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## **Coverage of the Russia–Ukraine War by Television News**

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## **Abstract**

This is a condensed presentation of an international study on the way the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 was covered by television news in Russia, China, Finland, the UK, Italy, the USA (separately in broadcast and cable networks), Brazil, India, and South Africa. The quantitative analysis was based on the main TV news bulletins in each country on ten days sampled between late February and mid-April by classifying the news stories according to a common code of topics and national angles. In addition, a qualitative analysis was made by identifying the key narratives in the news. The results reveal significant differences between countries, especially between Russia and others but also between the Western countries and the BRICS countries. The Feature ends with proposals to follow up on this research.

*Keywords: Russian invasion of Ukraine, television news, content analysis, war and peace journalism*

## **Introduction**

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

This content analysis study was initiated at the Finnish Tampere University in March 2022 with the support of the Tampere-based C.V. Åkerlund Media Foundation—in response to the appalling aggression of adjacent Russia towards another neighbor, Ukraine, causing a shock that reverberated throughout Finnish society. The study initially focused on war coverage in television news in Russia, China, and Finland from the invasion on for two months. Soon the selection of countries was expanded by the

voluntary participation of the UK, Italy and the USA (the latter by two teams) as well as Brazil, India and South Africa, following up an earlier BRICS Project (2012).

The study was essentially of an exploratory nature without a conventional literature review and posing no theoretically sophisticated questions. However, its results provide several leads for follow-up research to test and elaborate relevant theories.

### *News bulletins*

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

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

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

The US media landscape is far too diverse to be represented by any one channel and it was agreed to include the main evening news bulletins of the three national broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) and two leading cable networks (CNN, Fox). The US broadcast bulletins are traditionally half an hour long and broadcast at 6:30 PM. For the US cable network programs were selected that most closely follow the concept of a bulletin: the daily *CNN Newsroom*, which has a duration of 50 minutes not counting commercial breaks, and *Fox News Special Report* with a similar length.

Of the remaining BRICS countries, the Brazilian *Jornal Nacional*, produced by the leading free market media conglomerate Globo Group, has a duration of about 50 minutes at 8:30 PM. The Indian state channel *DD India* broadcasts its half-to-one-hour main news bulletin *The News* at 7:30 AM, while there is no formal news bulletin in the evenings; it is also available in over 190 countries via satellite. The South African 24h channel *SABC News* is the most watched news channel in the country, with a reach of over 50 countries in Africa. It does not have one single main bulletin comparable to those of the other countries but several more specialized bulletins, which is why the South African data could not be compiled for the overview presented in Figure 1 below, while it is included in the subsequent analysis of war-related content.

### *Days sampled*

Days selected for the content analysis are every Thursday from the start to two months into the invasion as well as the Mondays of the first two weeks: 24 and 28 February, 3, 7, 10, 17, 24 and 31 March, 7 and 14 April. The TV news bulletins on those days were screened and copied from the archives in the respective countries.

### *Method*

The content analysis was conducted by first dividing the bulletins into *news items* defined as thematically consistent units of news flow with a direct or indirect focus on the war. Items were typically 1 to 5 minutes containing a mix of in studio and on location material. Next, each news item was attributed to one of the following 13 *topics*:

1 – Battlefield	Military updates in studio and videos from Ukraine and elsewhere
2 – Civilians	Killing and saving civilians
3 – Disinformation	Allegation of disinformation in both sides, not disinformation itself

4 – EU policies	EU policies relating to the war, excluding sanctions
5 – Justification	Reasons to justify the war or challenging its justification
6 – Nuclear hazard	Nuclear plants in Ukraine and Russia's potential use of nuclear weapons
7 – Peace	Peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine and other talks
8 – Refugees	Refugees inside and outside Ukraine
9 – Sanctions	Sanctions against Russia and their consequences in Russia, in the sanctioning countries and on global economy at large
10 – Security	National and regional security issues, including public opinion
11 – United Nations	UN debates and decisions
12 - US policies	US and NATO policies relating to the war, excluding sanctions
13 – Other war-related	Any topics that do not fit into the categories above

Each news item was further classified according to the national perspectives or *angles* that were represented. **An angle was defined as a dominant national perspective or a non-governmental perspective.** Five angles were identified according to the political perspective of specific stakeholders:

1 – Russia	
2 – Ukraine	
3 – Home country	The country whose TV news is under scrutiny
4 – Other country	A country whose perspective is outside of those above
5 – Non-government	Representing the point of view of ordinary people, including civilians and refugees as well as military prisoners

Topics and angles were measured in terms of their duration in minutes. The coding was performed mostly by one coder in each country team according to shared instructions and recorded in Excel tables. These were sent to the team of core researchers in Finland, who double-checked the coding and the quantitative calculations. In the process of coding, Zoom meetings took place between the country teams and core researchers to ensure a common understanding of the coding. Accordingly, each set of country data was assessed and evaluated by a minimum of three researchers, except for the US teams, which used an extended coding scheme and developed their own reliability checks.

