



International Graduate Student Symposium

New Perspectives on Contemporary Ukraine: Politics, History, and Culture

Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies, University of Toronto

March 17-19, 2006

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**“Frame Analysis of the *New York Times* and
Izvestia Coverage of the Presidential Elections and
the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004”**



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

On Monday, November 22, 2004, the Prime Minister of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovych was declared the winner of the presidential elections. According to the official results, he defeated his opponent, opposition leader Viktor Yushenko, with a small, but still comfortable margin of almost three percent. However, Yanukovych was never inaugurated as President of Ukraine, because on the same day hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians poured onto the streets to protest what they saw as blatant election fraud. These mass demonstrations lasted for two weeks, and, as a result, a parliamentary vote and a ruling by the Supreme Court denounced this election and refused to legitimize it. The unprecedented ‘third round’ (the rerun of the second round) was won by the opposition candidate at the end of December 2004.

During the elections crisis, the world witnessed a serious deterioration of relations between Russia and the West. Russia endorsed Yanukovych who was seen as a pro-Russian candidate, while the West supported Viktor Yushenko who was seen as a pro-Western reformist. Russian president Vladimir Putin twice congratulated Yanukovych on his ‘victory’ even before the official results were announced. In contrast, the Western leaders and mass media were mostly sympathetic to Yushenko and his supporters.

In fact, *New York Times* and Western press overall did not pay much attention to the Ukrainian presidential election until the protests broke. Similarly, *Izvestia*’s coverage, though more attentive to Ukrainian issues due to historical reasons, was also quite average. However, when the protests known now as the Orange Revolution started, Ukraine became much bigger news both in the United States and Russia. Probably never in its modern history was



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Ukraine covered so intensively in the American and Russian press. This study assesses coverage of the elite American and Russian quality dailies, the *New York Times* and *Izvestia* respectively, and the researcher employs frame analysis as his methodology and critical theory as the theoretical framework.

Critical theory is inspired by Marxist political economy, but has been updated with a new reading. It was especially influenced by Antonio Gramsci and his conception of hegemony. Hegemony implied that the dominance of certain formations was secured, not by ideological compulsion, but by cultural leadership. Thus, media (and other signifying institutions) not only reflect and sustain the consensus in society, but also help to produce the consensus and manufacture consent (Hall, 1982).

Carragee and Roefs (2004) argue that “the media hegemony thesis directly connects the framing process to considerations of power and to examinations of the relationship between the news media and political change.” Therefore, studying the framing process within the context of the production, distribution, and interpretation of hegemonic meanings allows researchers to find the relationship between news and the distribution of power in American society. “Frames, as imprints of power, are central to the production of hegemonic meanings” (Carragee & Roefs, 2004, p. 222).

Overall, the Gramscian concept of hegemony argues that the dominant class will use any means to spread its ideology through society, and mass media is an extremely important instrument in this struggle. In any society the media are used to bring the political message of the government to the population, and foreign policy is not an exception.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it will be one of the first assessments of the media coverage of the modern-day “velvet revolutions” which happened



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in several post-Socialist countries in recent years (Serbia 2001, Georgia 2003, Ukraine 2004, and Kyrgyzstan 2005). These revolutions are new phenomena, and their international news coverage has rarely been studied. Second, this research will address important questions regarding the ideological role of the mass media. Finally, it will probe whether Chomsky and Herman's propaganda model for mass media is still relevant in the United States and Russia.

This paper will consist of four chapters. First, the subject and purpose of the study and the theoretical framework will be covered. Next, the research questions and the methodology of the study (frame analysis), sampling, and data collection will be explained. This will be followed by the reporting of the results and their analysis, and a conclusion.



CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

The main focus of this study is to analyze how the 2004 presidential elections and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine were framed in the American and Russian press. The following specific question will be explored: How were the Ukrainian presidential elections and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine framed by the *New York Times* and *Izvestia*? Frame analysis will be employed as a method of this study.

Framing research originates from the sociological research of Goffman (1974) and the media sociology of Tuchman (1978) and Gitlin. One of the most common definitions of what is meant by “to frame” is “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1991).

In general, frame analysis is a type of narrative/content analysis in which the researcher explores text to identify the frame in order to pinpoint the rhetoric of the writer and/or the news organization. More specifically, frame analysis assesses whether or not journalistic text plays a political role. Ideally, framing research examines how frames are sponsored by political actors, how journalists employ frames in the construction of news stories, how these stories articulate frames, and how audience members interpret these frames (Carragee & Roefs, 2004).

Frame analysis examines reasoning devices used to explain the news event and framing devices used to characterize the event. Reasoning devices provide justifications or reasons for a general position; these are: roots (causal interpretations of issues),



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consequences, and appeals to principle (Carragee and Roefs, 2004, p. 223). Framing devices include: sources (all people directly quoted in the text); keywords (words that appear in a headline and are then repeated in the text, words that appear frequently in the body of stories, or words that have particular salience due to their placement within the text or their cultural resonance for the news audience); metaphors (the figures of speech in which a word for one idea or thing is used in place of another to suggest likeness between them); agency (the person or group identified as causing or solving the problem; the causal force that created the newsworthy act). In the course of analysis, each story is read to determine specific patterns found in the coverage, focusing systematically on dimensions that have been identified in previous studies as framing devices: sources, keywords, metaphors and agency (Entman, 1991; Wall, 1997).

This study analyzes the coverage of Ukraine's 2004 presidential campaign in the American daily the *New York Times* and the Russian newspaper *Izvestia*. The time period of the analysis is from the beginning of the Ukrainian presidential campaign coverage (October 12, 2004 in the *New York Times*, October 21, 2004 in *Izvestia*) till the last reports about Yuschenko's inauguration (which happened on January 22) on January 24, 2005.

