Central European Journal of Communication

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Central European Journal of Communication

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We dedicate the Spring 2022 issue of the *Central European Journal of Communication* to Professor Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska to celebrate the 40th anniversary of her scholarly career and achievements. We are grateful to Bogusława for her contribution to media systems and journalism culture scholarship in Central and Eastern Europe, alongside the scientific community-building in Poland and beyond.

Bogusława served as the President of the Polish Communication Association (2008–2013) and Editor-in-Chief of the *Central European Journal of Communication* from its early days on (2008–2019).

We thank Bogusława for her advice and lengthy support towards the fundamental values and societal mission connected with communication and media studies.

We highly appreciate her dedication and enthusiasm and wish her all the best for her Jubilee!

Iwona Hofman
PRESIDENT, THE POLISH COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION

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EDITORS, THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION

Editors' Introduction

What is this era that we all experience, from which it is impossible to hide or avoid, by simply shouting, "stop the world, I want to get off now?" Do all societal crises of the early 2020s present an ironic interpretation of the notion of dominating the liberal world, proposed in 1989 by the famous political scientist Francis Fukuyama in his essay "The End of History?". After more than three decades, Fukuyama has evidenced more recent failures and discontents of Western liberal democracy "as the final form of human government" (Fukuyama, 2022; Schuessler, 2022). Societal threats in the form of new and more advanced forms of ideological polarisation, political propaganda and media misinformation are now coupled with other turning points (Boit, Hart & Kuipers, 2017). The notion of the crisis itself has become multilayered and fragmented. Around the globe, it has been recently used concerning health, war, economy, climate change and an ongoing struggle for equality and sustainability alongside free and accountable media (Fengler et al., 2022).

February 24, 2022, marks the brutal Russian invasion of Ukraine with visions of free and responsible media in crisis communications and its public perception. In response to the war in Ukraine, we have all experienced the multiple voices and perspectives resonating in international and national politics and news agendas. The "Central European Journal of Communication" (CEJC) is a part of the whole societal ecosystem because it exists and evidences rapid changes in today's media. Hence, we make it clear; we stand for the Ukrainian citizens, media and researchers defending freedom, democracy and all the related values.

We start the Spring 2022 CEJC issue with a joint Swedish-Ukrainian study on patriotic war narration that illustrates media in light of the Crimea crisis of 2014 onwards. The study by Nina Springer, Gunnar Nygren, Andreas Widholm, and Dariya Orlova, entitled "Narrating "Our Conflict," "Their Conflict," and the "Conflict of our Ally": The Patriotic Journalism Paradigm in the Context of Swedish and Ukrainian Conflict" proves the blend of normative views vs journalistic practices in reporting from the conflict zones. Correspondingly, the following papers by Markus Kreutler et al. and Jana Rosenfeldová and Lenka Vochocová look at media reporting on migration, using the refugee crises of 2015 as a point of departure. In fact, these studies evidence a call for

more advanced methods to juxtapose media contents, media users' perspectives, and media's organizational culture and management, another potential layers for studying the crisis.

Building on Deuze's call for more humanocracy in media studies (Deuze, 2021) and transdisciplinary media-oriented research (Doudaki et al., 2022) presented in previous CEJC issues, this volume extends media challenges in the aftermath of social distancing, lockdowns and media's role and image in the times of pandemic. In line with this, Ainārs Dimants explores Latvian media editorial autonomy and newsrooms' transparency via the lenses of corporate social responsibility. Taking health and societal wellness as a point of departure, Pablo Medina et al. analyse online reputation management with the case studies of American cancer hospitals. Overall, we see an interplay between the media's organisational crises and the crises in the media contexts. Indeed, all the studies presented in this collection argue for the rebirth of fundamental values and creating responsible and accountable connections between individuals, communities, the states and societies.

In a section on Methods and Concepts, Oleksii Borysov and Olena Vasylieva look at the prerequisite of a successful dialogue between two people. The "Communicative Analysis of Dialogical Interaction: Methodology of Research" study calls for a more in-depth understanding the communications contexts and openness towards the linguistic methodologies; a subject for further discussion and empirical validation.