To confirm the consistency of the coding between two individual coders, the four first news bulletins in Finland were subjected to reliability testing. The coding proved to be compatible at a level of 90%. As the coding of all countries was verified and approved by the core researchers, the overall consistency was considered to be satisfactory.

The quantitative analysis was complemented by a qualitative analysis identifying specific frames, here called *narratives*, and their tones evaluated as positive, negative or neutral. A narrative refers to a mediated account of events, including their interpretation by a journalist and/or TV anchor. To clarify, let us take the topic Sanctions.

In Russian *Vremya* this topic consisted of seven key narratives presenting the Russian activities in a favorable light and the Western activities in a negative light: from state support for industry, agriculture, business and the population to the Russian counter-sanctions imposed on the West—about Russia's successful resistance in the economic struggle with the West.

In the USA, *CNN* key narratives included regular updates on US and EU sanctions which were generally neutral. Other narratives emerged with reports questioning their effectiveness, scope and speed of implementation, which were more negative, particularly regarding EU energy purchases from Russia, Sanctions specifically targeting the Russian oligarchs were reported positively. *Fox News* narratives regarding Sanctions focused on the energy sector, their effectiveness in terms of the cost to Russia and the cost to the West. Another key narrative was criticism of US President Biden claiming his sanctions were not strong enough or imposed too late.

In China, *CCTV* carried six stories on the topic of Sanctions focusing on three issues: what sanctions are, the negative impact of sanctions and the views against sanctions. Five out of six narratives were reported at least partially from the Russia angle by quoting either Putin or Russian government agencies.

In the South African *SABC News*, 47% of the topic of sanctions was reported mainly from the other country angle, effectively from the perspective of Western institutions and countries. The topic developed along two broad narratives: the first on Western countries and institutions imposing sanctions on Russia and its people; the second pertained to President Putin's reaction to sanctions imposed by the West.

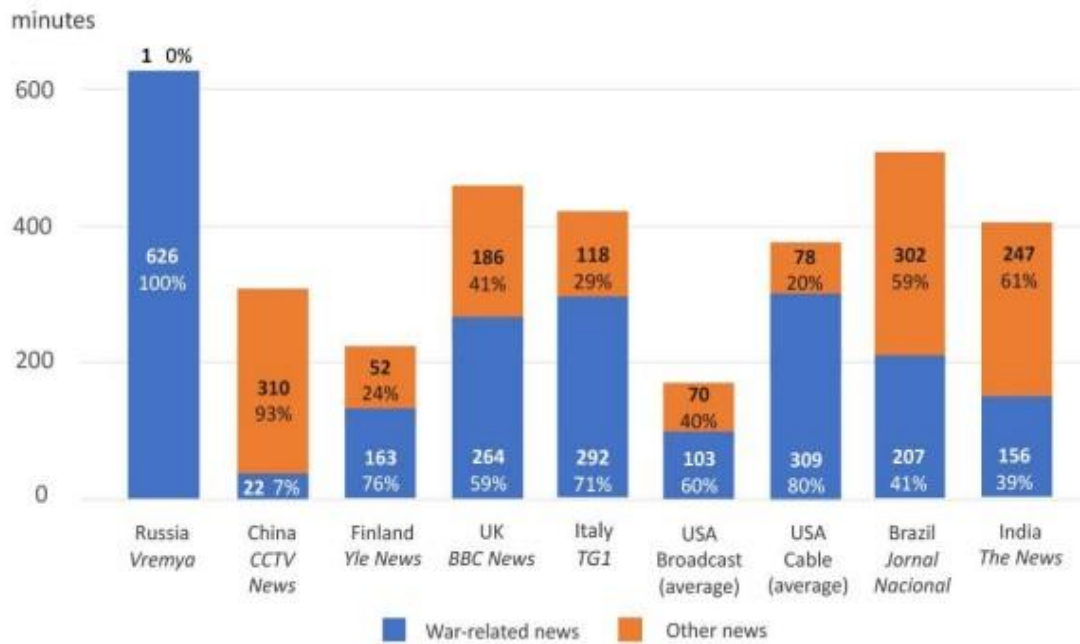
A comprehensive report of the project, including extensive accounts from the nine countries involved, is available as an open access publication (Nordenstreng, 2023).

