country. Here, the economically framed narratives represented one 'good' and one 'bad' alternative. Specifically, Putin's deal was promoted through a positive description, while the counterpart EU offer was described in a negative light. The implication was: Yanukovych's refusal to sign the country's EU Association Agreement and turn to closer economic and political ties with Russia was a wise choice; although the EU claimed that Brussels had prepared a document showing the

long-term benefit that could have flowed to Ukraine over seven years (*The Moscow Times*, 20 December 2013). The efforts aimed to divert the attention from the general perception that Yanukovich is responsible for the Ukraine crisis to a rather glorified one that Yanukovich committed himself to dealing with the country's current debt crisis for all Ukrainians interests. Such means of misdirection led to an appeal to the readers that either you support the EU who could not guarantee a promising economic future or Russia who will solve the country's financial problem immediately with a further bonus of being a member of the Eurasian Union.

This type of journalistic practice – one 'good' and one 'bad' alternative – was also manifested in the subsequent periods after the West had imposed several rounds of economic sanctions on Russia. The Russian media reduced the promotion of Putin's deal and turned to describe the country's economy in a positive light. The West was presented as miscalculating the importance of Russia to the Western and global economies and as exaggerating its ability to affect the 'strong' Russia. Yet the positive information flow was privileged over any reference to possible negative economic consequences. The use of positive storylines can be explained by the notion of gatekeeping (e.g., Perloff, 2014; Koltsova, 2006; Oates, 2007; Vartanova, 2012). Perloff (2014) refers to the gatekeeping as an information selection process including 'exclusion, selection, and framing' (p. 400). Koltsova (2006) suggests that following the information policies of the Russian government, skilfully manufactured 'positive information flow' goes to the public sphere thus replacing negative information (p. 40). Especially in the months when the Russian economy encountered severe economic contraction due to the tit-for-tat sanctions between Russia and the West, the media continued suggesting that the illegal sanctions against Moscow would eventually backfire on the EU economy. This type of

narrative seemed to further prove the merit of Putin's deal offered at the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, while continuing to condemn the West for interfering in Ukraine's national affairs at the expense of the country's economy. The presented narratives in relation to the Russian government's competence to overcome the economic recession and the Western enemy not only allow the public to place their faith in Russia, but also remind them that 'Russia always will be a world power' (Cooley & Stokes, 2018, p. 13).

As the overall goal of this study was to examine the news frames used by the media, the economically framed narratives – highlighting one good and one bad alternative – is identified as one of the characteristics of the Russian news coverage of the Ukraine crisis. The positive descriptions of Moscow's deal, as previous studies of Russian media being supportive of national foreign policy suggest (e.g., Heywood, 2014), served a propaganda function aimed at securing public support and justifying and naturalising Russia's involvement, thus reflecting the manufacturing consent thesis (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). It is important to reiterate that throughout the crisis the Russian media – *RT* and *Pravda.ru* – insisted that the Ukraine conflict was an internal issue but with what the media regarded as immoral assistance from the West. This was further presented in the increased use of morality frames to criticise the West and delegitimise the new Kyiv while legitimising 'ourselves', especially from the end of the first period to the second period, and during the final period.

8.2.2 Legitimise 'ours' & delegitimise 'theirs': morality.

During the second time period, *RT* and *Pravda.ru* in particular following President Putin's political rhetoric used the morality frame to express discontent over the Western bodies in terms of what the media presented as the Western 'moral

bankruptcy' (*RT*, 5 March 2014). This is the second characteristic identified in the Russian news coverage of the Ukraine crisis, which directly reflects the manufacturing consent thesis (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The references included discussions of a double-standard policy against Russia, immoral direct meddling in other country's internal issues, as well as the aggressive propaganda in Western mainstream media. According to the moral unfairness claimed by the Russian media, the new Kyiv regime backed by the West treated the Maidan participants as heroic revolutionaries. However, the anti-Maidan protesters who were against the new Kyiv and demanded for autonomy, were considered 'separatists' and 'terrorists' (*Pravda.ru*, 23 September 2014). The moral discussion can be perceived as to prevail and legitimise political rhetorics such as taking over Crimea and participating in the battles in Eastern Ukraine. These were practiced through the media blaming the Maidan protesters, accusing the new Kyiv of conducting violence and the Anti-Terrorism Operations, and condemning the West for its strategic manoeuvring of geopolitics and economies against Russia.

A noticeable example is *Pravda.ru* during the second period aligning with *RT* to condemn the West's expansionism through a moral lens and the use of the human rights violations frame (diagnosis) to explain why the conflict escalated: the illegitimate neo-Nazis in Ukraine – including the new Kyiv and the far-right parties – supported by the West conducted war crimes against ethnic Russians. As *Pravda.ru* reported 'gangs of neo-Nazis are patrolling the streets of Kiev and other Ukrainian cities, beating and killing defenceless people [...] The victims are ethnic Russians, ethnic minorities, Jews – who have been warned to leave Kiev' (4 March 2014). On the topic of solutions, the media (especially *RT*) for the most part reported in favour of military action – Russia could send troops to South-Eastern Ukraine to protect

ethnic Russians (as shown in Table 5.10). This is an observable shift from the first period when the Russian media distanced the country from the Ukraine crisis and preferred external co-operation as an ideal solution. The presentation of ‘neo- Nazis’ and ultra-nationalist threats over ethnic Russians alongside the recommended military action could be explained as key justifications paving the way for Russia to take over Crimea: legitimising ‘our’ side while delegitimising ‘theirs’. The justification for the country’s involvement was evident not only in the direct usage of morality frame but also in the human-oriented coverage addressing the humanitarian issues by distinguishing good from evil.

8.2.3 Good vs. evil.

8.2.3.1 Humanitarianism.

The human-oriented coverage from the Russian media became especially prominent in the final two time periods. The Russian media put forward the idea of humanitarianism by highlighting an internal split in South-Eastern Ukraine where victims asked for Russian help; whilst overlooking the existence of those who supported the new Kyiv. Dominant subjects the Russian media focused on were: the civil war, the immoral Western interference and sanctions, Novorossiya (or new Russia) – consisting of Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People’s Republic (LPR), the Ukrainian fascists, and the Anti-Terrorism Operations. Among these the Novorossiya, Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics were presented in a positive light. In comparison, the new Kyiv was described in a negative context: Ukraine was dangerous (fascist), incapable of political and economic independence, and deteriorating without Russia. When the anti-fascist account was embedded in a wider narrative highlighting human suffering, it became more effective. The

deleterious depiction of the new Kyiv allowed for a coherent moral sensibility via focused reporting of refugees fleeing from the flamed regions of Ukraine. For example, allegations of massacre/genocide by the new Ukrainian government forces were significantly underlined by *RT* that painted a very black and white picture of what was a volatile and intricate situation on the ground. In reporting the shelling in the South-Eastern city of Slavyansk, the media wrote:

Many of the people gathering in central Slavyansk told Phillips [*RT*'s stringer] that they are frightened for their lives and do not want any Ukrainian military sent by the “*Kiev junta*” in their city. One woman interviewed by Phillips appealed to Russia and personally to President Vladimir Putin for help, saying the people are getting desperate. The others had a message for US President Barack Obama, whom they blame for the chaotic developments in Ukraine (*RT*, 2 May 2014).

Three days later, *RT* quoted Maksim Grigoryev – a Public Chamber member who chaired the non-commercial Foundation for Problems of Democracy and prepared to sue the new Kyiv in the European Court of Human Rights:

After the Odessa massacre the statements of UN and OSCE representatives were quite soft, but after some time the sobriety will come, like it happened with the Georgia war of 2008 and Western nations will understand that the people that they are supporting now are typical neo-Nazi groups, discriminating against people by their ethnicity and ready for any actions (*RT*, 5 May 2014).

The coverage of the massacre might have aimed to increase empathy towards the ethnic Russians. The media was deliberately or instinctively provoking an emotional response from the international audiences through the dehumanisation of new Kyiv. The intention can be understood as a way of justifying a humanitarian intervention, as previous studies have illustrated (e.g., Hammond, 2007a, 2007b, 2017, 2018; Parry, 2011; Robinson, 2017). Hammond (2007b) suggests that the British media talked about ‘ethnic cleansing’ in Bosnia in order to promote the Western intervention in 1999. By the time of the Kosovo conflict, the media framed the NATO bombings ‘as an epic struggle of good against evil’ to justify ‘military action in terms of moral values based on human rights’ (p. 219). Similarly, *RT* highlighted the war crimes conducted by the new Kyiv, used the term ‘massacre’, and labelled the anti-Maidan fighters as ‘self-defence forces’, thus advocating further discontents over new Kyiv and the West. This was regardless of the likelihood that some of the testimonies would have been intentionally selected among those pro-Russian or anti-new Kyiv populations. The human suffering was again increasingly covered by the Russian media in August 2014, potentially reflecting Russia’s motivation to offer the so-called humanitarian aid that was criticised by the West as an ‘invasion’. The represented atrocities equipped with humanitarian sentiments were in war mobilisation efforts to cover for political or military involvement.