The *New York Times* and *Izvestia* were chosen because they are known in the USA and Russia respectively as leading elite publications paying special attention to the international news. Based in the biggest cities of their countries (New York and Moscow), they are the most influential papers in the U.S. and Russia (Malinkina & McLeod, 2000). The *New York Times* is the most authoritative source of information and guidance on issues of public policy (Friel & Falk, 2004) and one of the oldest newspapers in the USA (founded in 1851) with



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one of the highest circulations in the country – 1,121,057 in September 2004 (“Circulation,” 2005).

The articles from *Izvestia* were collected through a keyword research of *Izvestia*'s web site search engine. The keyword “Ukraine” produced 306 total stories. All news articles and commentaries (there is no clear distinction between news stories and editorials in the Russian press) longer than 100 words and focused on the topic of the Ukrainian elections and the Orange Revolution were included with the exception of the Q-and-A stories. Because of the data collection method, the place and position of the articles in *Izvestia* is not known. It is also possible that the online versions of *Izvestia*'s articles differ from the printed ones.

The data from the *New York Times* was accessed through the Lexis-Nexis database using the same criteria. The keyword “Ukraine” produced 184 total stories. All articles longer than 100 words focused on the topic of the Ukrainian elections and the Orange Revolution were included in the analysis. As a result, a total of 153 stories (79 articles from *Izvestia* and 74 articles from the *New York Times*) were downloaded and printed out.

All the stories were be read first for comprehension. On the second time the researcher “open-coded” each story. The sample codesheet included four ‘technical’ questions (name of publication; date and year; length, location, and type of the story; title and author) and five theme questions. The themes include the campaigning and voting process; the mass demonstrations; the main candidates (Yuschenko and Yanukovych), their programs and their popular support; difference between Ukrainian East and West; and the foreign actions/attitudes (namely world leaders, the USA, Russia, the European Union, West). These questions were applied to the articles, and the codesheet for each article will be



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filled with supporting examples and observations. Afterward the researcher compared the findings, probed for particular framing devices, determined which words and images are the components of the frame and discovered the consistent patterns of the overall frame (Entman, 1993; Wall, 1997).

The credibility and trustworthiness of this research was guaranteed in three ways. First, the researcher provided rich and thick description using the numerous examples from original texts to illustrate and provide specific support for arguments (Creswell, 1998). And, second, the researcher's background secures his deep understanding of Ukrainian political, economical and cultural issues. He was raised in Ukraine, and has a fluent knowledge of English and native knowledge of Ukrainian and Russian languages. His academic background includes degrees in Political Science and Journalism.

This study is limited to its own data and analysis, and its results cannot be generalized. The researcher analyzed the coverage of only one event by two newspapers – the *New York Times* (USA) and *Izvestia* (Russia). Thus, they cannot represent the American and Russian print media as a whole. The time frame of the study was limited, and the sample included not all stories, but only those more than 100 words long.



CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, the problem, cause, solution, and moral claims found in the *New York Times*' and *Izvestia*'s coverage, as well as their interpretation will be discussed. The findings of this study suggest that both newspapers employed the same frame in their coverage, even though their portrayal of the crisis in Ukraine was different, and sometimes even opposite.

The Problem

The New York Times

The electoral fraud was depicted by the *New York Times* as the primary problem in its coverage of the presidential elections and the 'Orange Revolution' in Ukraine. It was the reason for the mass protests and a severe political crisis inside Ukraine, which led to a serious confrontation between the West and Russia on the international arena. For American newspaper, the electoral fraud was a justified cause for the conflict which polarized Ukraine and the whole world for several weeks in the end of 2004.

Since its beginning, the presidential campaign in Ukraine was portrayed as "a fiercely contested fight over the country's future" (Meyers, 2004, para. 16) between two rival politicians – Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich and leader of opposition Viktor Yushenko. The tensions culminated in the second round of the election which had to name the winner of the presidential race, and which was officially won by Yanukovich. This vote was characterized by the *New York Times* as 'disputed'. This categorization appeared 44 times in



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the text, as well as in two headlines: “Ukraine Court Delays Results In Vote Dispute” (Chivers, 2004); “Rivals in Ukraine Agree to Negotiate Over Disputed Vote” (Chivers, 2004).

Overall, the voting was characterized by such words as “fraud” (Chivers, 2004, para. 3), “abuse” (Chivers, 2004, para. 1), “irregularities” (Chivers, 2004, para. 9), and “violation” (Meyers, 2004, para. 6). The keyword “fraud” (“fraudulent”) was used most of all – 108 times in the text and once in the headline: “Powell Says Ukraine Vote Was Full of Fraud” (Weisman, 2004). This word choice suggested that the *New York Times* didn’t see Yanukovich’s victory as legitimate, claiming that there was “a pattern of harassment and electoral irregularities that calls into question the fairness of the vote to elect Mr. Kuchma’s successor” (Meyers, 2004, para. 4).

Therefore, after the second round of the election, Yanukovich was portrayed as the “official winner” (Chivers, 2004, para. 2), “nominal winner” (Chivers, 2004, para. 5), or “officially declared winner” (Meyers, 2004, para. 2), but never as just ‘winner.’ On the other hand, Yuschenko was portrayed by the *New York Times* as the “declared loser” (Chivers, 2004, para. 1) or “officially defeated presidential candidate” (Chivers, 2004, para. 1), and these depiction implied that he was not really defeated. Thus, an American newspaper made the clear accents that suggested that the Yanukovich’s official victory was not real, and that the Yuschenko’s defeat was not final.

The accents changed after the second round’s rerun, when, even before all votes were counted and the official results published, the *New York Times* proclaimed the winner, Yuschenko, “Ukraine’s presumptive president-elect” (Chivers, 2004, para. 1), while Yanukovich was portrayed as “the evident loser” (Chivers, 2005, para. 1). Moreover, in this ‘third round,’ according to American newspaper, the problem of fraud was solved: despite



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the reports about the irregularities it was declared “relatively free of the type of bare-knuckled fraud that doomed the original” (Meyers, 2005, para. 6).