### **Overall coverage**

The overall volume of the main news bulletins in the countries included, except South Africa, is shown graphically in Figure 1. *War-related news* refers to the total number of minutes of news items dealing with any topics relating to the war in the news bulletins across the ten sample days. *Other news* refers to the rest of the bulletins, excluding regular weather forecasts and sports reports. The US data are averages of bulletins on three broadcast networks and two cable networks. The order of countries/bulletins



follows their entry to the project as noted above. South Africa is not shown here but included below in the analysis of war-related news.



**Figure 1. Total minutes of war-related and other news, with respective percentages, in the bulletins on the ten sample days in the countries included.**

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

The share of war-related news is highest in Russia: 99.7 per cent, leaving practically zero per cent for other news. Only one out of about 627 minutes was not related to the

war—a story on 44 billion rubles being allocated by the government to construct new schools. This is probably the only case in history that TV news anywhere has been so heavily and for so long a period concentrated on a single theme. It demonstrates how all-pervasive has been the Russian attention on the “special operation”—not only military but also economic and not least cultural-informational.

Going from overall volumes to actual news content, Table 1 presents the percentages of 13 war-related news topics, based on their numbers of minutes on the ten days scrutinized for each country.

*Table 1. Percentages of War-related Topics Based on Their Duration in Each Country Bulletin (in South Africa Several Bulletins on the 24-hour News Channel) Throughout the Sample Days.*

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

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

Closer scrutiny of the topics and their contents is provided in separate country reports. They follow a standard format of quantitative and qualitative analysis.

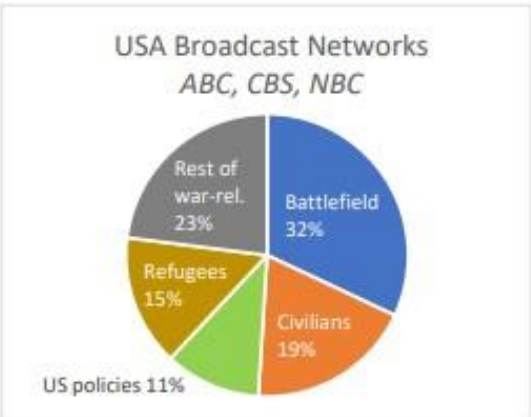
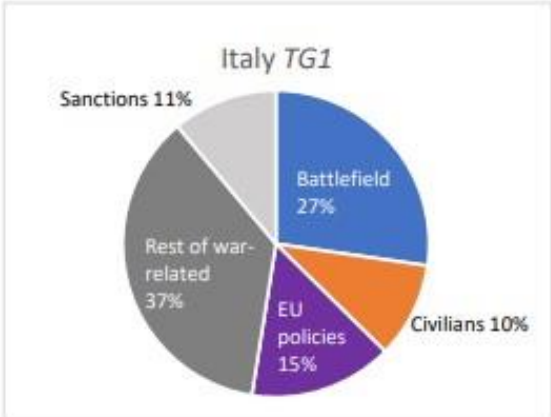
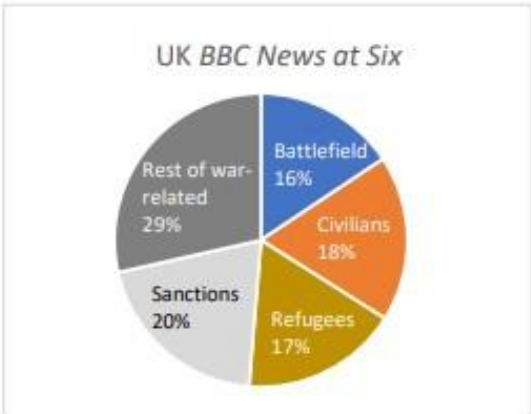
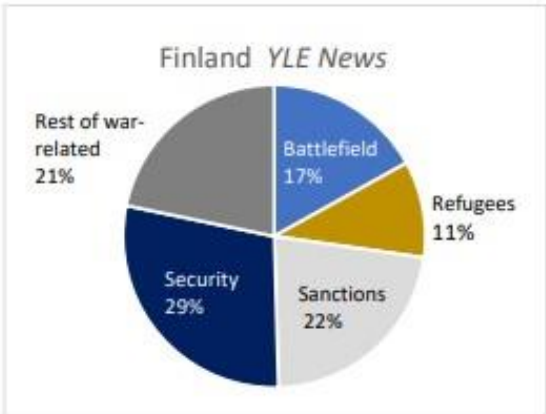
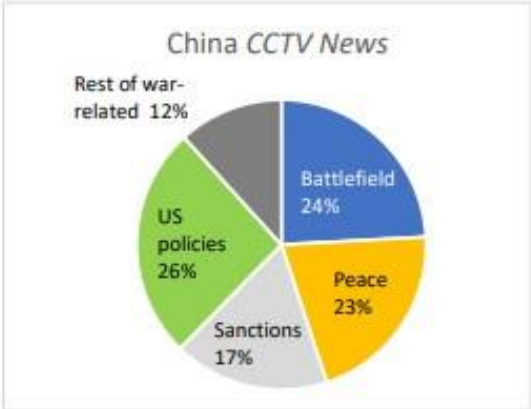
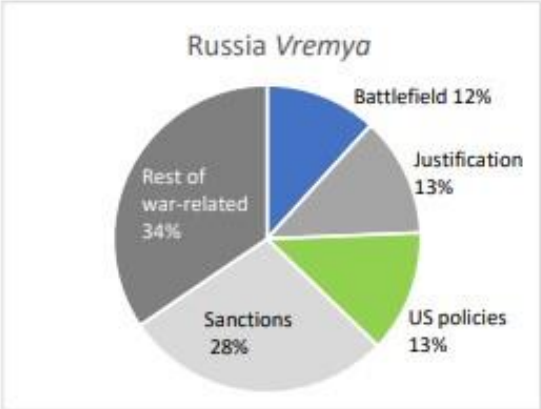
### Comparisons