Going back to fundamental democratic values, the Interview with Karen Donders provides the so-called "reality check" for delivering public value by public service media (PSM) in Europe. Referencing semi-structured interviews conducted across Western, Central and Eastern European traditions, Donders argues for an understanding of societal lenses and cultural path-dependencies in analysing the PSM today. Uncovering findings from her latest scholarly book, "Public Service Media in Europe. Law, Theory, and Practice" Donders (2021) looks at external pluralism, the multiplication of truths alongside the societal acceptance of the 'of coursiveness' of the PSM capture. Karen received the 2021 "Media and Democracy Karol Jakubowicz Award" from the Polish Communication Association and Małgorzata Semil-Jakubowicz.

With this issue, we present the nominees for the Karol Jakubowicz's Award of 2022, reviews of books and reports from the "Central European Journal of Communication" related events. One of them, under the umbrella of "Enhancing Independent and Effective Media Self-Regulation in Poland" events, aims to create a cross-cultural journalism dialogue on media self-regulation in Poland.

Overall, the studies in this collection prove that the mediatization of democracy quality crisis needs to become an important context for studying media in crisis. We think the classical and recent thoughts by Fukuyama on the clash

of culture need to involve related cultural media potentials alongside the path-dependencies repeated. We hope for more humanocracy and more critical looks at the foundations of Western democracy, one of the reference points being to address the societal and media polarisation coupled with organizational crisis dimensions. We shall keep an eye on an interplay between media crises frameworks to further understand the media's and media researchers' response to crisis, adaptation and change.

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Narrating "Their War" and "Our War" – the Patriotic Journalism Paradigm in the Context of Swedish and Ukrainian Conflict Coverage

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Abstract: "Patriotic journalism," a deviation from objectivity, has become an important paradigm and well-documented phenomenon in the analysis of conflict coverage. However, studies rarely focus on the link between journalists' perceptions and narratives. We investigated how journalists from two countries, one involved in a conflict (Ukraine) and the other observing it from a distance (Sweden) relate to the objectivity norm in sourcing and narrating seven conflictive news cases in Ukraine (2017 to 2018). We found pragmatic commitment to objectivity in both countries, which was not always reflected in the content produced. For Swedish journalists, our results hint toward a value-based ally loyalty, which seems less stable than a tribe-based bond. In Ukraine, official Ukrainian perspectives were undisputedly disseminated; however, we did not find that they were generally positively laden, as one would expect for patriotic journalists. Trust in public institutions might be a deciding factor over the extent of patriotism.

Keywords: Patriotic journalism; Ukraine; Sweden; conflict coverage; reconstructive interviews.

INTRODUCTION

"Patriotic journalism" has become an increasingly important area in the study of conflict coverage, making this type of journalism a "worldwide, cross-cultural, and well-documented phenomenon" (Ginosar, 2015, p. 289). The term was coined to describe conflict journalism that departs from the objectivity norm, i.e., journalism "in which journalists—whether consciously or not—take a side in the conflict, their side, and their professional work is affected by this" (Ginosar & Cohen, 2019, p. 8). Framing and rhetorical analyses (e.g., Ginosar & Cohen, 2019; Liebes, 1992; McGlynn, 2020; Wolfsfeld, Frosh, & Awabdy, 2008), as well as studies on journalists' professional ideals and ideas behind conflict news narratives, exist (e.g., Budivska & Orlova, 2017; Hoxha & Hanitzsch, 2018). However, work on patriotic journalism rarely focuses on the link between journalists' perceptions and narrations, i.e., their sourcing and framing practices. These practices are highly challenged in conflict reporting that operates under dangerous conditions in unpredictable, rapidly evolving situations on inaccessible grounds (e.g., Andén-Papadopoulos & Pantti, 2013; Hoxha & Hanitzsch, 2018). Hoxha and Hanitzsch (2018), for instance, illustrate how in conflict news, "the selection of facts and quotes to be included and emphasized in a news account travels behind the construction of the story narrative" (p. 60). Consequently, conflict coverage cannot present an impartial picture overall (e.g., Nygren et al., 2018).

However, we "know surprisingly little about the realities journalists face on the ground and the processes of conflict news production" (Hoxha & Hanitzsch, 2018, p. 48). This paper stems from a comparative research project investigating journalistic practices in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict (before it evolved into the Russo-Ukrainian War of 2022). In applying an adaption of the "face-to-face reconstruction interview method" (Reich, 2016) we sought to find out:

RQ1: How do journalists in a country directly involved in this conflict (Ukrainian journalists) relate to professional ideals of objectivity in the sourcing and narrating of conflict news?