This word choice suggests that the *New York Times* was biased in its coverage of the Ukrainian presidential campaign: its sympathy was clearly with the opposition leader – Viktor Yuschenko. Therefore, the problem of electoral fraud which aroused so seriously in the second round and during the mass protests was downplayed in the coverage of the first and ‘third’ rounds won by Yuschenko.

The *New York Times* also identified the “split” (Arvedlund, 2004, para. 1) between “the agrarian west” of Ukraine which “is ardently nationalist, predominantly Catholic and anti-Russian” and “the industrial south and east” which “are predominantly oriented toward Russia in speech and religion” (Schmemmann, 2004, December 9, para. 7). However, it was depicted as just one in the complex of many cultural, social and economic problems facing Ukraine, and not as a reason of the conflict.

This image of the sharply divided country consisting of two hostile parts was incorrect, because the real picture of Ukraine is much more complicated (for example, Central Ukraine provides a balance between the opposites of West and East). There were also some mistakes in the coverage regarding the regional divide of Ukraine: the newspaper mentioned “a civil conflict between the country's starkly divided regions, dominated by ethnic Ukrainians in the west and ethnic Russians in the east” (Meyers, 2004, December 4, para. 7), even though, in fact, ethnic Russians dominate in only one Southern Ukrainian region – Crimea.

Izvestia



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For *Izvestia*, the primary problem of the conflict laid in the historical difference between ‘pro-Western’ (and ‘anti-Russian’) Western Ukraine and ‘pro-Russian’ Eastern Ukraine. The electoral fraud was not seen as reason serious enough to provoke a political crisis with the global implications. Moreover, the newspaper mentioned that “falsifications were always present in democratic Ukraine” (Pankin, 2004, para. 7), implying that the electoral fraud is a usual Ukrainian (and, actually, post-Soviet) political practice, so it could not lead to such a crisis.

Therefore, for *Izvestia*, the ‘Orange Revolution’ was not a struggle of citizens for the democratic cause of honest and transparent election, but, first of all, the internal Ukrainian ‘East versus West’ conflict:

“Split into East and West is not just a fact of Ukrainian election, but a diagnosis of Ukrainian statehood in its current state” (Zatulin, 2004, para. 5).

Thus, the historical division of Ukrainian society was emphasized. To express this division *Izvestia* used the keyword “split” (Zatulin, 2004, para. 4). It was used 26 times in the coverage and was applied not only to regions, but also to Ukrainian celebrities, politicians, and government institutions. The ‘split’ was total, and the idea of hostile ‘East’ and ‘West’ ran through all coverage of Ukrainian campaign:

“It was predictable that the country will split Ukraine into ‘Russian East’ and ‘national West’. Ukraine is clearly split into two parts. To the right of the imagined line going from the Northeast to the Southwest there are nine Russian-speaking regions and the city Sebastopol which supported Yanukovich. To the left – 16 oblasts and city Kyiv that voted for Yuschenko” (Sokolovskaya & Yusin, 2004, para. 10, 11).

Izvestia insisted that the regional differences were so deep-rooted that these parts of Ukraine may be even considered separate countries: “West and Southeast are like two different countries: Russian-Ukrainian and Galician-Ukrainian” (Markov, 2004, para. 10).



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Thus, the Southeast was a close region, actually almost Russian or ‘Russian-Ukrainian,’ while the West was alien, ‘Galician’ (Galicia is one of Western Ukrainian regions, which is known in Russia as a center of anti-Russian nationalism). Comparing these two parts *Izvestia* always stressed that Eastern Ukraine is richer and more populous than the Western:

“All Western Ukrainian regions give the Ukrainian national budget only three percent of the income while Donetsk and Dnipropetrovsk regions – a quarter of the whole budget” (Bausin & Sokolovskaya, 2004, para. 7).

As East and West were supporting two different candidates (Yanukovych and Yuschenko), *Izvestia* depicted election as a strategic conflict. Even before the second round, Russian newspaper predicted that there will be no compromise between the rivals, and that “the loser will not accept his defeat” (Grigorieva, 2004, para. 7). Therefore, *Izvestia* expected the coming conflict and emphasized the competitive side of the election. The theme of winning or losing was obvious in the headlines that sometimes reminded sports reports: “A Draw in Favor of a Premier” (Sokolovskaya & Yusin, 2004); “Yuschenko Defeated Yanukovych” (Grigorieva, 2004); “Ukraine Should Choose the Loser” (Grigorieva, 2004); “East defeated West” (Grigorieva & Sokolovskaya, 2004); “Orange Ukraine Defeated White-Blue Ukraine” (Yusin, 2004).

To dramatize depiction of the conflict Russian newspaper used the word ‘war,’ which appeared twice in the headlines: “War of Exit Polls Could Provoke the Events” (Grigorieva, 2004); “Two Ukraines: Geopolitics of Crisis and Map of Civil War” (Dugin, 2004), and in the text. One article mentioned “war of meetings,” “war of complaints,” and “war of comments” (Grigorieva & Sokolovskaya, 2004, para. 4, 5), and before the third round another article warned its readers that “the battle is lost, but not the war” (Yusin, 2004, para. 4).



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Causes

Both the *New York Times* and *Izvestia* identified the internal and foreign actors as the underlying causes of the Ukrainian crisis. However, both newspapers selected the different sides of the conflict and their allies abroad to portray as the conflict's cause. For Russian newspaper, it was the oppositional candidate Viktor Yuschenko and his supporters inside Ukraine and in the West who provoked the conflict, while for their American colleagues – Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych with his camp and Russia.