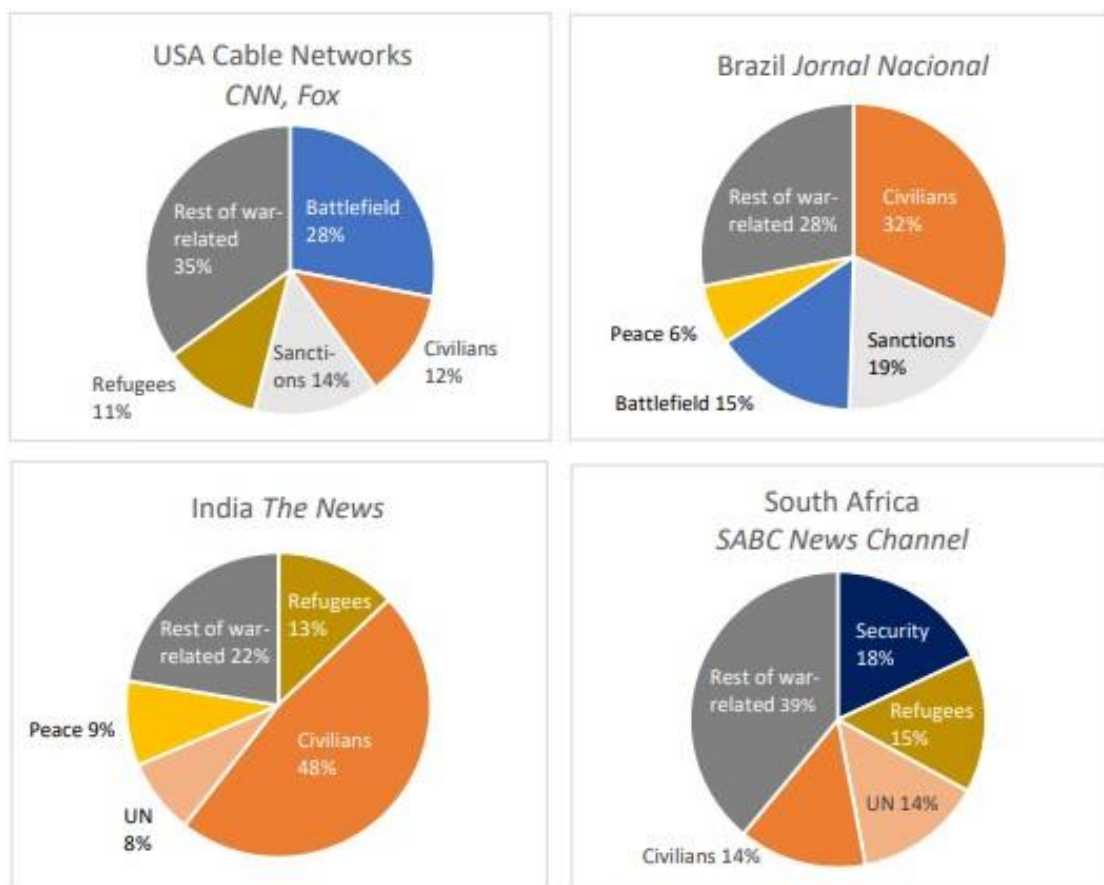
The results of the country reports are summarized here regarding the topics, angles and key narratives of the war coverage in the news bulletins analyzed on the sample days. Finally, the validity of the results will be discussed and proposals for further research presented.