This notion of humanitarianism is disputable and reminiscent of the 4th December 1992 when the decision was made by the US government of going for war in Somalia. President George Bush Snr. clarified that the mission was humanitarian, although the notion of humanitarian intervention is not universally accepted, remaining largely contested in the post-Cold war era (Balabanova, 2015, p. 59). To some researchers (e.g., Kaldor, 2010), humanitarian intervention is about helping

people from other countries to halt severe humanitarian crises. This is what Bush referred to, after the image of suffering children bombarded the public who as a result called for doing something. The action was then named ‘Operation Restore Hope’ which Bush believed to be ‘doing God’s work’; as well as showing American leadership (Hammond, 2007a). This stressed the importance of an overwhelming moral imperative. But many doubt such assumption and believe the media to be primarily responsible for the moral construct. As Moorcraft (2016) argues ‘the media were no longer reporting on the agenda, but setting it’ (p. 278). The consequence is the appearance of the coverage of conflict as an overgeneralised ‘morality play’, where one side in a conflict is depicted as evil, and the other as a victim, with a procedure that puts pressure on the international community either to intervene and rescue the victim, or to withdraw the troops from the battlefield (Hammock & Charny, 1996, pp. 115-116). Other researchers (e.g., Chomsky, 1999; Robinson, 2017, 2019a; Hammond, 2007a, 2007b; 2017, 2018; Hammond et al., 2019; Parry, 2011; Balabanova, 2015) make a similar argument but are critical of the universal values as justifications covering for military imperialism.

New Kyiv’s shelling in Eastern Ukraine was also described by the Russian media as violating human rights. This was to imply that the form of ‘self-defence forces’ and the establishment of Novorossiia together was a result of the new Kyiv that got to power through so-called a political coup and conducted war crimes against its own people. Taken together, the message deeply rooted in human values not only criticised the new Kyiv, but also served as the pretext to justify the establishment of Novorossiia. The use of human rights reinforced the humanitarian rationale in news coverage in a way of constructing and highlighting distinct groups, speaking for them and acting in their name, potentially advocating defensive or retaliatory violence, and

justifying political/military involvements with rhetoric of ‘humanitarian’ missions and higher moral values (Baysa, 2017; Baden & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2018). The selective reporting on human suffering alongside the claimed violation of human rights without the historical, political, social, and local context, as Balabanova (2017) argues, fails to fulfil the media’s democratic role in offering in-depth analysis, thus possibly missing some real human rights stories (p. 233). Hence, the use of human rights by the Russian media – the third characteristic identified in the mediated Ukraine crisis coverage – is rather a tool to justify the national interests and geopolitics (e.g., Balabanova, 2015; Robinson, 2017, 2019a; Gowing, 1994, 2000; Jakobsen, 1996, 2000; Strobel, 1997) in the context of the Ukraine conflict, thus supporting the manufacturing consent thesis (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The delivered sense of assisting Ukraine by the media reflects Russian geo-strategic interests that have been sugar-coated under ‘humanitarian sentiment’ to justify the interference in the country (Robinson, 2017; Freedman, 2017). The journalistic performance of highlighting human values was not exclusive to the media in Russia. The British media were equally identified as a moral agent using human-focused coverage to identify the evil and stress the importance of sovereignty. This overarching reporting pattern characterises the British news coverage throughout the Ukraine crisis.

8.2.3.2 Sovereignty.

During the first period, a human-oriented focus applied to all three British media and manifested itself in their preference for the human rights violations and the government’s crackdown frames (particular triggers frame) – as shown in Figure 7.6.1 about the difference between the British and Russian media’s preferences in the

use of diagnostic frames. Moreover, most of the British coverage reflected the involved parties' efforts to pursue a long-lasting solution to the crisis and engaged in the blame game. The presented responsibility frame possibly aimed to influence the audiences' perspective on who was responsible for the crisis. As previous literature on news agenda and framing (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Brown & Deegan, 1998; Entman, 1993; Robinson et al., 2010; Freedman, 2017) suggest the perceptions of events depend on how the media select and organise the information about them by framing them one way or another. The significance of frames may also explain why the British media were more likely to use the human-interest frame. The implication of their preference for the two frames is double-fold: One may suggest that the British media's relatively high interest in using the responsibility frame to blame the former President Yanukovych for his crackdowns proves that the media still play an important role as watchdogs in democratic societies by holding politicians accountable. On the other hand, it also seems that the British media outlets conformed to international norms in which human values are at the core. The norm is based on the value of 'equality, democracy, and freedom' that aim to develop equal rights of peoples and to maintain universal peace (Charter of the United Nations, 1945). By highlighting Russian-backed Yanukovych's 'anti-freedom' stand, the emotional feeling of 'to do something' could be spread across the audiences. This is what Entman (1993) refers to as salience that together with information selection constitute essential part of the news framing process. However, promoting particular frames means an omission of counter narratives that may be as important as the inclusions (Entman, 1993; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Robinson et al., 2010). Hence, the salient indicator of 'anti-freedom' narrative was set on to the agenda whereas other viewpoints were played down.

For example, the British media allocated minimal space to portraying how the protesters (including what the Russian media regarded as ‘far-right extremists’) started attacks and the severe injuries in the riot police during the battles, while they gave extensive coverage to Yanukovich’s disputed use of brutal force to suppress the pro-democracy protests. As journalist Parry writes:

Neo-Nazi and other extremist elements from Lviv and other western Ukrainian cities began arriving in well-organized brigades or “sotins” of 100 trained street fighters. Police were attacked with firebombs and other weapons as the violent protesters began seizing government buildings and unfurling Nazi banners and even a Confederate flag (*Consortiumnews*, 11 April 2016).

The same is noted by scholars (e.g., Van der Pijl, 2018; Sakwa, 2015) who point out the important role of Stepan Bandera-worshipping⁶ forces in the violence in February 2014. When riots reached a peak on 20 February 2014 with anonymous snipers on roofs opening fire on both the police and protesters, the British media immediately blamed the Yanukovich administration for the assumed default understanding: pro-government forces targeting the protesters. This was regardless of various voices outside the Western mainstream media, one of which suggesting that the sniper fire came from mercenaries trained by the Right Sector (RS) extremists led by Dmirtiy Yarosh (Katchanovski, 2015; Parry, 2014, 2016; Zuesse, 2018).⁷ The group allegedly owned ‘CIA-and-oligarch-backed army numbering probably between 7,000 and 10,000’ people (Zuesses, 2 May 2018).

⁶ A Ukrainian far-right leader – Nazi collaborator who lived from 1909 to 1959.

⁷ Yarosh later became a member of Parliament in Arseniy Yatsenyuk’s interim government that was established following the collapse of Yanukovich’s regime in February 2014.

As a result, there was no equal treatment of the subject by the British media who took it upon themselves to justify the ‘good’ anti-authoritarian forces. In this interpretation, the good forces – the protesters, opposition parties at the Maidan, and the new Kyiv – deserve our understanding and sympathy; whereas Yanukovich-led parties, the police, Russia, and the pro-Russian rebels – deserve condemnation as they were brutal killers who fired on unarmed supporters of ‘democracy’ and escalated the Ukraine conflict resulting in a number of victims. The omission of information intending to discredit Yanukovich regime during the first period was further evident in the three British media’s higher interest in a change of government (prognostic frame) as the most possible solution to the conflict, where the Russian media preferred the external co-operation (e.g., Figure 7.7.1).

Even at the early stage of the conflict, the British media without directly suggesting the regime-change agenda (Ojala & Pantti, 2017; Van der Pijl, 2018; Kuzmarov & Marciano, 2018; Robinson, 2019a), constantly embraced Western politicians who came to the Maidan cheering the uprising. These included the U.S. Assistant Secretary Victoria Nuland who passed out cookies and announced financial aid from the U.S., and the late Senator John McCain who stood on stage together with far-right group – Svoboda Party⁸, giving a speech suggesting that ‘Ukraine will make Europe better and Europe will make Ukraine better’ (*BBC*, 15 December 2013) and the United States is with them in their challenge to the current regime. The leaked phone call conversation between Nuland and Pyatt – US ambassador to Ukraine (as discussed in Chapters six and seven) was portrayed by the British media as the West’s (the U.S. and UN) constructive role in searching for solutions to the conflict rather than ‘the US-backed political coup’ as interpreted by the Russian

⁸ A party describing itself as ‘the last hope of the white race, of humankind as such’ and ‘throwing up a sieg heil Nazi salute during a speech’ (Blumenthal, 27 August 2018).

media. This indicates the media's alignment with the Western position in the Ukraine crisis while distancing Russia (Sakwa, 2015; Ojala & Pantti, 2017; Boyd-Barrett, 2017a, 2017b; Kuzmarov & Marciano, 2018). Ojala and Pantti (2017) propose that the EU policies on the conflict coordinated with the U.S. partly hinged on 'favourable public opinion within Western Europe', which stemmed from an existing perception that President Putin is 'the culprit and aggressor' and Ukraine is 'the victim of a foreign attack' (p. 51). This important finding is also evident in Ojala et al.'s (2017) study suggesting that while Ukraine and its people were reported as victims, Russia and Putin were portrayed as villains. The concentrated manufacturing of consent drives to demonise Russia that has been blamed for disrupting 'democratic processes throughout Western states' (Robinson, 2019b, p. 1).