RQ2: How do journalists observing this conflict from a distance (Swedish journalists) relate to professional ideals of objectivity in the sourcing and narrating of conflict news?

Thus, the study used qualitative content analyses of Swedish and Ukrainian news covering conflictual events between Russia and Ukraine and interviews with the Ukrainian and Swedish journalists behind the news.

PATRIOTIC JOURNALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON CONFLICT NEWS PRODUCTION

Patriotic journalism manifests through coverage that is loyal, solidary, sympatric, and empathic with the "own" nation or ethnic community (Ginosar & Cohen, 2019, p. 4; Ginosar, 2015; Schudson, 2002). At least in times of immediate danger or grief, and before there was time for reflection, the perception of those affected is inward-looking, and journalists are no exception (Schudson, 2002; Zandberg & Neiger, 2005). As such, and depending on the perspective, patriotic journalism can be judged "as a deviation from 'professional (good) journalism,' while other models of journalism and other approaches toward objectivity might consider patriotism in journalistic coverage as a natural part of professional journalistic work" (Ginosar & Cohen, 2019, p. 4). Overall, then, it is not surprising that most of the research on patriotic journalism used to be "descriptive or normative, rather than analytical" (Ginosar 2015, p. 289).

Patriotic journalism is said to be most prominent when covering "our war" or "our news," while reporting on "their war" or "their news" comes with the personal and professional distance that makes detached observation and balancing most likely (Liebes, 1992; Nossek 2004). Whether it plays a role when the "journalists' side" is the aggressor or the victim in a conflict is not yet clearly settled (Ginosar & Cohen, 2019; Wolfsfeld et al., 2008). In addition to such "tribal patriotism," Ginosar (2015) also acknowledges "global patriotism," a stance that expresses loyalty toward "humanity and the human society as a whole" (p. 290). We would even go so far as to place an entity between: a value-based patriotism beyond one's own ethnicity/nationality, i.e., a bond of loyalty due to shared values and conflict lines.

While much empirical work focuses on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (e.g., Ginosar & Cohen, 2019; Wolfsfeld et al., 2008; Zandberg & Neiger, 2005) or 9/11 (e.g., Waisbord, 2011), recent studies also applied the concept of patriotic journalism to the context of Ukraine (Budivska & Orlova, 2017; Nygren et al., 2018). We continue on this path, aiming to advance the concept by applying it to domestic and foreign news on the pre-war conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Theoretically, Ukrainian coverage would represent "our" side of the conflict, and the Swedish coverage the detached observer position, reporting on "their conflict." However, things are, as often in the empirical world, not as binary. Russian fighter jets have entered Swedish airspace multiple times; they have also acted aggressively against Swedish signals intelligence planes. Only recently, Russian warships sailed close to Gotland in the Baltic Sea (Duxbury, 2020). In the light of these "deteriorating relations with Russia" (Simons, Manoylo & Trunov, 2019, p. 335), "Sweden's centuries long policy of neutrality/non-alignment" (p. 335) has been increasingly challenged, leading Sweden to apply for NATO membership together with Finland in May 2022 as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Sweden

is thus distant, but not completely detached, making it a particularly interesting case for investigation. With this study, we delve deeper into journalists' patriotic behavior in a "their conflict" versus "our conflict" versus what we would term the "the conflict of our ally" constellation.

Based on the available literature, it is possible to theorize how patriotic journalism would materialize in coverage through sourcing practices. Journalists experience crises as professionals *and* individuals (Ginosar, 2015). As individuals, journalists may be emotionally moved, affected, and concerned. The experience of circumstances as uncertain or out-of-control can easily shape perceptions. For instance, a known phenomenon is "tunnel vision," a state of fear causing a narrowed attention at the expense of missing out on information in the periphery. Sentiments triggered may be powerful enough to override institutionalized professional behavior, which is why journalists may, in their professional roles, rally around the flag, discard viewpoints that threaten the political consensus, follow patriotic audience demands, and thereby depart from professional standards (i.e., the objectivity norm). In the case of a crisis—specifically when time is scant and perception narrowed and inward-bound—journalistic sourcing processes cannot be expected to remain unaffected and effective. Tunnel vision might affect (1) journalists' source selection and (2) engagement with the sources, as well as (3) the presentation of their narratives (see also the set of indicators for patriotic journalism in Ginosar & Cohen, 2019), which in extreme forms may find its reflection in "media panic" (Waisbord, 2011, p. 282).