The New York Times

For the *New York Times*, the cause of the conflict was the corrupt government inside country which was accountable for the falsifications, as well as the influence of Russian government. Ukrainian government was personified by the outgoing president Leonid Kuchma and Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych, while Russian interference was usually embodied in the person of president Putin who was characterized as “a co-conspirator with Ukraine's outgoing president, Leonid Kuchma, to tilt the campaign and fix the election in favor of the pro-Moscow candidate” (Kristof, 2004, para. 8).

Foreign interference

Russian intrusion was stressed by the *New York Times*' reporters since the beginning of the campaign. They portrayed Yanukovych as benefiting from a “high-profile support offered by... Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin” (Meyers, 2004, para. 17). The Russian president's visits to Kyiv were characterized as “interfering in another country's internal



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affairs” and “Russia’s soft imperialism” (Meyers, 2004, para. 3). In fact, it was Vladimir Putin,

not Russia as a country, who was found personally responsible for the Russian foreign policy:

“Mr. Putin's direct interference underscores his keen desire to keep Ukraine, in particular, Russia's historical and cultural partner, from tipping toward the West and further diminishing Moscow's reach” (Meyers, 2004, para. 4);

“Long before mass street protests paralyzed Kiev, Mr. Putin had injected himself into the race, campaigning on behalf of Mr. Yanukovich and then publicly congratulating him on his victory” (Chivers, 2004, para. 8).

Therefore, the *New York Times* attacked not Russia which is supposed to be an American ally in the global war against the terrorism, but the country’s president. American newspaper also did not want to acknowledge a substantial Western interest in the victory of Yuschenko. So, Russian support for Yanukovych was characterized as open, while Western support for Yuschenko – as subtle:

“Russia and President Vladimir V. Putin himself have come out so strongly for the candidate promising closer relations with Moscow, Viktor F. Yanukovich, while Europe and the United States are supporting Viktor A. Yushchenko, albeit more subtly” (Meyers, 2004, para. 2).

After the ‘Orange Revolution’ won, the *New York Times* mentioned that some groups in the West accuse American government, as well as such Democratic and Republican institutions as NED and IRI, of “conspiring to underwrite and orchestrate the revolution, in part through grants and foreign aid” (Chivers, 2004, para. 19). However, this alleged Western conspiracy was never investigated.

Thus, the West was a ‘good force’ in Ukrainian conflict, the defender of democracy, while Russia was a ‘dark force’ trying to steal the Ukrainian election. Russian Federation in this coverage was definitely a successor to the Soviet Union, and the negative coverage it



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received was reminiscent of the American-Soviet confrontation during the Cold War. It is

not strange that the Cold War parallels were ubiquitous:

“The standoff had a cold war quality, as the United States and Russia tussled over spheres of influence and political principles” (Shane, 2004, para. 6);

“Russian officials dusted off cold war vocabulary and summoned bitter visions of lost imperial ambitions and fears of Western meddling in Russia’s sphere of influence” (Arvedlund, 2004, para. 1);

“The election also exposed tensions between Russia and the West not seen since NATO bombed Serbia in 1999, and perhaps since the cold war” (Meyers, 2004, para. 7).

The Soviet Union was alive again in the headline “The Eternal Suspicions of the Soviet Mind-Set” (Schmemmann, 2004). And as the tensions grew, the *New York Times* asked a rhetorical question: “So has a Ukrainian political standoff escalated to a Russian-American confrontation out of the cold war, ‘captive nations’ and all” (Whitney, 2004, para. 3)? The newspaper’s coverage with the headlines like “Eastern Front, 2004” (Judt, 2004) and “The New East-West Divide” (Whitney, 2004) implied the answer: the world was once again portrayed as a contest between Russia and the West, the competition for Ukraine.

Overall, the accents made by the New York Times in its coverage of the international politics around the Ukrainian presidential election are clearly seen in this conclusion made after Yuschenko’s victory:

“And Europe and the United States, which both rightly fought for a fair and democratic election, must now work to dispel any perception that it is Washington and Brussels, not Kiev, calling the shots. For his part, Mr. Putin disgraced himself by meddling in the internal affairs of Ukraine – which he clearly considers one of his territories.” (“President,” 2004, para. 3, 4).

Domestic aspect



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Inside Ukraine the cause of the conflict for the *New York Times* was the government and its presidential candidate – Viktor Yanukovych. It becomes evident in comparison of his and Yuschenko’s portrayals in American newspaper. Yanukovych was seen as a candidate “promising to follow [the departing president] Kuchma’s course,” while Yuschenko – as “promising to steer the country toward a more open and democratic path, more closely allied with Europe” (Meyers, 2004, para. 12). As the president Kuchma’s course was associated with the “cronyism and corruption” (Meyers, 2004, para. 7), it is clear that the Western public would perceive Yanukovych as a negative character.

Moreover, Yanukovych’s name in the coverage was almost always connected to the infamous president Kuchma: usually he was referred to as Kuchma’s “choice” (Meyers, 2004, para. 6) or “successor” (Chivers, 2004, para. 8). The Russian president’s support for Yanukovych was also often reflected in the articles: the Prime Minister was called “Mr. Putin’s choice” (Shane, 2004, para. 4). Actually, Yanukovych was shown as even more pro-Russian than Kuchma:

“While Mr. Kuchma tilted alternately toward Russia and Western Europe, Mr. Yanukovich promised to cultivate closer ties with Russia, proposing to make Russian an official language and to allow dual citizenship” (Meyers, 2004, para. 13, 14).

On the other hand, Yuschenko was shown as a “liberal, democratic reformer” (Meyers, 2004, para. 17) who was promising to push country toward the West. Unlike his opponent, Yuschenko was praised for his past endeavors: “he was involved in steering the Ukraine from Communism to a market economy, developing monetary and credit policies, and introducing the hryvnia, Ukraine’s currency” (Chivers, 2004, para. 13). However, the *New York Times* never told its readers that Yuschenko was also a Prime Minister under



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‘corrupt Kuchma,’ and that he, as well as Yanukovych, is also a product of the Soviet system, a former member of the Communist party and a part of Soviet bureaucracy.