The omission of information continued in the following three periods, with the media persistently focusing on accusations of Russia and pro-Russian forces for destabilising the region in the East and breaking international law (as shown in Chapter seven in relation to the differences in using the global dimensions and human rights violations frames between the British and Russian media outlets), and suggesting NATO to start military action against Russia to help Ukraine (e.g., Figure 7.16.1). The media set the agenda mainly around Yanukovich's 'crackdowns' and Russia's interference, whilst failing to appropriately reflect the evidence of new Kyiv's wrongdoings. The media's acquiescence also included the West's involvement in supporting the new Kyiv by providing military, technical, and financial assistances. When the UK's sale of Saxon armoured troop carriers to Ukraine was disclosed by the Russian media, the *BBC* explained that the vehicles were defensive in nature: 'The Ministry of Defence confirmed these were out-of-service unarmed vehicles and not lethal equipment [...] the delivery did not represent

an escalation of British involvement in Ukraine [...] “They offer protective mobility to personnel” (13 February 2015). *Mail Online* quoted the former head of the British Army Lord Dannatt who had encouraged Britain to commit troops against Russia, and explained that the delivery was “nothing short of immoral”, as the vehicles were so decrepit as to be “quite useless” (*Mail Online*, 14 February 2015). The next day, the media continued to glorify the military assistance: ‘Ukrainian President Poroshenko paraded himself proudly by one of the Saxons. Soon they will be fitted out with guns’ (*Mail Online*, 15 February 2015).

Quite different to Yanukovich, Poroshenko was portrayed as a hero who sees human life as the highest value. The rebels were depicted as evil resisting peace and insisting on secession, and Putin’s denial of assisting separatists was presented as illogical. The British media suggested that the EU would save the civilisation from barbarism. But in this context ‘evil is both the answer to a question and itself a question’ (Silverstone, 2007, p. 58). Silverstone (2007) points out that the media in collusion with those who identify evil articulate judgements of good and evil for public consumption, thus legitimating and amplifying them. The judgements imply practices of inclusion and exclusion and justifications for actions. This means that the media’s identification of evil alongside the resulting moral discussion for action, is in fact a problem for practical morality. As he argues the moral discussion is derived from its ‘capacity to make the singular judgements of absolute right and wrong that humanity must make if it is to survive’ (Silverstone, 2007, p. 56). Therefore, the alignment between the media and the politics, in the context of the Ukraine crisis, shows the evidence of the manufacturing consent thesis, where the former promoted ‘explanations for conflicts that assert a righteous moral stance and legitimise an interventionist policy orientation’ (Hammond, 2018, p. 443).

Overall the British media stressed the importance of sovereignty, through supportively representing the will of the majority of the people at the Maidan and promoting a universal value of democratic unity of the Ukrainian nation. The media identified evil individuals such as the separatists backed by what they regarded as aggressive and imperialist Putin who dominated coverage through the sheer volume of information; while downplaying the ‘good’ guys’ offences (the violence at Maidan and the Anti-Terrorism Operations in Eastern Ukraine). Thus, the media treated the presence of ultra-rights in Kyiv as a legitimate part of the Maidan, and the new Kyiv’s military attacks as a legitimate action to alleviate the crisis. This characteristic of one-sidedness, however, was not always the case. There was news coverage that tended to blame both sides in certain events, which was tracked through the frequent use of responsibility and conflict frames. This yet further exemplified the one-sidedness. The *BBC*’s frequent use of the conflict frame may be explained by the fact that the media value objective reporting (Schudson, 2001) in order to balance between the conflicting positions (Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992). Nevertheless, it may also result in negative effects. For example, De Vreese and Tobiasen (2007) ascribe the democratic potential of conflict frames to the notion that the more the conflict presents, the more the public believe in the significance of political decision-making. Vliegthart and Schuck (2008) drive this point further and suggest that the frequent use of conflict frame can increase the public support for national policies. The use of ‘blame on both sides’ during the Ukraine conflict is analysed in detail in the next section.

8.2.4 Both-side construction.

When there were clear events regarding new Kyiv's use of chemical weapons confirmed by the Human Rights Watch, the British media's response was to either juxtapose situations between players or blame both sides for the violence. Thus, guilt was equally shared. By presenting the seemingly 'balanced' report, the British media were ignoring the imbalance in the fact that the new Kyiv was as well conducting war crimes on its civilians. 'The both sides' construction was a manipulation victory for the new Kyiv, and perhaps for the EU too. The sufferings of those who were attacked by a government (new Kyiv) allied to the EU attracted less press attention, seemed to be more likely degraded by the media, than the sufferings of those who were disputably attacked by the previous government (the Yanukovich regime) unconnected to Western interests (Boyd-Barrett, 2017b). As Yarchi et al. (2013) suggest political value proximity plays an important role in attracting media attention.

In this study, the new Kyiv had a closer political value such as 'pro-European' leadership that embraced democracy and human rights, the British media tended to frame in detail the regime as victim thus downplaying its wrongdoings. Freedman (2017) in the discussion on the equal representation of both sides in relation to the Israel-Palestine conflict in 2014 suggests that this is a journalistic strategy that should be objected because of the unequal nature of the assault on Gaza. Accordingly, in the case of Ukraine the British media were very much in consensus with the British government and the EU, consenting to subsequent rounds of economic and political sanctions on Russia (Ojala & Pantti, 2017; Sakwa, 2015). In the context of economic sanction, the perceived threats were in play at least for propagandistic purposes: people would be thinking that Russia was dangerous and

that supporting the government's political decision – economic sanctions was essential (Bakir et al., 2018, p. 14). As Vliegthart and Schuck (2008) argue the conflict frame can contribute to the increase in the public support for certain national policies.

Whether the media were passively disseminating the one-sided coverage or unconsciously reporting based on their own established ideology, the uncovered characteristics reflect the media's close concordance with national foreign policy establishments as the manufacturing consent thesis suggests (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Ukraine and Russia's perspectives predominated in the British and Russian media coverage of the Ukraine crisis respectively, resonating the Cold War rhetoric of an ideological battle. As Herman and Chomsky (1988) claim on the subject of the treatment of national elections in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua by the US media: 'where relations are friendly, the election is seen as "democratic"; where they are unfriendly, the coverage is less sympathetic' (as cited in Street, 2011, p. 41). Herman and Chomsky call this kind of reporting 'double standards' that is in fact not new especially during wartime (e.g., Hallin, 1986; Thussu, 2000; Yarchi et al., 2013; Herring & Robinson, 2014). Both the Russian and the British media constructed one-dimensional stereotypes simplifying complex issues under a manufactured common banner in terms of national foreign policy. The manipulation of public opinion was masked as a morality play about doing what is right.

This study found that although some critical coverage such as that on the Western sanctions on Russia did occur in the British media, this did not operate without boundaries. As presented in Chapter six about how the British media used the economic consequences frame during the final period, the critical coverage was mainly about whether the economic sanctions would successfully drive Russia out of

Ukraine, whether the sanctions would affect ‘our’ economy, or whether NATO and the U.S. should send further (lethal) military assistance to Ukraine and the Baltic to confront Russia (e.g., *BBC*, 5 February 2015). In other words, at a broader level this sporadic critical coverage still reflected the manufacturing consent theory with limited dissensus among European politicians (Robinson, 2002; Hallin, 1986; Bennett, 1990; Wofsfeld, 1997; Robinson et al., 2010). The political consensus/dissensus factor in this study reflects the elite version of manufacturing consent theory (Robinson, 2002) as well as the indexing hypothesis (Bennet, 1990). Ojala and Pantti (2017) address that the EU position in the Ukraine crisis internally differed owing to the member-states’ very different relationships with Russia, ranging from histories to economic co-dependencies and foreign policy traditions (p. 51). But overall the studied British media’s dominant framing patterns showed a great alignment with the majority Western position in terms of isolating Russia.

8.3 The Media Systems of Hybrid and Liberal Regimes

8.3.1 The statist commercialised model.

The Russian media started manufacturing consent since the opening week of the Ukraine crisis, demonstrating deep suspicions about Western intentions in Ukraine while creating an idealistic picture of Russia. The media deemphasised and diverted attention from certain issues in relation to the Russian government and the country’s involvement in the crisis was presented as a heroic answer to the call of justice (Yaff, 2014). The influence of Putin’s administration as the major owner of the media outlets alone might have shaped the one-sided news coverage of the Ukraine crisis, but it is also important to take into account the limited media freedom and the journalistic culture in Russia that differ from those of the West (Becker,

2014; Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018; Oates, 2013). As discussed in Chapters one and two the Russian media system is characterised by partisan reporting practiced by journalists with a low level of professionalism. Commercial media outlets experience high level of government interference, and media elites often associate with the elite political network (Vartanova, 2012; Watanabe, 2017), serving as passive outlets for the distribution of foreign policy line in the context of the Ukraine crisis. This combination was expected to increase the degree of reflecting the country's political agenda by the studied Russian media.