For instance, Waisbord (2011, p. 280) observes how patriotism seems to inhibit critical, investigative behavior. In addition, he notices that sources suspecting or charging "foreign parties with the [anthrax attacks after 9/11] were prominently quoted," even though "reporting showed that sources did not agree on the origins of the attacks" (p. 284). Conflict and crisis situations induce uncertainty, in which experts usually still need to learn (p. 283). Since the management of such situations lies in the hands of official sources, journalists strongly depend on the information they provide (p. 283). At this stage, journalists are also less likely to have the distance to think analytically—for this, they need time to reflect (Zandberg & Neiger, 2005). These observations fit findings on journalistic sourcing in general. Studies have shown how sources dominate the formation of the news product in the discovery phase, while reporters take over the lead in the phase of further information gathering (Brüggemann, 2013; Reich, 2006).

Sourcing depends on journalists' choices and decisions and will materialize in the content they produce. Access to these decisions requires the verbalization of thoughts, while the results can be assessed through content analyses. Therefore, we applied an adaption of the "face-to-face reconstruction interview method" (Reich, 2016) to find out how Ukrainian and Swedish journalists relate to professional ideals of objectivity in the sourcing and narrating of conflict news on Ukraine.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative content analyses investigating news cases have been fruitfully used to investigate patriotic journalism (e.g., Ginosar & Cohen, 2019; Nossek, 2004; Zandberg & Neiger, 2005). As a first methodological step, our content analysis focused on seven cases of news coverage on Ukraine in 2017–2018. The following events selected evoked conflictive narratives among sources, which technically would have allowed journalists to balance: (1) The premiere of a documentary on the Ukrainian filmmaker and writer Oleg Sentsov—sentenced to 20 years for plotting acts of terrorism—and follow-up reporting on his hunger strike; (2) Arkady Babchenko, a Russian journalist, staged his murder in Ukraine together with the Ukrainian Security Service, as announced at a press conference; (3) The coup d'état in Luhansk in late 2017; (4) The Joint Investigation Team (JIT) report on the crash of Malaysian Air Flight MH17; (5) Stories on the treatment of the Jewish population and (6) the treatment of Crimean Tatars in Ukraine, featured in Swedish news; (7) The "Kerch Strait incident," in which three Ukrainian navy vessels were captured by the Coast Guard of the Border Service of the Russian Federal Security Service as they passed through the Strait of Crimea.

We analyzed the coverage of these cases in Swedish and Ukrainian media. Our sample included 34 Swedish news pieces published in the four national daily newspapers, public service radio and TV, as well as 115 Ukrainian news pieces from two online news outlets, two major TV channels, and two daily newspapers (see annex, Table 1).

The analysis was based on questions about sources and the framing of the events. Hence, we coded sources mentioned in the articles and applied Entman's (1993, p. 52) four "framing devices" (problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, treatment recommendation) to detect narratives of a situation covered. The objectivity norm is not only about balancing but also about the separation of facts and opinions. To capture this separation in relation to balancing, we distinguished two types of "moral evaluations:" (A) A *normative evaluation* to code how the issue was assessed, i.e., whether—according to the journalist's or actor's narrations—the article's main issue was rendered in a positive light, a negative light, or without any evaluation. (B) A *political evaluation* was coded thereafter to understand whether a journalist appropriated a narrative (i.e., took a side in the conflict) or tried to balance accounts.

In a second step, we conducted 18 *guided interviews*. Building on the content analyses, we explored with the journalists the decisions behind the sourcing and balancing steps for their content (reconstructive questions), general sourcing and source-checking routines, and reflections about objectivity overall (general questions). Almost all 7 interviews in Sweden and 11 in Ukraine were

conducted with the authors of the content we analyzed and happened face-to-face in Stockholm or Kyiv (see annex, Table 2). Transcripts were analyzed using a deductive category scheme covering the areas explored by our guideline.

FINDINGS

NARRATING "THEIR CONFLICT" AND THE "CONFLICT OF OUR ALLY" – SWEDISH COVERAGE

All three Swedish news pieces, on the 'imprisonment of Oleg Sentsov', conveyed his narrative: While Russia claims Sentsov was a terrorist, he was imprisoned for political reasons—therefore, the imprisonment was unjust. Sentsov was even seen as "a symbol for Ukraine's fight against the Russian occupation—not to say a martyr." Furthermore, all articles were written in an authoritative (evaluative) style. One was published in the culture debate section, a beat in which authors' views are prominent. Another article was published in the regular news beat, where the separation of facts and opinions is considered the norm. The third one—by a Moscow correspondent—remained more balanced and gave space to the other side: According to Putin's press secretary, there was an openness to negotiate with Ukraine, but it was up to Sentsov to start this process.