First, however, we should note how the attention paid to war-related television news differed between the countries included this study. While in Russia the coverage was focused exclusively on the war—albeit without calling it a war—Figure 1 above shows that in the Western countries over half of the news time was devoted to the war: from 80% of the US Cable coverage to 59% of the BBC coverage. On the other hand, the BRICS countries, apart from Russia, devoted less than half of the news time to the war—and least of all in China, just 7%.

### *Topics*

The 13 topics were to be found in each of the ten news bulletins as shown in Table 1 above. Figure 2 below highlights the four main topics in each country, in addition to the rest of the war-related topics, according to the amount of time devoted to them throughout the ten sample days.





**Figure 2. Percentages of main war-related topics based on minutes in each bulletin (in South Africa in a number of bulletins on the News Channel).**

The most common topic in the bulletins analyzed was understandably Battlefield, absent from the four main topics only in India and South Africa. Almost equally common topic was Sanctions, not among the four main topics in the US broadcast networks, India and South Africa. Those were economic sanctions imposed against Russia by the EU and the USA—*Vremya* presenting their impact mainly as an opportunity to enhance the domestic economy, while Russia’s counter-sanctions were a retaliatory measure to those Western countries which supported the EU and US sanctions. Civilians were given prominence in all countries except Russia, China and Finland. Refugees had notable coverage in Finland, the UK, both US networks, India and South Africa. Peace was

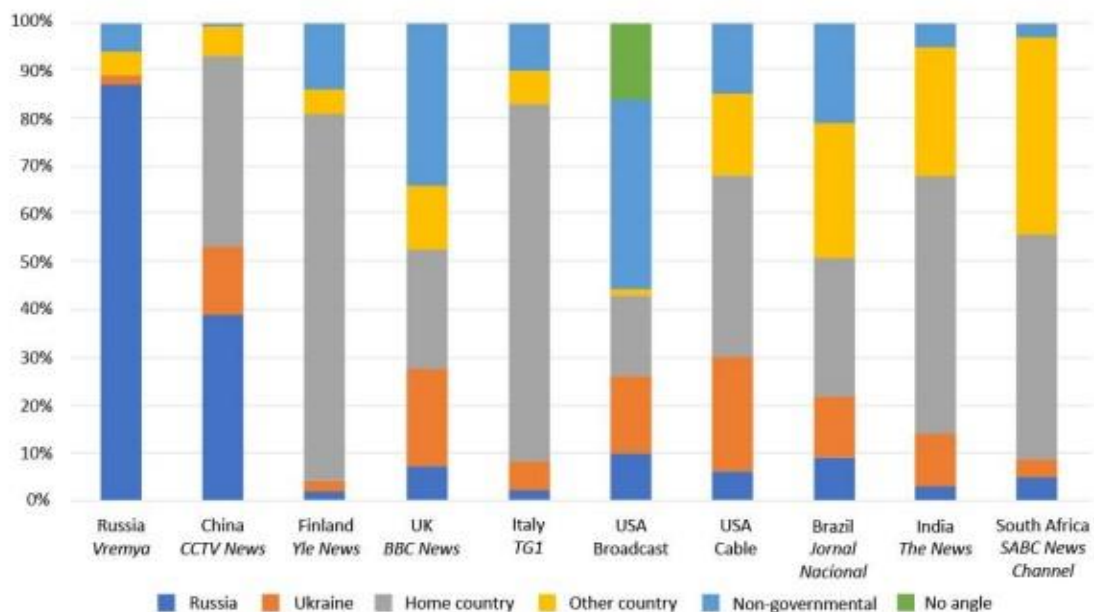
among the four main topics in Brazil, China and India, while the UN was accorded the same status only in India and South Africa. US policies was notable in Russia, China and the US broadcasts. Security had prominence only in Finland and South Africa; EU policies only in Italy.

This is a rough overall picture of the bulletins. The actual content of their war coverage requires an in-depth look at the news, which is attempted below in terms of angles and narratives.