Some scholars (e.g., see Shekhovtsov, 2018) explain the reason behind this phenomenon with the fact that on a global level, Russia – the country, its leaders, and its people, are willing to pay a price for ‘getting up off its knees’ at all levels in the post-Cold War era; whilst ensuring and reinforcing its global prestige and authority among the top ranking great powers (Miskimmon & O’Loughlin, 2017; Cooley & Stokes, 2018). A forfeiture of Russia’s influence in Eastern Europe is perceived as a threat to its role as a regional hegemon and its desires for global major-power status (Malyarenko & Wolff, 2018). As Sakwa (2015) writes ‘the asymmetrical end of the Cold War effectively shut Russia out from the European alliance system’, while European politicians failed to establish a symmetrical and inclusive political and security order within the region (p. x). The watershed events such as the Crimean annexation were driven by ‘realist geo-strategic’ and ‘ethno-national concerns’ in terms of developing ‘the Russian world – a sphere of Russophone interests’, which boosted nationalist sentiment in the country (Sakwa, 2015, p. 108). According to Bauer et al. (1959), the majority of Russians regard the government as ‘a just but benevolent father’ – a concept that persists since Soviet times (as cited in De Smaele, 2010, p. 54). President Putin highlighted four traditional Russian values in his

millennium speech: étatism (or statism), patriotism, derzhavnost (the belief in a great Russia), and social solidarity (De Smaele, 2010). This marks a common will of the public who have faith in a collectivist society: ‘what good is for the state has to be good for the people’ (De Smaele, 2010, p. 54). Any criticism of policies would be seen as unpatriotic thus ‘undermining Russia’s traditional values’ (Lipman, as cited in Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018, p. 34). These along with the consequential resentment towards the West including the Western media may explain why the submissive media outlets (especially *RT* and *Pravda.ru*) seemed to be patriotically politicised and defensive of the country’s policy by targeting what they see as the cultural and news imperialism of the West. As Koltsova (2006) and Oates (2013) point out journalists’ self-censorship is key to understanding part of the characteristics of Russian journalistic culture; while Slavtcheva-Petkova (2018) emphasises media subsidies from the government as a factor that influences journalists’ self-perceived roles as political players (Oates, 2013). Cooley and Stokes (2018) see this media gatekeeping process to have resulted in ‘parallel groups with different ideologies and motives’ in today’s Russian public sphere and mass media (pp. 5-6).

Notably *RT* is counter-hegemonic in virtually all of the senses discussed in this study, intending to signal its exceptionalism and take on the Western counterparts like the *BBC* by providing different perspectives (Miazhevich, 2018). Miazhevich (2018) connects *RT*’s counter-flow remit to national branding campaigns that aim at attracting positive global attention and impacting external (foreign) audiences who thus are in ‘awe’ of Russia (Bolin & Miazhevich, 2018). Hence, the media outlet attempted to bring the Russian view on global news such as the Ukraine crisis in opposition to the monopoly of the Anglo-Saxon media (Spahn, 2019), while simultaneously finding out what the British media were keeping silent about. This

included the role the far-right groups played in contributing to the violence in both Maidan and Eastern Ukraine fighting against anti-Maidan and pro-Russian forces. The aligned view from *RT* and *Pravda.ru* were evidently in service of the state, perceiving ‘aggressive’ otherness coming from Brussels and Washington as attempting to lure Ukraine into their orbits. Yet, *The Moscow Times*, for the most part, was critical of the policies and ideologies of Putin’s regime during the Ukraine crisis. This persisted even after the end of 2014 when the newspaper’s ownership was transferred significantly to a leading opposition figure in Russia – Demyan Kudryavstsev. Kudryavstsev had a close connection with the late Russian oligarch Boris Berezovsky who was later exiled by President Putin and fled to Britain (Pomerantsev, 2014; Jeffries, 2013). According to Zhegulev (2015), the two together were said to have helped organise support for Ukraine’s 2004 Orange Revolution.

Therefore, the revealed features of the Russian media outlets reflected what Vartanova (2012) has identified and characterised as the statist commercialised model highlighting the co-existence of statist mentality and commercial practice. On the one hand, the ‘depolitization’ element (or the empty roles of political programmes) within the model was especially evident in this study (*RT* and *Pravda.ru*). Vartanova’s (2012) explanation of the ‘depolitization’ lies at the state’s efforts to minimise media’s political engagement. This in turn benefits the advertising and commercialism-oriented media business which could focus on entertainment content thus naturally supporting the ‘depolitization’ strategy (p. 134). In this study, the politicised media (*RT* and *Pravda.ru*) also implied the ‘depolitization’ strategy owing to their compliant thus ‘empty’ role, which reflected the instrumentalisation of political communication (Vartanova, 2012). The process was part of the efforts to support the vertical power system of Putin’s administration.

This also means that the professionalisation in terms of journalistic autonomy was consequently low (De Smaele, 2010; Vartanova, 2012). This finding is in line with other studies on the topic (Nygren et al., 2018; Roman et al., 2017; Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018; Nelson, 2019) where the journalists' self-censorship and strong political control over mainstream media are stressed. On the other hand, the evidence from *The Moscow Times* firstly demonstrated what Vartanova (2012) has highlighted the growing commercialism/market-driven economy element in the Russian media system. Secondly, it proved a high level of political parallelism during the Ukraine crisis from October 2014 to February 2015, which was embedded in power struggles among business and political players (Vartanova, 2012; Koltsova, 2005; Lehtisaari, 2015).

8.3.2 The liberal model.

In comparison, the British media focused on issues around democracy, freedom, and the financing of Ukraine, thus responding to the demands from the majority of the people at the Maidan since the early stages of the Ukraine crisis in November 2013. However, the setting of the news agenda involves selection of particular news stories at the expense of other information that was potentially as important as the inclusions (Entman, 1993). The British media adopted the same approach as the Russian media, playing down what the counterpart (the Russian media) highlighted, thus intensifying anti-Russian hyperbole and covering reality. The explanation is two-directional.

First, since 'melodrama sells' especially during wartime (Wolfsfeld, 2011), journalists tend to dramatise and de-contextualise news (Aalberg & Curran, 2012), thus simplifying subjects and making them appealing to the mass audience (Franklin,

1997). As a consequence, news becomes ‘spectacle’ (Louw, 2010). As Bennet (2003) points out with reference to the US media the lack of analysis and explanation degrades the media’s information role. In this study, one of the pervasive assessments was viewing Putin’s policy as reflecting Russia’s imperialist ambitions. In defending Ukraine’s sovereignty, the British media exaggerated Putin’s ambitions: Putin using military force to threaten Ukraine was reasonable as he aspired to power and influence. As previously discussed Putin’s announcement – ‘If I want to, I can take Kiev in two weeks’ (e.g., *BBC*, 2 September 2014) – that the three British media chose to cover, was later proved inaccurate by the EU: Putin’s words had been “‘taken out of context”, said a spokeswoman for the European Commission President in a written response to *The Wall Street Journal*’ (*RT*, 5 September 2014). The unproven statement masquerading as fact gives an unfair advantage to one point of view, therefore becoming a means of manipulating a conversational partner – the global reader. The explanation of the Ukraine crisis was hence reduced to a single proposition of ‘Putin’s aggression’ (Stockman, 2014; Kuzmarov & Marciano, 2018), which is reminiscent of the stereotypical demonisation of Saddam Hussein for allegedly using poison gas on his people prior to the 2003 Iraq invasion – the war that resulted in internecine strife in the country (Parry, 2011). The over-simplified frame of Putin without offering sufficient context or background could result in ‘the atmosphere of fear and our sense of insecurity’ (Kaldor, as cited in Somerville, 2017, p. 2). This was further exaggerated by *The Guardian* and *Mail Online*’s comparisons of Vladimir Putin and Russia to Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany (as discussed in Chapter six), the media used this fear factor to sell news and attract readers. Dorman and Livingston (1994) refer to this type of historical content as the media’s practice of driving up their negatives that overwhelm the alternatives in order to create

enemies. Emotional speculation equipped with responsibility and greater legitimacy superseded rigorous and inclusive analysis, blurring the real and imaginary.

The second explanation follows from the claim that there was geo-political play over Ukraine between the West and the East (Mearcheimer, 2014; Sakwa, 2015, 2017), wherein the British media seemed more likely to ‘facilitate the engineered outcomes’ by the western establishments, through ‘manufacturing a type of consensus reality’ with omission of information (Henningsen, 2017). The downplaying of events could mean a news reader might miss out on what drives a large part of international politics. Putting more voices of ‘suppressed protesters/victims’ at the Maidan on the news may generate too uncritical a view of their actions. At worst it could also mean a lack of scrutiny of the British government or the EU, in their justification for the involvement in Ukraine. The media’s attacks on Russia for Putin’s nostalgic vision of resuscitating the Soviet empire, resurrects the knee-jerk Russo-phobia (Putz, 2016; Robinson, 2017b; Kuzmarov & Marciano, 2018) of the Cold War legacy causing a deeper misunderstanding of the rather complex Ukraine crisis (Ojala & Pantti, 2017). As MacLeod (2019) suggests, Western media’s collective obsession with, mistrust of, and treatment of Russia as the West’s *bête noire* has always existed since a century ago. Mearcheimer (2014), Sakwa (2015), Malyarenko and Wolff (2018), and Gotz (2015) point out that the competitive geopolitical play between the Kremlin and the West (e.g., EU, NATO) is the main factor causing the conflict for influence in the post-Soviet space. But rather than reflecting ‘structural contradictions in the international system’, the scapegoaters often externalise responsibility for Ukraine’s issues and demonise Russia (Sakwa, 2015, pp. 5-6). The corollary is a failure in seeking constructive contributions to the Ukrainian state-building project (Sakwa, 2015).