For the 'Arkady Babchenko' case, we focused on 31 May 2018, the day after a press conference at the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU), at which it was announced that Babchenko's murder was staged. The narrative in the Swedish news was that the SBU, with the help of the Russian journalist, "orchestrated [his murder] to expose Russian agents who had planned to kill Babchenko" (a quote by Vasyl Hrytsak, SBU). Unlike the Sentsov case, the Ukrainian officials' and the Swedish journalists' perspective fell apart: Although some articles provide Babchenko with space for apologies ("I had no choice"), the Swedish journalists' criticism of his engagement and the methods applied dominate. The threat this action posed to the trust in democratic institutions and journalism is a common theme. Even if the articles were not as critical ("Even if the cause was good"), journalists agreed that the stakes were high: "Ukraine has (…) spent a part of their trust-capital (…) the Kremlin is sure to use the whole story as a validation that the Ukrainian government is not to be trusted." Since the focus remained on the critique of the actors involved, covering the other side was largely omitted. Exceptions were visible, however, usually with a similarly clear evaluative standard: The Russian government was not siding with the morally good either. The Foreign Minister was quoted in two articles with statements such as "it has become a trend to constantly accuse Russia before investigations have even begun." Similarly, an article disseminated a Facebook

comment by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson: "The best news is that Babchenko is alive. That this story was about achieving a propaganda effect is obvious." Expressen, a tabloid contextualized the reactions accordingly: "(…) the Kremlin can point to a fake news the whole world believed. (…) It will undoubtedly be easier for Moscow in the future to flatly deny and question everything coming from Kyiv." This angle was also supported by the quality press, i.e., *Dagens Nyheter* articles, one of which cited Swedish defense experts: "This is about discrediting Russia." We found that making the authors' names (sometimes their roles) as well as their pictures prominent seemed to serve as a strategy to frame the articles' authoritative styles if they were not explicitly labeled as commentary. Citing relevant sources such as Reporters Without Borders (the operation was a "pathetic trick") contextualized their opinions as a common, shared perspective.

Three articles were published on the 'coup d'état in Luhansk', written by two correspondents in Moscow and one reporter partnering with a Russian exile journalist. As seen previously, the articles were opinionated and authoritative. The reporters' article was published in the culture section, the other two as analysis and news. The articles represent the diverse sides engaged in the conflict, focusing on Luhansk actors (mainly Igor Plotnitskij, the head of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic; and Igor Kornet, the head of the so-called Ministry of Internal Affairs of Luhansk People's Republic). The articles' main theme was a critical discussion of the situation in the breakaway republic of Luhansk (also in connection with the separation of Donetsk) along with a critical reflection of the actors' roles. The articles outlined that this case was not only a conflict between the governments of Ukraine and Russia but also a "fight between Plotnitsky and Kornet" (which "dates back to 2014 and was about land and property"). Along these lines, the alliance between the actors in Luhansk and Russia was portrayed as an unstable one of unequal power, even though the former were portrayed as being in line respectively with Russian and Soviet Union narratives. Igor Kornet, according to one article, "accuses all of being Ukrainian spies, an example of classic Soviet rhetoric. One looks for enemies, one denigrates, discredits and undermines." One article elaborates, however, how "in the beginning more peaceful protests developed into civil war when Kyiv sent soldiers trying to suppress the independent movement, at the same time as Moscow backed the rebels with weapons and military technical know-how," a point also highlighted by another article. "The violence between separatists and the government in Kyiv has prevented a plan of peace being introduced." Thus, we saw reporting patterns similar to the Babchenko case, in which actions by both Ukrainian and Russian actors were critically assessed.