Instead, the candidates’ differences (especially their geopolitical aspirations) were stressed, so they were portrayed as the absolute antipodes. The newspaper did not pay attention to the Yuschenko’s declaration to develop the good relations with Russia, and Yanukovych’s intentions to continue Ukraine’s move to the West. Even though both candidates claimed to be dedicated to Ukrainian interest, they were labeled as ‘pro-Western’ or ‘pro-Russian.’ The extreme dichotomization of the coverage is clearly seen in this editorial:

“The choice facing Ukrainian voters on Sunday, in the second round of their presidential election, was about as clear as choices get: East or West. In the shorthand of the race, Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich was pro-Russian, and his opponent, Viktor Yushchenko, the head of the opposition and a former prime minister, was pro-Western” (“Ukraine,” 2004, November 23, para. 1).

Thus, the *New York Times*’ portrayal of Yuschenko and his supporters was aimed to evoke sympathy of the Western readers, while Yanukovych and his camp were shown as the ‘bad guys’ of Ukrainian conflict, the agents of Russian influence. Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin, were portrayed absolutely negatively, and this depiction of Russian involvement clearly had the Cold War quality.

Izvestia

Izvestia also provided its readers with the picture of intense clash between ‘good’ and ‘dark’ forces in Ukraine. However, for Russian newspaper, the conflict was caused by the opposition candidate Viktor Yuschenko and his supporters in Ukraine and Western countries. First of all, Yuschenko was personally responsible for the turmoil and the split of the country:



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“Yuschenko is provoking the split of Ukraine – it’s impossible not to see. Gathering the crowds, he is drawing the line of divide. Supporting the street revolution in the West, he is urging the East to respond with the same” (Grigorieva, 2004, para. 3).

Izvestia saw the mass protests not as a tool of direct democracy, but as provocation leading to the split of the country. However, when some pro-Russian politicians from several Southern and Eastern regions were trying to proclaim the Southeastern Ukrainian Autonomous Republic during the ‘Orange Revolution’, their move was depicted by Russian newspaper not as an actual effort to split Ukraine, but as an “answer to the decision of Western Ukrainian mayors to recognize Viktor Yuschenko as a president” (Sokolovskaya & Shesternina, 2004, para. 14).

Foreign interference

Unlike the *New York Times*, *Izvestia* focused more on the internal aspects of the Ukrainian crisis. However, Russian newspaper also mentioned “those who support Yuschenko in European countries” (Grigorieva, 2004, para. 2) as another cause of the conflict. The American influence was also present in the coverage, for example, in the reports about the financial support for Ukrainian opposition. As *Izvestia* stated, “the Ukrainian election split not only Ukraine to East and West, but the whole world” (Sokolovskaya & Shesternina, 2004, para. 3).

Ukraine was also called the reason of one of the most serious confrontations between Russia and the EU, and both Russian Federation and the European Union were reported to have the same goal: “getting the comfortable rear and realization of geopolitical ambitions” (Grigorieva, 2004, para. 10). Therefore, the European Union was portrayed as a



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force trying to include Ukraine in its geopolitical sphere of influence, thus hurting the Russian national interests.

The character of the *Izvestia* coverage changed during the ‘Orange Revolution.’ Most notably, Russian newspaper recognized that Russia was one of the crisis’ causes, even though “not the only one and not the most important” (Pankin, 2004, para. 6). The newspaper also described the whole Russian ‘Ukrainian strategy’ in 2004 as “a row of mistakes and disappointments” (Yusin, 2004, para. 2) and the outcome of the Ukrainian presidential elections – as the “biggest diplomatic defeat of Russia since collapse of the USSR” (Yusin, 2004, para. 1).

Domestic aspect

Izvestia’s portrayal of Viktor Yuschenko was very critical. He was depicted as a “pro-Western” (Bausin & Sokolovskaya, 2004, para. 5) or even “ultra-Western” (Dugin, 2004, para. 3) politician, which is a negative characteristic for most Russian readers. Moreover, as Yuschenko’s wife, Kateryna Chumachenko, was an American citizen by the time of the presidential campaign she was usually referred to as the “American wife” (Sokolovskaya & Yusin, 2004, para. 16) and Yuschenko himself was called an “American son-in-law” (Sokolovskaya, 2004, para. 2). To make him even more unacceptable for Russian public, which is highly intolerable to Ukrainian nationalism, *Izvestia* portrayed Yuschenko as and “extreme nationalist” (Sokolovskaya, 2004, para. 10) who is “influenced by radicals” (Markov, 2004, para. 12) and “surrounded by nationalists” (Zatulin, 2004, para. 9). After the second round and beginning of the protests Yuschenko was ridiculed as a “self-proclaimed president” (Solovskaya, Bausin & Stepanov, 2004, para. 4).



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During the mass demonstrations, Yuschenko supporters were usually portrayed by *Izvestia* unsympathetically. Russian reporters even invented such words as “orangists” (Grigorieva & Sokolovskaya, 2004, para. 10) or “Americanists” (Sokolovskaya, 2004, para. 11) that sounded like ‘fascists’ to refer to them. Another word with negative connotation invented by *Izvestia* reporters was “Yuschenkovtsy” (Sokolovskaya & Shesternina, 2004, para. 11), and it reminded Russian readers about the members of different forces fighting against Red Army during the Civil War in 1917-1922. Once *Izvestia* even compared them to German Nazis: “it [pro-Yuschenko demonstration] reminded the sequences from the film Ordinary Fascism” (Sokolov-Mitrich, 2004, para. 17). The newspaper also used quotation marks with words like “revolutionaries” to undermine the protesters’ cause.