The dismantling of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (the Warsaw Pact) in 1991 with the end of the Cold War did not foreclose opportunities for NATO's expansion to incorporate many former Soviet members such as Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, and the Baltic states (Sakwa, 2015). This was regardless of a vocal promise made by the Soviet Union and the US in late 1990: Russia withdrew troops from East Germany in exchange for NATO's non-enlargement towards the Russian border (Kuzmarov & Marciano, 2018). Scholars (e.g., Dragneva & Wolczuk, 2015; Sakwa, 2015) suggest that the eastward integration aiming to enhance their security, however, triggered 'a security dilemma for Russia that undermined the security of all' – aggravating the Ukraine crisis (Sakwa, 2015, p. 4). In this context, Putin's takeover of the Crimea peninsula can be seen as in response to the overthrow of Ukraine's democratically elected president, because Crimea is a strategic site Russia feared would host a NATO naval base (Mearcheimer, 2014; Sakwa, 2015, 2017; Kuzmarov & Marciano, 2018; Van der Pijl, 2018).

The legitimacy of the Crimean secession was denied by the British media without exception which accused the secession of being unfree and Putin of breaking international law. During the Ukraine crisis, the Crimean – including ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, and Tartars – mostly wished to join Russia rather than belong to Ukraine (Boyd-Barrett, 2017a; Van der Pijl, 2018). In addition to the long-entrenched connection between Russia and Crimea as explained in Chapter three, the primary reason was that 'Russian pensions were three times higher than Ukrainian, and that Ukrainian pensions were in the process of being slashed as the [new] Ukrainian government conceded to IMF demands' (Boyd-Barrett, 2017a, p. 1021). The living conditions were jeopardised and further deteriorated as the new Kyiv blocked water supply and the system of payments in April 2014 (Van der Pijl, 2018;

Sakwa, 2015). After the reunification, a presidential decree promised Tatar, Russian, and Ukrainian to be state languages – a movement the Crimean Tatar in particular had demanded since 1986 (Sakwa, 2015). Apart from the resistance led by Mustafa Dzhemilev who was accused of ramping up tensions at the price of the Tatar's real needs, Sakwa (2015) points out that, several Tatar organisations embraced the reunification of Crimean with Russia. As a leader of one such organisation – Vasvi Abduraimov states: 'Only after Crimea became part of Russia did Kiev even remember that we exist' (as cited in Sakwa, 2015, p. 112). Nevertheless, the British media such as the *BBC* ignored the historical and local account when discussing Crimea, and denied the comparability between the Crimean secession and the 1999 Kosovo crisis. Instead, the *BBC* regarded the latter as a legitimate humanitarian war without mentioning the absence of UN Security Council authorisation for the use of military force. Van der Pijl (2018) adds to this the fact that the West (Washington and Brussels) articulated its indignation at the incorporation of Crimea while paying no attention to the new Kyiv's violating of the Ukrainian constitution as well as its dismissal of the Supreme Court. The British media did not offer this analytical assessment either.

The media in the UK, especially the *BBC* and *Mail Online*, helped spread Western values and promote democracy in Ukraine via omitting to mention several controversial subjects discussed above, resonating with the West's solution of detaching Kyiv from Moscow. As Balabanova (2015) notes the important role of the media in raising awareness of problematic human issues before and during wartime however 'is not the only or even the most important factor' driving interventions (p. 102). National interests and geopolitics are often the focus (Balabanova, 2015; Robinson, 2017a; Freedman, 2017). Thus, the British media in the case of the

Ukraine crisis have rather played a subservient role justifying the Western position in the conflict, which however refutes the Liberal model proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004). Although the evidence did not indicate a high level of political parallelism supporting the liberal model, as *The Guardian*, the *BBC*, and *Mail Online* were all supportive of the Western policies on Ukraine and the isolation of Russia; which itself indicates an alignment between the media and the politics to some extent. As a result, the level of journalistic professionalism cannot be proven to be high, due to the lack of rigorous analysis in the case of the Ukraine. This can be explained by the fact that while the media are increasingly dependent on government or public relations sources (Boyd-Barrett, 2019), the number of investigative journalism has declined (Balabanova, 2019).

In addition, the state may have played a significant role as well. As Bruggemann et al. (2014) argue the British media enjoy a 'high level of state intervention' in terms of ownership regulation and broadcasting (p. 1058), which (especially the *BBC*) represents an official apparatus for reinforcing 'a common sense: that the United Kingdom's foreign policy interventions are necessarily legitimate despite the odd mistake' (Freedman, 2018, p. 214). Freedman (2018) suggests that the relationship between the *BBC* and the government is filled with three factors that help define and police a 'centre ground': unspoken assumptions, bureaucratic procedures, and stubborn hierarchies. Regardless of the sporadic conflicts between the two parties, the centre ground does its job in favour of the long-run interests of the establishment. Therefore, the *BBC* is more of a public service broadcaster that is 'based on state patronage and elite consensus' than a form of social control that is 'based on market forces' (Freedman, 2018, pp. 213-214). Speaking of the privately-owned media practice in capitalist democracies such as the

UK, Hammond (2017) argues that free media often ‘act as agents of power despite relatively little direct state interference’ (p. 88). Nonetheless, the aim of such criticism of media’s compliant role ‘seems to be to encourage greater official regulation’ (Media Reform Coalition 2012, as cited in Hammond, 2017, p. 88). In the ways of supporting the socio-economic status quo such as ‘the prevailing system of power and privilege’ thus cultivating a ‘climate of conformity’, the media are seen as ‘a crucial element in the legitimation of capitalist society’ (Miliband, 2013). As many scholars (Robinson, 2017a, 2018, 2019b; MacLeod, 2019; Boyd-Barrett, 2019; Hammond, 2017; MacLeod & Chomsky, 2019) suggest, Herman and Chomsky’s (1988) propaganda model drawing from the broader political economy and ideological perspectives still applies to current media landscape in the West – in the UK in this study. There is no fundamental change in mainstream media’s dependence on governmental lines. The media are still manufacturing consent as the examined here case demonstrates.

8.4 Conclusion

Since no one knows more than a certain part of the facts and it is unfeasible to present all the facts, objectivity or fairness in the construction of news stories is considered an illusion (Paul & Elder, 2004). The presented facts are therefore thought to be important. But it is equally important to question what has been left out of the reporting. Would the narrative be interpreted the same way if different facts had been highlighted? Accordingly, by comparing the Russian and British news media coverage of the Ukraine crisis, the shared nature of the one-dimensional news reporting was uncovered. Both the Russian and the British media outlets unproportionately stereotyped the Ukraine conflict although in different light, but

followed a similar logic of othering the counterpart. This was tracked through the different frames used by the Russian and British media, revealing illiberal trends. In addition to the judgemental rhetoric replacing sensible discussion, a shared particular characteristic is the humanitarian rationale that the Russian media used to discuss the taking over of Crimea and the country's involvement in Eastern Ukraine; the British media used it to justify the West's interference throughout the Ukraine crisis. The humanitarian mission/intervention alongside an attribution of blame not only failed to resolve existing tensions but simultaneously fed the spiral of aggression (Baysha, 2017).

The evidence presented in this discussion chapter demonstrates an illiberal trend in both the hybrid regime – Russian and the liberal democracy – the UK media outlets. The study supports the Statist commercialised model (Vartanova, 2012). While *RT* and *Pravda.ru* have been identified as being submissive to the Russian foreign policy on Ukraine, *The Moscow Times* has played a critical role throughout the crisis. Given the nature of the liberal democracy where the media are expected to perform their democratic roles, the studied British media during the Ukraine crisis nevertheless were characterised by one-sided reporting that legitimated the national foreign policies on Ukraine and Russia. Similar to the Russian media, the self-claimed impartial and independent media outlet – the *BBC* and the right-winger – *Mail Online* not only paid more attention to the conflict than *The Guardian*, but also tended to play compliant roles to the Western politics especially when the stories were associated with Russia and the President Putin. Although *The Guardian* has offered multiple perspectives on the Ukraine crisis and stopped paying attention to it in October 2014, it has rather set the nation's agenda in terms of anti-Russia rhetoric particularly in the context of economic sanctions on Russia. Thus, the British news

coverage of the Ukraine conflict without critical and in-depth analysis reflects a higher degree of state intervention (Bruggemann et al., 2014), and a lower degree of journalistic professionalism than what has been expected. This, to some extent, refutes what Hallin and Manchini (2004) have proposed the Liberal model to be.

Conclusion

Nearly five years later the conflict in Eastern Ukraine continues despite the settlement agreements reached in Minsk in September 2014 and February 2015 (Pifer, 2018). The IMF has stopped distributing funds to the country since the early 2017. The EU followed the IMF withholding assistance due to the new Kyiv's failure to deliver on reform measures such as land privatisation and harmonisation of gas prices (Brookings, 22 February 2018). The existing issues of corruption and the political power of the oligarchs have resulted in increasing public dissatisfaction with Poroshenko's administration (Brookings, 22 February 2018). These along with inefficiency have significantly influenced today's Ukrainian economy, that remains one of the poorest in Europe (Kalymon & Havrylyshyn, 2018). Importantly, the British media stressed the corruption issues in late 2013, suggesting that Ukraine should continue the political and economic package with the EU and that Victor Yanukovich should step down. However, these controversial issues alongside the battles on the ground, by the time of writing in September 2019, have slipped off the media's agenda in the West, with very little mention of a conflict that has claimed more than 10,000 lives. Why did anti-corruption and civilisation matter to the British media in 2013 under Yanukovich's rule, but seem unnewsworthy under the new Kyiv's regime since 2014?