The analyzed reporting on the shooting down of 'Malaysian Air Flight MH17' was different compared to the cases discussed. While we did find a solid number

of news pieces published (seven in sum), only two were authored by correspondents. The coverage was briefer and mostly produced by "nameless" journalists. We assume that we found these differences because the cases discussed earlier circled around people, while this case represented an investigation. Central themes were the responsibility for the crash, and Russia was pointed out as having caused this incident. The short news flashes in the print outlets were relatively free of evaluations, and one of the longer pieces gave a quite substantial amount of space to the accused parti: "(…) 'Russia has not had a single new air defense missile of the brand Buk in Ukraine since the dissolution of the Soviet Union,' stated the Russian Defense Department." The TV reports, however, ranged from being somewhat to clearly more evaluative. While one correspondent's article remained to some extent balanced (though with the same "Russia denies" angle), the other followed an explicit "Russia will never admit" narrative and made a case for why Russian actors must have caused the incident. The argument ends with, "One thing is clear—there was no intention behind the shooting-down of a civilian plane that caused the death of 283 people. It was a mistake. A catastrophic mistake they will never admit." In sum, the news authors attributed high levels of trustworthiness to the investigators and findings, rendering Russian actors in a dubious light while Ukrainian actors were freed of any charge, if mentioned.

While none of the Ukrainian news outlets engaged with this topic explicitly, we found one article in Swedish news media that took up the 'situation of the Jewish population in Ukraine'. It was published in *Svenska Dagbladet* and written by two reporters. The journalists let the interviewed protagonist and main source, the president of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee UJC, set the scene and narrate: The anti-Semitic currents in society are, again, gaining momentum ("during recent years I have been forced to counteract the government's glorification of the people who took part in the mass murder of Jews"). The protagonist's everyday life experiences were not only tied to the context of Ukraine's problematic relation with Russia but also used to illustrate a Western turn to be a positive thing: "As a Ukrainian and a Jew, I want to talk about a growing economy, about what can bring Ukraine closer to the EU." Although the protagonist's narrative was not questioned, one public incident was mentioned, in which people had been shouting at him: "He is an agent of the Kremlin, Moscow is paying him, get him out of here." This critique, however, can be used to render him even more credible: The other side would not try to delegitimize him if what he has to say was irrelevant. The article was published in the news beat; therefore, the objectivity norm would have suggested hearing the other side as well. However, no comments by people and institutions that the protagonist criticizes for being anti-Semitic, such as the Ukrainian government, were included. We found that the protagonist was also not commonly cited or referred to in the Ukrainian media in general.

Google searches showed that he was frequently mentioned on some pro-Russian Ukrainian websites, such as the controversial news portal ukraina.ru, where he regularly publishes opinion pieces critical of post-Euromaidan Ukraine. Also, outlets in other countries reported on the claim of anti-Semitism and suspected this narrative of being used for propaganda (e.g., Fritz, 2019).

Swedish coverage of the 'situation of Crimean Tatars' followed a similar pattern, but with more favor toward the Ukrainian government. Two of the three stories were written by correspondents, and one was produced by a reporter. All coverage presented events in Crimea and the situation of the Tatars from a legal perspective: from international law to freedom of speech and human rights. It was unlawful for Russia to annex Crimea; Russia did not meet legal requirements for the restoration of cultural heritage, and Tatars' and dissidents' lives were at risk. Independent journalists were sued for political reasons, "(…) and non-governmental organizations, as well as independent media—such as the Crimean Tatars' own TV channel ATR—were closed down." In two stories, the journalists clearly follow the narratives of the Tatar protagonists: Russia was destroying Tatar heritage and torturing Tatars. While *Dagens Nyheter* "has tried to reach the museum's management for a comment but has not received any answer to repeated inquiries via phone and email," *Swedish Television* does not report such attempts to obtain more perspectives. The Tatar sources were clearly assessed to provide truthful information, and quoted accounts by lawyers and governments added weight to their accounts.

Mirroring our sampling strategy in the Babchenko case, we collected all stories published the day after the actual event of the so-called 'Kerch Strait incident' (on 26 November 2018). In summary, many articles covered a wide variety of perspectives and reactions to the incident, especially the longer articles (with a source range from 2 to 13 mentioned sources). We found that most articles presented both sides (even three sides, if one was to include the reactions of the Western collectives such as the EU, UN, and NATO). Most of the reports served to inform the Swedish audience about the event. They read along the lines of a news agency report: Russia placed a large merchant ship under the bridge that crosses the Strait to stop three ships from accessing the Sea of Azov from the Black Sea. A Russian tugboat rammed one of them; two crew members were hurt, and the three Ukrainian ships were seized. *Swedish Television* reports added that Ukraine's President declared martial law for 30 days. An *Expressen* article does not mention the blockade but adds that the Ukrainian fleet considers the event a "clear aggressive action" (a quote from *The Guardian*). This perception of Russia being aggressive (a quote from the Ukrainian President Porosjenko on *Swedish Television*) or provocative (a tweet by the former Swedish Prime Minister, Carl Bildt, cited by *Aftonbladet*) was advanced in other news stories. However, the *Expressen* and *Aftonbladet* articles, as well as a TV report, give credit to the fact