The protesters were portrayed as conflict-oriented and “ready to use force” (Grigorieva & Sokolovskaya, 2004, para. 17). Actually, the beginning of the ‘chestnut revolution’ (chestnut tree is a symbol of Kyiv) was announced even before the first round of elections, when *Izvestia* reported about the opposition’s “intentions to seizure power” (Sokolovskaya, 2004, para. 1). During the mass protests Russian newspaper often used the word ‘to storm’ to depict the protesters as more radical than they actually were: “Yushenkovtsy planning the storms” (Sokolovskaya & Shesternina, 2004, para. 11). Yuschenko supporters were also reported to “provoke unrest” (Grigorieva, 2004, para. 5), and sometimes *Izvestia* informed its readers about the “seizure of the government buildings” (Sokolovskaya & Shesternina, 2004, para. 8), whereas in reality they were only blocked.

Overall, this kind of coverage was opposite to reality, and portrayed the opposition supporters as an aggressive crowd while not even one act of violence was registered during the ‘Orange Revolution.’ Another *Izvestia*’s inaccuracy during the crisis was in portraying the



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protesters as the representatives of the insignificant part of Ukraine's population. The reporters stressed that it was mainly students who were protesting, even though all age and social groups took part in the protests.

In additions to these attempts to portray Yuschenko supporters as dangerous, Russian newspaper was also ridiculing them: "people on Independence Square were freezing and became not orange, but blue – as Yanukovych emblems" (Grigorieva & Sokolovskaya, 2004, para. 5). Yuschenko himself was ridiculed even after the campaign was finally over – during the inauguration *Izvestia* portrayed him as a "Ukrainian 'king'" (Sokolovskaya, 2005, para. 2).

On the contrary, Viktor Yanukovych received a favorable coverage in Russian newspaper. His closeness to Russia was stressed: he was addressed in *Izvestia* as "pro-Russian Premier" (Sokolovskaya, 2004, para. 1), and even "our candidate" (Leskov, 2004, para. 7). The newspaper praised him as a successful Prime Minister whose government made more for Ukraine's economy than Yuschenko's. Right after the second round, which was later announced invalid, *Izvestia* tried to legitimize the favorable for Yanukovych results calling him the "winner of the election" (Grigorieva & Sokolovskaya, 2004, para. 3).

Overall, both candidates were shown by *Izvestis* as contrapositional: Yuschenko as ultra-Western and Yanukovych as pro-Russian. Therefore, Yanukovych, as well as his supporters, received more sympathetic coverage than Yuschenko. Pro-Yuschenko demonstrators who were shown not as peaceful, but as aggressive and dangerous. In its portrayal of foreign involvement, *Izvestia*, similarly to the *New York Times*, recreated the Cold War picture of the global East-West divide with the West trying to harm the Russian national interests.



Solutions

The New York Times

Only the Westerners (American, Dutch, British, and Polish officials) were portrayed by the *New York Times* as working to solve the problem facing Ukraine. The most active among them were Polish president Aleksandr Kwasniewski and Javier Solana, the European Union's foreign policy chief who were presented as the “international mediators” (Chivers, 2004, para. 1). Therefore, the newspaper offered the solution identical to that of the West. First, it called for a recount of the votes, but later adopted the line of Ukrainian opposition which insisted on the rerun of the second round. The idea of the whole new election proposed by president Kuchma was never taken seriously into account.

By contrast, Russians were portrayed only as trying to interfere into Ukraine’s affairs. They were shown supporting the Yanukovych camp, and, thus, trying to ruin the West’s mediation efforts. For example, the speaker of Russian parliament’s lower house Boris Gryzlov (who also took part in the talks between Yuschenko, Kuchma and Yanukovych) was never depicted as a mediator. Instead, he was shown as “a counterweight” (Meyers, 2004, para. 5) to the Westerners and a source of “the overt support” (Meyers, 2004, para. 22) for Yanukovych.

The Western observers, who were presenting such organizations as from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Parliament, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the Council of Europe, were shown by the *New York Times* the major source of criticism toward the Ukrainian government. They blamed Ukrainian government for irregularities during the vote and called for an investigation or recount.



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However, American newspaper didn't mention the CIS observers who found the second round of election legitimate and democratic.

Usually the *New York Times* used expressions like "leading Western nations" (Chivers, 2004, para. 7) to articulate the position of the West. They were reported to "condemn the official results" (Chivers, 2004, para. 7) and "put pressure on Ukraine for a recount or investigation of Mr. Yushchenko's charges" (Chivers, 2004, para. 31). American officials were shown to use even stricter vocabulary like stating that the U.S. "could not accept a victory by Victor F. Yanukovich as legitimate" (Weisman, 2004, para. 1).

Thus, the U.S. was portrayed as the primary source of warnings to the Ukrainian leadership and Moscow, while Europeans were mostly depicted as mediators. However, once the *New York Times* admitted that actually it was "Mr. Bush... working through the Europeans, and especially the Poles, to achieve a solution, and he may fear that too public an American role would anger the Russians and revive the cold war" (Kristof, 2004, para. 13). Therefore, American newspaper recognized the leading role of the U.S. in the Western mediation.

Overall, the Westerners were shown as the saviors of young Ukrainian democracy, while Russians were supporting the authoritarian Kuchma regime. The solution offered by the newspaper (first, recount of the votes, and then, the rerun of the second round) was identical to the solution offered by the West. Moreover, it was in line with the Ukrainian's opposition demands. Thus, it is a clear evidence of the *New York Times* support of the Western position in the conflict.

Izvestia



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Izvestia, as well as Russian leadership, failed to present any clear solution of the conflict. It claimed that the election was democratic, and Yanukovich was a legitimate president. Russian newspaper expected that the protests should fade away soon, and Ukrainian politicians would start the negotiations. Speculating about the possible outcome of these talks, *Izvestia* hoped that Yanukovich's presidency would be the best variant for Ukraine.