### *Angles*

Angles in coverage studies like the present one is a somewhat fluid concept, occasionally open to interpretation. However, double checking between coders and teams showed that the five categories used were sufficiently consistent as indicators of general orientations.

The shares of angles in each county/bulletin are presented in Figure 3.



***Figure 3. Percentage of the angles in each country based on minutes of war-related news.***

The Russia angle was marginal in all countries except in China and naturally in Russia. The Home country angle dominated in all countries except the UK (25%), the US broadcast (17%) and cable (21%) networks and Brazil (29%). The Non-governmental angle was dominant in the UK (34%) and the US broadcasts (40%). The Ukraine angle was prominent alongside the other angles in the UK (20%) and US cable (28%). However, the Ukraine angle was presented at least twice as much as the Russia angle in all other countries except China, Finland, Brazil and South Africa.

In terms of political orientation, Russia was referred to in an overwhelmingly negative tone by other countries except China and to some extent by South Africa. The *CCTV News* kept its reporting tone neutral, in line with the Chinese government's position.

***Narratives***

Comparing narratives between countries shows they were far from uniform. However, the first bulletin of 24 February already suggested a clear difference in the coverage between the Western countries and the BRICS countries (apart from the special case of Russia). Firstly, the tone of the news in the Western bulletins was quite emotive, whereas the tone on the BRICS channels was decidedly dispassionate. Secondly, the Western bulletins typically presented the war in terms of military activities and national politics, while the BRICS countries focused more on explanations and background information.

The key narratives show that the coverage was largely built on antagonistic grounds, depending on the country and its attitude towards the Russian invasion. Here we only summarize the narratives in the four main topics, leaving the details to the country reports.

In the *Battlefield* coverage China was the only country to adopt a balanced approach to covering the war in a tone that was neutral to the warring sides. Russia praised its own military progress at the front. The Western countries prioritized the Ukrainian view in



military narratives, using a positive tone for Ukraine and a negative tone for Russia. Most of the countries sided with Ukraine against Russia, demonstrating how it was impossible to be neutral when covering military events. Television news had clearly become part of the information war between Russia and the rest, with the exception of China and South Africa.

In the *Sanctions* narratives there was a clear difference between the term “sanctions” in Russia and Western countries and a different approach to the policy of sanctions in the West and the BRICS countries. In Russia, sanctions were seen as an instrument of the West's economic war against Russia. In response, Russia imposed counter-sanctions against the West. As Western sanctions escalated as of mid-April, this topic became the most important one on the news agenda of *Vremya*, along with the topic of US policies, indicating that Washington, not Kyiv, was perceived as Russia's real adversary. In Western countries, by contrast, sanctions were seen as a politically necessary and proportionate response to Russia's unjustified aggression, agreed between the Western allies. The BRICS countries refrained from joining Western sanctions against Russia. Brazil and South Africa assumed the role of neutral observers in their coverage of the sanctions, China reported on the negative effects of sanctions on the economy and people's lives and called for them to be lifted, while India adopted a negative tone towards Russia in its coverage of Western sanctions.

In covering *Civilians and Refugees*, one should note the difference in the definition of civilians in Russia and other countries. In Russia, the news was about those civilians, their situation and suffering, who were oriented towards Russia and fled from the fighting to Russia. In the other countries except China, the news was about civilians and refugees fleeing to Europe from Ukraine. In India, the news paid a lot of attention to Indian students, their evacuation from Ukraine and their repatriation. There was only one story in China about Russia's efforts to help deal with the humanitarian crisis in Kyiv. That is, all countries took a politically selective approach to reaching civilians and refugees, distinguishing between “us” and “them.” This indicates that the war spread not

only territorially, informationally and economically, but also psychologically, not recognizing the “other.”

*Peace* was one of the most important topics in the BRICS countries but not at all in the Western countries. In Russia, the topic developed along with the narratives of peace negotiations and political decisions, international visits by senior officials and reports on the restoration of a peaceful life. In China, the topic itself was a key focus of the Chinese government’s declared policy; as in the coverage of Battlefield, this topic maintained a balance by sharing perspectives from both the Russia and the Ukraine angle and keeping a neutral tone with no recriminations against either side. The other BRICS countries, Brazil, India and South Africa, presented their narratives mainly from the Home country perspective and kept a balance between the Ukraine and Russia angles. The Western countries—Finland, the UK, Italy and the USA—paid some attention, for example, to the early ceasefire negotiations between Russia and Ukraine but overall, the coverage of this was minimal. Obviously, the Western countries were involved in the war politically and economically, providing military aid for Ukraine, and thus not directly furthering peace, whereas the BRICS countries were more observers and detached from the war and therefore focused on peace and negotiation.