The current comparative study explored and answered this question in detail by examining the role the Russian and the British media played during the Ukraine crisis as representative of two media systems that are described as belonging to two different media models: the statist commercialised and the liberal. Since the Ukraine crisis appeared in headlines globally from the end of 2013 through to the beginning of 2015, there had been varied versions of the Ukraine crisis posited across the

world. It became virtually impossible to distinguish between what was simply information and what was in fact propaganda. Given the characteristics proposed by Vartanova (2012) and Hallin and Mancini (2004), the news coverage of the Ukraine crisis from both Russia and the UK was expected to be biased to different extents.

This final chapter sums up the in-depth comparative study into the media coverage of war and conflict from hybrid and liberal regimes, focusing on the role the Russian and the British media have played during the Ukraine crisis. The chapter offers an overall conclusion of this comparative research. The key findings will be highlighted in order to shed light on their significance to the developments of news framing of war and conflict and theories on media systems. The chapter will also outline the limitations of this study, proposing recommendations for further research.

General Summary of the Study

Chapter one offered the foundation for the study, exploring the relationship between media and conflict. The first part of the chapter discussed the normative frameworks of media within democracy. The second part discussed the media systems theory. In order to fully understand the models developed by Vartanova (2012) and Hallin and Mancini (2004), this section first of all introduced the political contexts in liberal and hybrid regimes since the collapse of the USSR in 1991. The third part of the chapter looked at the literature on media coverage of conflict. This is significant as the relationship between the media and government within democracies has implications for the way media cover conflict. The main frameworks of the thesis, the manufacturing consent and the CNN effect, were used as concepts aiming to identify the media's role in the context of the Ukraine crisis. The manufacturing consent thesis indicates the way media are manipulated by the

economic and political elites, who thus protect their privileges. The CNN effect theory provides an opposite view of the media, which supports the view of media influence on foreign policy during conflicts being possible on humanitarian grounds. By critically looking at these two theories, the emphasised discourse sheds light upon the core axis that the media are more likely to manufacture consent in the context of war/conflict.

Chapters two and three together offered a context for the subsequent analysis. While the former focused on the nature of the Russian and the British media linking their characteristic features with the media systems models; the latter introduced the story of the Ukraine crisis from 30 November 2013 to 28 February 2015, including the different foreign policies of Russia and the UK in relation to it.

Chapter four discussed the research method incorporating both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The adopted framework was a set of news frames consisting of generic, diagnostic and prognostic frames, deriving from Godefroidt et al. (2016) who applied them to scrutinise four countries' news articles of the Syrian conflict in a comparative content analysis. The sample for this study included six media outlets from two countries covering 15-months' worth of news coverage of the Ukraine crisis (30 November 2013 – 28 February 2015). The British media coverage was collected from three publications – the *BBC*, *The Guardian*, and *Mail Online*. *The Guardian* and *Mail Online* are on the opposite sides of the political spectrum while the *BBC* is claiming to be independent. As counterparts, the selection of the Russian media coverage of the Ukraine crisis was based on three media sources – *RT*, *The Moscow Times*, and *Pravda.ru*. They are either entirely English-language media or have English editions in print or online. Overall, a sample of 5,532 pieces of news articles was selected for final analysis.

Chapter five presented the findings of the Russian media coverage of the Ukraine crisis from 30 November 2013 to 28 February 2015. The data showed that the media, first, paid an increased attention to the crisis during the second (27 February – 20 March 2014) and the third (21 March – 17 July 2014) time periods. Second, the framing assessment disclosed the Russian media's preferences in the use of the economic consequences, morality, and human-interest frames. *RT* and *Pravda.ru* tended to articulate the Ukraine crisis by criticising the new Kyiv's launch of the Anti-Terrorism Operations and suggesting decentralisation, autonomisation, or federalisation as solutions to the crisis. *The Moscow Times*, on the other hand, offered various perspectives on the Ukraine crisis, including critical stances toward the Putin regime.

Chapter six examined the British media news coverage of the Ukraine crisis between 30 November 2013 and 28 February 2015. The findings showed a gradually reducing focus for each time period. The human-focused news coverage was extensively adopted by the British media throughout the Ukraine crisis. The use of diagnostic frame shifted from Yanukovich's crackdown on people at the Maidan (particular triggers frame) during the first period to Russia's involvement in Ukraine (global dimensions and particular triggers frames) during the subsequent three periods. As a result, the focus on change in government moved to that on economic sanctions (financial intervention) as solutions to the Ukraine crisis.

Chapter seven focused on comparison between the Russian and British media coverage of the Ukraine crisis, thus addressing the fourth research question. What the evidence specifically revealed was that although the British media paid less attention to the Ukraine conflict compared to the Russian media, the former tended to offer longer stories. This was also evident in the media offering more diagnostic and

prognostic frames than the latter. In addition, the humanitarian sentiments were interpreted and conveyed by both the Russian and the British media during the crisis, although with conflicting perspectives. The findings were tracked through the focus on the human-interest and human rights violations frames along with accusations of the counterparts' respective governments.

Chapter eight offered an analytical discussion in relation to the different narratives that characterised the Russian and the British media during the Ukraine crisis. The first part of the chapter focused on the theoretical implications for media and conflict – illustrating how the study offers support for the manufacturing consent thesis developed by Herman and Chomsky (1988), in the sense of media following governmental lines in its construction of the story of the Ukraine crisis (e.g., Hallin, 1986; Bennett, 1990; Zaller & Chiu, 2000; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Robinson et al., 2010; Balabanova, 2007, 2015; Carruthers, 2011, Robinson, 2017, 2018, 2019a; Freedman, 2017, 2018; Hammond et al., 2019; Boyd-Barrett, 2019; MacLeod, 2019). Once the question of humanitarian sentiment was set on to the agenda, both the Russian and the British media outlets paid significant attention to the human-interest issues. The Russian media's (*RT* and *Pravda.ru* in particular) frequent employment of morality frame served the state purpose of condemning the West for having double standards in treating key parties involved in Ukraine. The media stressed the importance of what the British media overlooked, thus offering alternative views to the British media narratives. The commonality here shared by the Russian and the British media was that Russia's involvement and the Western interference in Ukraine were hardly questioned in its respective media outlets. Given the fact that the Russian media operate under a hybrid regime (Hale, 2010; Sukosd, 2018) that holds the majority of media ownership in the country, it is not surprising that the media

followed the national political line and frequently justified Russia's course of action on the Ukraine while accusing the Western bodies of applying double standards. Following this, a moral obligation to assist those suffering in Eastern Ukraine due to new Kyiv's launch of Anti-Terrorism Operations and the minorities who faced abuse in terms of outlawing Russian language was at the core of the message delivered by the media.

In comparison, the British media engaged in setting the anti-Russia agenda by selectively reporting human-focused stories. In other words, the British media identified evil – the Yanukovych regime, eastern separatists, and Putin, while downplaying the misconduct of the 'good guys': the new Kyiv's launch of Anti-Terrorism Operations and use of chemical weapons. Despite the less frequent usage of the morality frame, the British media delivered the sense of immoral Russia and Russian-backed parties (e.g., Yanukovych and eastern separatists) since the early stage of the Ukraine crisis. Human rights were perceived to be at stake because of Russia, the resulting humanitarian rationale offered a reasoning of moral criteria. The articulation of 'values' vindicated the West's positive role in Ukraine that seemed imperative and significant. The media largely presented the protests in Kyiv in a positive light to shore up the battle for freedom and democracy as well as embracing Western leaders who went to the Maidan cheering up the protesters in the name of respecting the sovereignty of a weak Ukraine. But this state violated its own citizen's human rights. By giving the public a sense of urgency regarding the Ukraine crisis through the human-interest lens, with buried references to the right-wing extremists who played an important role in ousting Yanukovych and the new Kyiv's use of chemical weapons in Eastern Ukraine, the following foreign policies on Ukraine and Russia would be legitimate – Ukraine successfully reshuffled the government with

the help from the EU talks, while Russia was to be liable for its involvement. The identification of evil – Yanukovych, eastern rebels, and Putin as the real force behind the scene – delivered a righteous message to the global audiences that Western politicians should interfere in the political contest against Russia that is perceived as the enemy in the current geopolitical context (Ojala & Pantti, 2017; Boyd-Barrett, 2017a, 2017b; Kuzmarov & Marciano, 2018; MacLeod, 2019; Robinson, 2019a, 2019b).

The second part of the chapter provided an analytical comparison between the media systems of hybrid and liberal regimes. This study discovered ostensible illiberal trends that remain significant during the Ukraine conflict – both the Russian and the British media reduced the rather complex issues into manufactured one-dimensional narratives in accordance with national foreign policy. While the right-leaning media outlets from Russia and the UK – *Pravda.ru* and *Mail Online* – strongly advocated the respective party's interventionist role in Ukraine, the left-wing newspaper in Russia – *The Moscow Times* – tended to report through various angles including constant criticisms of Putin's policy. In the UK, the centre-left media – *The Guardian* – in addition to being critical of Russia and offering various perspectives on the subject of the Ukraine crisis, was supportive of the Western position of economic sanctions on Russia. While *RT* paid significant attention to the crisis, being submissive to politicians' rhetoric; the *BBC* seemed to be balanced on the surface, yet relying heavily on story-selecting with an overall sense of anti-Russia hyperbole. Regardless of the less attention paid to the Ukraine crisis, the British media were more likely to offer diagnosis and prognosis frames to explain the roots of and suggest solutions to the crisis. Nevertheless, the majority of diagnoses and prognoses were, in fact, extra values added to support the anti-Russia discourse.