Therefore, the newspaper expected the solution to come from within Ukraine, and objected to the outside pressure (first of all, from the West). Among the possible sources of solution, it mentioned Ukrainian politicians like ex-President Leonid Kuchma and speaker of the parliament Volodymyr Lytvyn who were depicted as the “only two men who may reconcile the East and the West which elected different presidents: President Kuchma and speaker Lytvyn” (Bondarenko, 2004, para. 9).

Western mediation was shown as an intervention aimed at “weakening the Russian influence in post-Soviet sphere” (Ratiani, 2004, para. 1). *Izvestia* reported that Russian officials would also like to be in the role of mediators, but admitted that Russia “has disqualified itself to be a neutral mediator” (Pankin, 2004, para. 6). However, when tensions in Ukraine grew, Western mediators were portrayed as the “main hope that the crisis will be solved peacefully” (Sokolovskaya & Shesternina, 2004, para. 1).

Moral claims

The New York Times

The understanding of democratic principles was used by the *New York Times* to generalize about the people involved in the conflict. Therefore, the Yuschenko supporters



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shared the American journalists' sympathy toward their leader. The extent and democratic nature of their protests were emphasized in such portrayals as "the extraordinary uprising of popular sentiment" (Meyers, 2004, para. 8) or "unexpected democratic force" (Safire, 2004, para. 5). Some portrayals were almost romantic: "Crowds jammed the snowy central squares of Kiev all week, singing, chanting and freezing for Ukrainian democracy" (Shane, 2004, para. 1).

The peaceful and joyful character of the protests was also reflected in many articles in which the demonstrations were compared to festival, dance parties, or rock concert. The reporters emphasized the bloodless outcome of the mass demonstrations: "Without blood or chaos or coup... they had stopped their government as it stole an election" (Chivers, 2004, para. 16). For American newspaper, the 'Orange Revolution' was

"less reminiscent of Tiananmen and more suggestive of the protesters who, through peaceful free assembly, won union rights at the shipyards in Gdansk, or cheered a "velvet revolution" in Prague, or rejoiced in Berlin as the wall came down" (Kaufman, 2004, para. 2).

However, among those positive characteristics there was also one critical suggestion about the pro-Yuschenko protesters: "it would be wrong to romanticize the widespread protests in the streets of Kiev, which carry a dollop of an unsavory form of nationalism" ("Saying No," 2004, para. 4).

Unlike the opposition protesters, the Yanukovich supporters were mentioned in the *New York Times*' coverage seldom, and their portrayal was predominantly negative: "the bands of Yanukovich supporters... are often menacing and rude; today they catcalled to pedestrians and passing traffic with some of the most foul Russian insults" (Chivers, 2004, para. 30). Even though the *New York Times* journalists reported that "in eastern Ukraine,



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hundreds of thousands of Mr. Yanukovich's supporters took to the streets” (Meyers, 2004, para. 9), no details of the pro-Yanukovych demonstrations were provided. Much later, after the end of the campaign, the newspaper mentioned that they “lack the size and fervor of those [demonstrations] that clogged Kiev and other cities in what became known as the ‘orange revolution’” (Meyers, 2005, para. 11).

For American reporters it was the gap between “those comfortable living in a centralized and disciplined form of post-Soviet government” and “a free-wheeling, flower-waving generation” (Chivers, 2004, para. 15) that characterized the difference between Yanukovych and Yuschenko supporters. Thus, the supporters of Yuschenko were shown as democratic and, thus, “more ‘European’” (Meyers, 2004, para. 17), while the Yanukovych’s supporters were portrayed as the remnants of the Soviet past.

The fact that most Yuschenko’s supporters were from Western and Central Ukraine, while most Yanukovych’s followers were from Ukrainian East led to the exaggeration of the difference between these regions, as well as of the risk of “civil war” (Chivers, 2004, para. 1), and to headlines like “A Tug of War over Ukraine” (Meyers, 2004). Thus, the *New York Times* provided its readers with the image of the sharply divided country consisting of two hostile parts, even though the real picture of Ukraine was much more complicated. It has several very different regions which were not mentioned in the coverage (for instance, the bilingual Central Ukraine that balances the extreme East and West).

Izvestia

Izvestia did not make any moral claims about the nature of the conflict and its participants in the beginning of the campaign. Moreover, it mentioned that “falsifications



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were always present in democratic Ukraine” (Pankin, 2004, para. 7), thus implying that the electoral fraud is a usual Ukrainian (and, actually, post-Soviet) political practice. *Izvestia* ridiculed the Western observers, for example their critical suggestions made even before the first round of election. The headline “Observers Decided To Criticize Ukrainian Elections In Good Time” (Shesternina, 2004) implied that they were overcritical.

Russian newspaper also stressed that both government and opposition were responsible for the election fraud. Moreover, in its coverage of voting it reported mostly about the falsification in Western Ukraine, the Yuschenko’s stronghold:

“The main [falsification] is the attempt of people in Western Ukraine, which is sympathetic to Yuschenko, to vote using the passports of people, who are working abroad” (Grigorieva & Sokolovskaya, 2004, para. 14).

Taking into account that in reality the Yanukovych’s camp was largely responsible for most irregularities, and they took place in Eastern Ukraine, this portrayal was actually an attempt to move the negative characteristic of fraud-maker from Yanukovych to Yuschenko, or at least make both sides look guilty.

In reporting the foreign influence on Ukrainian campaign, *Izvestia* was always honest about what candidate their country supported: “It is not a secret – Kremlin does everything possible to secure the Yanukovych’s victory” (Grigorieva, 2004, para. 2); “Putin clearly stated that Kremlin desires Yanukovych’s victory” (Zaytsev, 2004, para. 1). But only toward the end of the ‘Orange Revolution’ *Izvestia* recognized that Russian interference into Ukrainian elections was immoral: “The main Russian mistake was not that it supported the wrong guy, but that it supported anybody and, moreover, actively” (Pankin, 2004, para. 6). However, this critical analysis of the Russian involvement into the Ukrainian presidential campaign was just a postscript to two months of unbalanced coverage.