## **Conclusions**

A comparative analysis of the news agenda of the main national TV channels in nine countries reveals a significant difference in the structure and quality of coverage of the war – in general and between Western countries and BRICS countries in particular.

The first difference lies in the selective type of journalism of the country's television channel. The news bulletins in our study show that all countries except China have developed their respective war journalism to varying degrees since the Russian invasion on 24 February 2022. Russia immediately adopted a total war approach and the countries of the West reacted promptly to this, embarking on an information war with Russia and becoming vicarious participants in the war with Russia.

Since Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge (1965), it has been clear that war journalism uses military language, and overemphasizes the visible effects of war, for instance, human casualties, bloodshed and material damage. It favors elite sources and adopts a superficial narrative with scant context or historical assessment (see Garcia-Perdomo, Harlow, & Brown, 2022, pp. 2-3).

In contrast, China was the only country in our sample to rely on peace journalism from the very first day of the military conflict. According to Galtung and Ruge (1965), Knightley (2000), Lee & Maslog (2005), and Nohrstedt & Ottosen (2014), peace journalism promotes conflict resolution by focusing on areas of agreement that bridge political and ideological differences, use the historical context, reveal cause and effect, include ordinary people as sources, and describe the invisible consequences of the conflict. Peace was the most influential topic in the CCTV war-related news, both in terms of duration (21%) and the number of news items (24%). Its peaceful journalism also introduced other topics of news items with balanced coverage of events presenting both sides of the conflict with a neutral approach without dramatizing the news. Importantly, peace journalism as used in this article only refers to the coverage of the war in Ukraine and no research was conducted to identify peace journalism on other topics.

The BRICS countries Brazil, India and South Africa took a middle way between a focus on war or peace, giving priority to peace journalism. Unlike in Western countries, peace was one of the most influential topics on their news agendas.

Another apparent difference between the Western countries and the BRICS countries was the extent to which they followed the propaganda model proposed by Edward Herman & Noam Chomsky (1988). The propaganda model of journalism serves the state by using government or corporate sources of information and experts to confirm the veracity of what the official sources claim to be the undisputable truth.

The Russian news was maximally produced in accordance with the propaganda model of journalism and a national government perspective—88% measured by duration. In the case of Russia and China, we are dealing with the unequivocally pro-government

journalism of state television channels as an integral part of government policy. In the Western countries the role of mainstream journalism is supposed to be independent from government and a more or less free public service, but the war coverage was found to follow official government policies and war journalism seemed to be structurally bound to the state—a soft but nevertheless systematic pro-government orientation. Accordingly, both the Western countries and the BRICS countries could be seen to follow the propaganda model—albeit in different ways. This same pattern was also discernible in the Gulf War of the early 1990s (Kellner, 1993; Nohrstedt & Ottosen, 2001; Ravi, 2005).

Among the Western countries, the national government perspective was most prominent in Finland (77%) and Italy (75%) and least prominent in the USA (17% for broadcast channels and 21% for cable channels) and the UK (25%). Of the BRICS countries, in Brazil this perspective was present in 29% of the coverage; in China it occupied 40%, in India 54% and in South Africa 47% of news time.

Considering the impact of journalism on society, the most obvious conclusion is that it was a collective sense of fear that ensured the support of the majority for the government and its decisions at this historical moment. In Russia, sociological research recorded the rallying of 80% of the population behind the leadership. In Finland, the war coverage was no doubt a decisive factor in the overwhelming support of the population for Finland to join NATO, which suddenly rose from less than 40% to over 70%. In Italy, right-wing parties proclaimed their public support for Ukraine, backed sanctions against Russia and approved the sending of weapons to Ukraine as well as accepting refugees from Ukraine (Biancalana, 2023).

## **Discussion**

Do the results of this study really present a comprehensive picture of the war in television news of these countries? And do the results apply to the coverage of the war by the rest of the mass media? How representative is the picture given by the television news bulletins of the media coverage as a whole?

Given the limitations of the empirical sample and measurement instrument, we recognize likelihood of criticism regarding *validity and generalization*. Moreover, we have to keep in mind that the reason for focusing on television news was that it typically constitutes, as stated at the opening of this Feature, the main window on the war scene having a crucial role in the process of creating and maintaining the climate of public opinion for or against the war. One may ask whether the ever-growing influence of Internet-based new media, including social media, on people – and especially on young people – has superseded the role of conventional mass media and whether it is any longer feasible to concentrate solely on television news. The sources from which people derive their knowledge and beliefs have undeniably expanded in the contemporary world. Nevertheless, television news has retained a central place in today's media ecology, both in terms of its daily consumption and its perceived trustworthiness among the viewers.