The decision to incorporate diagnoses and prognoses into the analysis helped identify salient framing patterns represented in the British media. Starting from the first time period of the Ukraine crisis, the British media in particular were more likely to explain the cause of and look for solutions to the conflict than their Russian counterparts, despite the fact that the latter provided the crisis with more coverage overall. However, using more diagnosis and prognosis does not mean that the media tended to investigate the subject more deeply. Instead, it helped the researcher to further detect *how* they viewed the conflict. Accordingly, the British media were found to be leaning upon UK national foreign policy through mostly suggesting the change in (Yanukovich's) government as the key solution to the crisis during the first time period. This prognosis had not been suggested afterwards, as the Western position on Ukraine changed after the collapse of the Yanukovich regime. What the British media tended to suggest during the subsequent three time periods was in coherence with the political lines of imposing economic sanctions on Russia. In similar vein, the Russian media – mainly *RT* and *Pravda.ru* – offered explanations of the crisis and solutions to it in line with the declared Russian national interests. Therefore, the evidence showed in this study supported the statist commercialised model proposed by Vartanova (2012). However, the study did not find statistical and qualitative evidence to support some of the characteristics associated with the liberal model developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004), due mainly to the media's insufficient analysis on subjects especially if they were associated with Russia and President Putin.

Based on the findings, this study concludes that the notion of humanitarianism was an overarching reporting pattern. The humanitarian rationale was used by the Russian media (*RT* and *Pravda.ru*) to justify its incorporating of the

Crimea and its political and military involvement in Ukraine. The British media, instead, used the idea to justify the West's interference throughout the Ukraine crisis whilst minimising the wrongdoings conducted by the new Kyiv, as the two were political allies. Therefore, the media from both Russia and the UK essentially contributed to the humanitarian sentiment in Ukraine by reporting human suffering and violations of human rights, thus evoking moral obligation among the public who may give support to the national foreign policies on Ukraine. Based on this, it can be argued that the manufacturing consent thesis is evident in the context of the Ukraine crisis in the media system of hybrid regime as well as the one of liberal democracy. The disclosed evidence that characterised the English-presence of Russian media – *RT*, *The Moscow Times*, and *Pravda.ru* – supports the statist commercialised model proposed by Vartanova (2012). The British counterparts – the *BBC*, *The Guardian*, and *Mail Online*, did not prove to be successful in playing democratic roles such as watchdogs, thus not delivering on some aspects of the liberal model developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004).

Original Contribution

As shown in the thesis, this study made seven significant contributions to knowledge in media studies. First, it is the first empirical comparative study on cross-section of news media between one hybrid regime – Russia and one liberal democracy – the UK, in the domain of global conflict reporting. Second, it broadened the applicability of theories on media and conflict – the manufacturing consent thesis (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The fifth filter of anti-Communism in the Propaganda Model (Herman & Chomsky, 1988), as demonstrated by the British media in this study in particular, can be revived as an 'anti-Russian filter' as

suggested by MacLeod (2019). The CNN effect theory – disputed among scholars examining the influence of media in driving foreign policy in the 1990s, was not applicable in the case of the Ukraine crisis. The findings of this study do not provide empirical support for the CNN effect. This resonates with several earlier studies (e.g., Robinson, 2002; Livingston & Eachus, 1995; Wheeler, 2000; Western, 2005; Balabanova, 2007) that demonstrate that the influence over the policy-making process can be largely contested and different geopolitical considerations are more significant. As Robinson (2002) argues in the case of Somalia, the change of policy was not media-related, rather reflected geostrategic considerations centring around Turkey – an important US/NATO ally. Livingston and Eachus (1995) and Wheeler (2000) similarly stress the significance of geostrategic formulation of political operations with news reporting simply responding to these decisions. Recent studies on war coverage (e.g., Robinson, 2017; Freedman, 2017; Balabanova, 2017; Parry & Goddard, 2017; Keeble, 2017; Hammond, 2017; Hammond et al., 2019; Boyd-Barrett, 2019) suggest that the media do not freely practise any direct influence over policy decision. Instead, they claim that the media often exaggerate humanitarian sentiment while overlooking the importance of realpolitik that contributes to intervention decisions.

Third, it is generally known that the media system of hybrid regimes such as Russia which owns and controls their press organisations (Vartanova, 2012), usually serve a propaganda function (Street, 2011; Hammond, 2017; Robinson, 2019b). This study found that the media in liberal regimes (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), as exemplified in the British news coverage of the Ukraine crisis, also align with national interests, seeking projection of Western political and military power in regions such as the Balkans (Hammond, 2017), the place that is also important to

Russia's campaign for global influence (Stronski & Himes, 2019). Different from the Russian media that are filled with patriotic contents (De Smaele, 2010), Hammond (2017) argues that the Western media product is rather systemic and stems from the fundamental characteristics of the media influenced by wider socio-economic engagements. Private ownership and state regulation are two of the key factors that have contributed to the biased media coverage in war (Hammond, 2017). The wealthiest media situated at the centre of capitalist economy are likely to disseminate 'authoritative sources [...] at the expense of less powerful but, sometimes, more credible sources' (Boyd-Barrett, 2019, p. 101). As mentioned above, the manufacturing consent thesis is still applicable in understanding and explaining the agenda and function of the media today.

Fourth, the study explored additional understandings of the Ukraine crisis. Apart from the pervasive view existing in the West on Russia's military and political involvement in Ukraine, the West played a significant role as well in the form of being politically and financially supportive of a Western-friendly right-wing regime – the new Kyiv (Kuzmarov & Marciano, 2018), and imposing economic sanctions on Russia. Russia's objection to NATO's expansion and primary goal of establishing 'a multi-polar world' (Sherr, 2014) were underestimated by the EU who had promoted the free trade agreements with Ukraine thus stimulated Russia's strong anti-Western stance (as cited in Dragneva & Wolczuk, 2015, p. 108). Sakwa (2015) argues that economic sanctions are 'less an instrument for the consistent defence of human rights than a political weapon against obstreperous countries' such as Russia that 'refuse to buckle down to Anglo-American leadership' (p. 203). Rather than alleviating the suffering of Ukraine, the economic sanctions appeared to aim to lay all responsibility on Russia, punish Putin in particular, and isolate Russia on the international stage.

This externalisation of responsibility rendered the EU to avoid recognising their own contradictions as the roots of the Ukraine conflict (Sakwa, 2015). The geopolitics in the post-Cold War age exist between two legitimating ideologies: the Eastern bloc led by Russia and the Western counterpart (the EU and the US); or in the words of Van der Pijl (2018): between ‘two conflicting social orders: the neoliberal capitalism of the West’ and the ‘state-direct capitalism’ of Russia (p. 3).

Fifth, it is necessary to recapitulate that the methods included traditional quantitative content analysis, a mixture of deductive and inductive framing analysis, and explanatory in-depth qualitative analysis – an extension of the framing analysis. The combination ameliorates the flaws in the singular methods so as to ensure a solid degree of validity and reliability.

Sixth, the author applied the already tested on other cases set of frames – generic, diagnostic, and prognostic – as used by Godefriodt et al. (2016) examining the news framing of the Syrian crisis, and was effectively testing their applicability to a new case – the Ukraine crisis. Accordingly, the results add to our understanding of the dynamics of news framing of conflicts.

Yet, the systematic quantitative content analysis alongside framing analysis with qualitative elements do not robustly untangle how and why the featured framing patterns were used in shaping the construction of the Ukraine crisis across the nations under study – Russia and the UK. To account for this, the researcher adopted an extension of the framing analysis explain and elaborate on the quantitative findings. The analysis provided essential interpretations and rich contextual descriptions by comparatively looking at qualitatively different constructions of the Ukraine conflict.

Furthermore, as part of the effort to cultivate and sustain valid and reliable procedure and results, it was ensured that samples were representative of the target

items, and the measures were sensitive to technical practices of criticism. So that the quantitative results could be applied to deal with the following qualitative analysis in identifying difference in the framing of the Ukraine crisis between the Russian and British media outlets. To avoid subtle practices of bias that may occur through framing, it was ensured that categories in the coding procedure were not only clearly defined, they were equally applicable, mutually exclusive and exhaustive, thus assuredly sticking with the values of reliability and validity (Berelson, 1952; Budd et al., 1967; Holsti, 1981). More importantly, a pilot study aiming to pre-test the established coding system, as Wimmer and Dominick (1997) have suggested, was carried out. It focused on three months' worth of news coverage of the Ukraine crisis in Russia (*The Moscow Times*) and the UK (*The Guardian*). As a result, the category of 'external co-operation' was added to the list that had been established for identifying prognosis frames.