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CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study suggest that both the *New York Times* and *Izvestia* employed a conflict frame in their coverage of the 2004 presidential elections and the ‘Orange Revolution’ in Ukraine. This frame emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions, and is conceptually related to strategy coverage. This type of coverage makes winning and losing the central concept; thus the vocabulary of wars, games, and competition was often used, and the performance of a party or an individual was highlighted (Valkenburg, 1999).

As we see, both *Izvestia* and the *New York Times* identified more than one problem in their coverage of the Ukrainian presidential election, and at least two of them were the same – the electoral fraud, and the split between Eastern and Western Ukraine. However, American daily focused on the fraud as the primary problem, while Russian newspaper – on the historical Ukrainian East-West divide. This choice perfectly fitted the overall strategy employed by them: *Izvestia* tried to downplay the ‘Orange Revolution’ as an example of the direct democracy; instead it was portrayed as a prosaic regional conflict with an old history of its own. On the other hand, the *New York Times* emphasized the democratic nature of the protest movement; for American newspaper, ‘Orange Revolution’ was a successor of the Eastern European ‘velvet revolutions’ of late 1980s.

Therefore, the causes in the *New York Times*’ coverage were the corrupt Ukrainian government of president Kuchma and Prime Minister Yanukovych and its Russian allies, particularly president Vladimir Putin. They were the negative characters in the election’s coverage, while Ukrainian opposition led by Yushenko and Western ‘mediators’ were the positive ones. Western interference was never seriously discussed by American newspaper.



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Creating the enemy image for one side of the conflict and the favorable image for another resulted in the recreation of the Cold War frame.

In *Izvestia's* coverage, opposition leader Yuschenko and his supporters in Ukraine and in the West were the causes of the conflict. They were given the negative characteristics, while Yanukovych was praised as a 'pro-Russian leader.' Therefore, the Russian newspaper's frame was the same as the American's one: the conflict frame resembling the Cold War picture of the world. However, toward the end of the campaign there was a significant change in *Izvestia's* coverage – Russian newspaper recognized that Russia was also one of the conflict's causes; and it meant that *Izvestia's* frame was not so rigid as the *New York Times's* one.

The *New York Times's* solution for the conflict was the Western mediation effort, and as the West's position was in line with the Ukrainian opposition's demands, the American newspaper actually took its side in the conflict. On the contrary, *Izvestia* didn't offer any clear solution. However, it objected to any foreign pressure (therefore, condemning Western mediation as an interference), and expected the solution will come from within Ukraine.

In their moral claims, American reporters relied on the principles of democracy. Therefore, Yuschenko and his supporters (and the West) were portrayed as fighting for the right cause, while Yanukovych and his followers (and Russia) were backing the post-Soviet authoritarian regime. Russian journalists did not make any moral claims in the beginning of the campaign asserting that democratic principles were unimportant, and even tried to put the responsibility for falsification on the opposition. However, *Izvestia* had to recognize the negative role of Russia in the Ukrainian crisis toward the end of the crisis.



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In general, the *New York Times* and *Izvestia* framed Ukrainian political crisis in a similar way. Both newspapers saw Ukraine as a geopolitical prize in a confrontation between Russia and the Western countries. Therefore, they favorably portrayed their ‘allies,’ and negatively – their ‘enemies’ both in Ukraine and in the outer world. To complete the frame, the keyword ‘Cold War’ was often used to characterize the tensions between the Kremlin and the West by both *Izvestia* and the *New York Times*.

The *Izvestia*’s frame appeared to be less rigid than the *New York Times*’ one, as Russian newspaper recognized its country’s interference into Ukrainian affairs as negative. On the contrary, American newspaper was confident till the end of the campaign that the West was doing the right thing in Ukraine. However, what both newspapers failed or chose not to report was the fact that in reality the 2004 presidential election was the internal Ukrainian conflict, and both sides first of all were pursuing their own goals (namely power) which had nothing to do with the geopolitics.

Overall, both the *New York Times*’ and *Izvestia*’s coverage may be characterized as a dichotomization based on serviceability to domestic power interests, which is one of the propaganda model’s filters¹ (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Herman and Chomsky’s findings show that the elections in client states are usually found by American media legitimizing, irrespective of facts, while the elections in enemy states are found deficient.

This study offers only brief analysis of the *New York Times* and *Izvestia* coverage of the political crisis in Ukraine in 2004. Further research in this area may also include a study

¹ The Propaganda model is “an analytical framework that attempts to explain the performance of the U.S. media in terms of the basic institutional structures and relationships within which they operate” (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. xi). It “traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public” (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. 2).



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of the electronic media coverage of the 'Orange Revolution' in Russia and the West, as well as a study of the Western and Russian news media coverage of other modern-day velvet revolutions (Serbia 2001, Georgia 2003, Kyrgyzstan 2005).



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APPENDIX A

Codesheet

1. Name of the publication
2. Date and year
3. Length and location; type (news story, commentary, editorial)
4. Title and author
5. What keywords, metaphors, phrases, or sentences are used to describe the campaigning and voting process? What sources are used to interpret the situation?
6. What keywords, metaphors, phrases, or sentences are used to describe the mass demonstrations?
7. What keywords, metaphors, phrases, or sentences are used to describe the main candidates (Yushchenko and Yanukovich), their political platforms and popular supporter?
8. What keywords, metaphors, phrases, or sentences are used to describe the Ukrainian history and present situation? How is the difference between Ukrainian East and West characterized?
9. What keywords, metaphors, phrases, or sentences are used to describe the foreign actions/attitudes (world leaders, the USA, Russia, the European Union, the West)?



APPENDIX B

List of the *New York Times* Articles

Arvedlund, E. E. (2004, December 2). Russian Talk on Ukraine Recalls Cold War. *New York Times*. Retrieved May 5, 2005, from Lexis-Nexis database database.

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