The *sampling* across time in research like this is always open to discussion; it is debatable whether the number and frequency of days is enough. In this case the ten days over the period of nearly two months proved a good compromise to reveal both changes and consistencies in the news coverage. This was confirmed by coding an extra day at the end of July in the bulletins from Russia, China and Finland.

Likewise, the *reliability* of the empirical measurement in a content analysis is always somewhat problematic, especially when approaching conceptually fluid and politically sensitive materials such as TV war coverage. Considerable interpretation was already involved in the identification of news items from the program flow and in coding the items to the 13 topic categories. Even more problematic was the coding of items to the five angles based on national perspectives. We might have done better in cross-checking between coders in different countries, but our coding instructions appeared sufficient, avoiding major queries or disputes. As noted above under Method, the inter-coder reliability of the Finnish sample proved to be at a satisfactory level.

The authors, having devoted innumerable hours to coding television news, assessing their contents and writing the country reports, came up with several *reflections* on the project and ideas for further activities. For example, the Brazilian team pointed out that

such a comparative study not only serves to reveal editorial choices and news criteria but also demonstrates differences and similarities in journalistic cultures across countries. This provides invaluable material for training professional journalists, for the curricula of journalism schools and also for mid-career extension courses. The Indian team emphasized the lessons to be learned from this kind of study for students of journalism, helping them to understand journalistic values and political affiliations in relation to global perspectives and the variations in the significance of this war in Europe and in countries farther away from it.

The US teams in both broadcast and cable noted that the war in Ukraine was covered much as they treat most issues. In the beginning, the war dominated the news because it was the most compelling international story at the time. The drama, conflict, life and death struggles, the villain, the victim attributes of the story justifiably commanded that attention. CNN was true to its reputation in war coverage by continuing to dedicate the vast majority of its news to the war throughout the research period. However, for the others, in a relatively short time the war occupied less than half of the news time, especially in broadcast networks, which returned to their news selection calculus and covered the war when it fitted that formula. Despite the war as a mega event, the television news services reverted to their conventional journalistic principles and established routines guided the coverage to side with the war frame. The US team of the cable networks also observed that while social media have contributed to another view of the war with new voices on Facebook, Instagram, etc., the ideological positioning and media-state relations are firmly situated in legacy media and their news services.

In brief, the authors are confident that the study was well worth doing and that the results identify significant trends. Nevertheless, we do not claim to have achieved definite answers but rather a promising beginning for a continuing research program with several potential avenues for further research.

The most obvious ways to *follow up on the present research* are:

First, it would be interesting to extend the sample to *include other countries*, notably a Central-Eastern European country as well as Qatar/Al Jazeera from the Middle East. If recordings of the respective bulletins can be made available for the ten sample days, the same content analysis should be repeated in these countries.

Second, as the war has continued for a year after the sampling ended, extending the sample of the currently included countries for a *longitudinal study* over this period would be worth doing, with a focus on the tense relations between Russia and the Western countries and on the new friction between political alliances both within the Western world and between Western and non-Western countries.

Third, more focus should be directed to the qualitative analysis and, with the participation of political scientists, including peace researchers, emphasizing the *perspective of international politics*. An interdisciplinary approach would ensure a thorough analysis of the implications of the Russian–Ukrainian war in the emerging new world order with an increasing role of geopolitical/military blocs such as NATO and political/economic coalitions such as BRICS.

In addition, two further ideas inspired by the present project:

The conclusions above bring to the fore *the concept of propaganda* as a central element of the framework for digesting the empirical results. This is no random reference to one of the classics but opens up promising ways to elaborate on an old concept with the new perspectives of the contemporary world. This has been done, for example, by Oliver Boyd-Barrett (2020) on the discussion around Russia's meddling in the US elections, while revisiting the notion of propaganda was introduced by Colin Sparks (2007) and recent research on the topic was presented by Göran Bolin and Risto Kunelius (2023).

Also, there is a tempting opportunity to follow up earlier initiatives for systematic *monitoring of media performance* in matters of global importance (Galtung, 1999; Nordenstreng, 2004; Ramonet, 2003). A permanent system for continuous comparative study and assessment of war and peace coverage by the media around the world would be a major undertaking still waiting to be implemented, but a pilot project focusing on

war and peace news in television could well be established as an extension of the present study. It could be based on the long-term voluntary collaboration of national research teams as, for example, in the Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS, 2023).

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