Finally, the lesser use of nationalisation frame in all media – especially the British media, was in sharp contrast to previous studies (e.g., Van Cauwenberge et al., 2009; Godefroidt et al., 2016). This may challenge the framework of the generic frames, hence raising a question about the applicability of the nationalisation frame in war coverage and the conditions in which it is more or less likely to be used. However, it is also important to point out that the nature of the Ukraine conflict may have affected the results. Specifically, neither Russia nor the UK was a participant in the war that ensued – at least not officially. It brings us to the issue of the limits of this study: further research would be essential to complement the findings of this study. Yet, it is worth reiterating that the study was also a test to existing frames and their applicability. As such, it seemed to validate previous analyses in relation to the high occurrences of the conflict, responsibility, economic consequences, human-

interest, and morality frames, thus adding to our understanding of the dynamics of news framing of conflicts.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study makes it the first comprehensive comparative research so far on media systems of hybrid and liberal regimes in the context of war and conflict, focusing on Russian and British media coverage of the Ukraine crisis from 30 November 2013 to 28 February 2015. The findings of this study make an important contribution to the on-going debate with regards to the relationship between the media and war/conflict, as well as the existing understanding of the media systems of Russia and the UK. Nevertheless, it is also important to give a thorough account of its limitations.

To begin with, this study's primary focus was on how the selected Russian and British media outlets framed the Ukraine conflict throughout the defined four time periods, rather than how the public would perceive the given coverage or whether the media coverage has actually influenced the public opinion on the Ukraine crisis. These assessments were beyond the scope of this research project. The necessity of examining the journalistic practices in times of war and conflict should not be neglected. It is important to reiterate the media's key roles in democracies where citizenry should be well-informed with credible information. It is part of the democratisation process. Recognising the flaw in the media tendency to acquiesce with the illiberal practice in the context of war and conflict is vital.

Second, this study did not directly contribute to the question of how every specific issue has been covered during the entire Ukraine crisis from 2013 to 2015. Again, this study looked at how different media outlets from Russia and the UK

reported and framed the Ukraine conflict offering a macro-analysis. Thus, the issue-based assessment, the specific way in which the sentences were formulated, and why journalists or reporters made such decisions on linguistic choices were not of interest. This has potentially downplayed some of the thought-provoking aspects of the news reporting of the Ukraine conflict. Therefore, speaking with journalists may have added valuable insights to how they understand their roles in both the liberal democracy and the hybrid regime and whether they experienced internal/external pressures during the reporting of the crisis. This could enrich the discussion on how the Ukraine crisis was framed in a complementary way, thus responding to the theoretical development of the media systems theory. Nonetheless, while acknowledging the potential significance of conducting qualitative interviews to tackle those questions, the research design was developed to offer as wide-ranging and concrete a landscape of the media coverage as possible. Moreover, the researcher paid significant attention to determining which frame it was during the coding procedure, which not only reinforced the accuracy of the results but also reduced the likelihood of missing out any significant points.

Third, the research has exclusively focused on six media outlets across two countries, because of the time constraints and the media source availability especially from among the English-language presence of Russian media. The lack of taking into account the news coverage from social media that is of an ever-increasing popularity and importance could be considered a limitation of this study. However, to incorporate the examination of social media news coverage would go far beyond the current scope of the project. In addition, traditional media such as newspapers along with their online versions are still one of the main media sources the general public

rely on. Overall, the study could have benefited from an inclusion of more media outlets and an extension of time periods.

Fourth, this study deliberately omitted a visual assessment of images from the news coverage of the Ukraine crisis. Photographic representations are powerful constructions of visual storytelling in conveying the nature of crisis, as they are possibly what most people including audiences and foreign policy-makers would remember of conflicts, not least as they are key to the discussion of the CNN effect theory (e.g., Seib, 2008; Parry, 2010; Parry & Thumim, 2016; Dan, 2018). Hence, visual analysis could have provided further nuanced qualitative depth to the current analysis. For instance, the MH17 tragedy was controversial as several (un)official organisations had shown images of conflicting evidence that different media selectively reported alongside the traumatic nature of the tragedy to raise awareness (e.g., Parry, 2010, 2011; Sontag, 2003). Thus, the assessment of the visuals used by the Russian and UK media outlets during the Ukraine crisis could shed additional light on the applicability of the theories on media and conflict as well as add extra values to our understanding of this research. However, in this instance, to include the analysis of news photography would have gone beyond the scope of this study with its focus on textual framing. In addition, the used electronic databases – Lexis Nexis – do not always include images.

Finally, in the process, this researcher was inevitably dependent on her social and cultural background to interpret the texts presented in this study. Yet the research benefited from the production of comparative knowledge in terms of contextualism that avoids standardisation. To be precise, the study looked at the Russian media and the British media in a comparative way that helped lead to contextual analysis of the

events across countries. The approach focuses on the light the study sheds on the issue for each party, rather than the question of universal ‘true value’.

Suggestions for Further Studies

As pointed out in the previous section, the researcher has accomplished a research in the field of political communication focusing on the on-going debate in relation to the media’s role in war and conflict in the context of different political regimes: hybrid and liberal. In order to reinforce the validity and reliability of the findings of this study, this researcher has outlined four suggestions. First, conducting in-depth face-to-face interviews with journalists would be helpful. This study has found a number of framing patterns used by the Russian and the British media in constructing the different narratives of the 15-months’ worth of the Ukraine crisis analysed here. Further investigation into the why the journalists covered the conflict the way they did would help to understand whether or not the journalistic practices were internalised as a result of editorial and political pressures or were embedded from their own ideological perceptions and interpretations. The generated new data from interviews would certainly help explain the relationship between the media and the politics in the case of Ukraine, as well as offer a deeper insight into the explored here theories such as the manufacturing consent thesis and the media systems theory.

Second, given the fact that the study has discovered a predominant framing pattern of human-interest and human rights violations that were applied by both the Russian and the British media outlets, it might be worth investigating this topic specifically beyond the context of this study. For example, further research could look at other international conflicts where conflicting parties are militarily involved, and examine how the media from the conflicting parties have covered specifically

the subject of human-interest stories. This could also be an opportunity to test the applicability of the nationalisation frame that was not used often in this study. The findings would potentially add to the existing understandings of the media's role during wartime.

Third, the evidence showed in this study has supported the features and patterns of behaviour identified in Vartanova's (2012) statist commercialised model of Russian media system and identified how British media system fails to fully deliver on all expectations associated with Hallin and Mancini's (2004) liberal model due to the shared feature of one-sidedness of news coverage. As mentioned above, it would be more inclusive and comprehensive to incorporate social media because of its growing significance and compatibility of constant news reporting where the uncovered issue of story-selection might not be in evidence. The findings therefore may differ from the ones of the current study. The focus will still be on the English-language presence of Russian media as they are the ones that are outward facing, targeting the global audience.

Finally, given the fact that Vartanova's (2012) model is built mainly upon national-language media landscape in Russia, a further research could explore the news coverage of the Ukraine crisis, focusing on Russian-speaking media and comparing it with the English-speaking Russian ones. In addition, visual analysis as a method could be incorporated into research on this topic.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Framing Analysis Codebook

Variables and Codes: Derivations and Meaning

Section A – Descriptive variables (Level 1 coding)

The first set of variables are descriptive, allowing for identifying the article and for subsequent traditional quantitative analysis (e.g. word count and frequencies).

A1 – Article ID

This is the same article identity code that has been assigned to when constructing the database. Sequence number is needed if there are more than one articles for each daily issue of the media. *For example, the first article you code for the 1st December issue of a media should be coded 1 for sequence number, the second article in the same issue is a 2, and so forth. For each new day or new media, restart the sequence at 1.*

A2 – Media

This variable will need to be coded according to the media that have been selected. Each media has been assigned a one-digit code. See Appendix B for a list of these codes.

A3 – Number of Words

Enter the word length of the article.

Section B – Variables analysing the frames (Level 2 coding)

The second set of variables analyse the frames for each article to answer the third and fourth research questions in terms of identifying and comparing the frames used by the selected media.

Level 2 coding identifies *Generic frames* consisting of six pre-defined frames, and *diagnostic* and *prognostic* frames. The combination of this set of frames was guided by the work of Godefroidt, Berbers, and d’Haenens (2016) scrutinising four countries’ news articles of the Syrian conflict. Identifying these eight frames will be done by answering the listed yes/no questions (see Appendix C).

Note that in the subsequent analysis, unit of analysis is the individual article. When more than one frame appear in an article, the researcher uses the headline to help determine the leading frame.

B1 – Generic frames

B1a - Conflict frame

B1b - Human-interest frame

B1c - Economic consequences frame

B1d - Morality frame

B1e - Responsibility frame

B1f - Nationalisation frame

B2 – Diagnostic frame

B3 – Prognostic frame

List of questions > Appendices C & D.

Appendix B

List of Media Outlets

Russian Media	British Media
1. The Moscow Times	2. The Guardian
3. Pravda.ru	4. Mail Online
5. RT	6. BBC

Appendix C

List of Twenty-One Framing Items (Adopted from Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000)

*Generic Frames***Conflict frame**

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

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

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

Does the story refer to winners and losers?

Human interest frame

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

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

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

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

Economic consequences frame

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

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

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

Morality frame

Does the story contain any moral message?

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

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

Responsibility frame

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

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

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

Does the story suggest solutions to the issue/problem?

Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?

Nationalisation frame

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

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

Appendix D

List of Diagnostic and Prognostic Framing Items (Adopted from Godefroidt et al.,
2016)*Diagnoses***Political causes**

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

Socio-economic causes

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

Human rights violations

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

Religious prescriptions

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

Global dimensions

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

Particular triggers

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

Others

This is a residual category for unforeseen causal elements

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

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

Assistance

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

Rejection

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

Change in government

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

Financial intervention

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

Internal reforms

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

Dismantling military weapons

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

External assistance

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

Others

This is a residual category for unforeseen remedial element.