that the two countries accused each other of provocations. Although another Television report mentions an earlier incident that Ukraine initiated, Russia being the first-and-foremost aggressor was, if not explicitly stated, a perceivable undertone in the articles analyzed. This undertone was supported by sources, for instance, the EU and individual member states, criticizing actions by Russian actors. Russia's counter was described as being offended ("Russia is right, and the rest of the world is wrong, and (…) this is a plot by which Ukraine—supported by the US, EU and others—tries to increase the pressure to possibly introduce new sanctions") and even suspected of being a secretive sensor ("to see if Ukraine has the international support that they say and the answer to that question is, so far, that Ukraine has the support of NATO").

NARRATING "OUR CONFLICT:" UKRAINIAN COVERAGE

In total, 11 stories were devoted to *Oleg Sentsov's case* in the selected Ukrainian media—most of them short news items produced at the desk. Typically, they covered small developments such as new information about his health or progress in his case. A good example is a report by *Inter*. It consisted of five sentences and did not explain why the Ukrainian filmmaker was imprisoned in Russia. Instead, the only description by the journalist, "a political prisoner," explained everything for the Ukrainian audience. Also, this immediately indicated the position of the author and the appropriated narrative. Another story produced by *LB.ua* contained a claim that charges against Sentsov were falsified. This claim was presented in a background paragraph and not linked to a particular source. In general, Ukrainian journalists linguistically questioned the verdict and accusations of Sentsov in Russia, and doubts about the justice of Russian courts were a part of the journalists' language. Russian authorities were rarely mentioned as a source; however, if information from Russian sources was obtained, it was usually questioned or scrutinized, whereas this was not the case for information from Ukrainian sources. Despite explicit partisanship toward Sentsov, the material rarely included any direct appeal for release.

In our sample, the Arkady Babchenko case was one of the cases most extensively covered by the Ukrainian media. Most of the items provided various bits of information related to the staged murder rather than a comprehensive picture of the story, which could be explained by the rapid developments in the case. Representatives of the SBU and other Ukrainian law enforcement agencies were most often cited or referred to. A significant share of the material described the events without questioning the actors' claims. Some of the analyzed pieces were nuanced in that they contained questions about the relevance of this special operation, mostly voiced by quoted experts. For instance, a *TSN (1+1)* reporter referred to the "Babchenko casus" in one of the video stories—with the term "casus" containing connotations of dubiousness. In the same report, the journalist

softly criticized how the operation was communicated and mentioned that "Ukrainians perceived it as political self-promotion" of the Ukrainian government. It was also relatively common for the media to mention critical reactions of international actors such as OSCE, Reporters Without Borders, Pentagon officials, and others. On the whole, and consistent with the analyzed Swedish news, Ukrainian media challenged the appropriateness of the staged operation and its possible impact on the attitude toward the media. However, Ukrainian journalists mostly did not question the official version of the attempted murder and so-called "Russian trace" in hiring a contract killer to assassinate Babchenko (as announced by the SBU). The journalists did not try to dig deeper at this stage to find out what kind of evidence the police had for this trace. Such a reporting pattern was particularly typical for the newspapers and TV channels, whereas online media covered a wider variety of positions and reactions, providing more critical and challenging viewpoints. For example, *Pravda.com.ua* presented reserved and challenging reactions of several professional journalistic organizations and Western think tanks. It is also notable that no attempts to report Russian reactions to Ukraine's official version of the Russian trace were mentioned.

One of the most striking peculiarities of the coverage of the 'coup d'état in Luhansk' was a notable lack of sources. Sometimes journalists used phrases like "as it is known," "it is reported," "according to media reports," or "according to Ukrainian intelligence." In some cases, journalists referred to other Ukrainian media, which quoted anonymous sources or unnamed social media accounts. This pattern merits special attention, given that Luhansk is hardly accessible for Ukrainian journalists. It is also notable that Ukrainian media barely mentioned local separatist media. One of the reports by *Inter TV* contained video footage from Luhansk; however, there was no source for the video, and all logos were blurred. Another crucial pattern identified through the analysis of both Ukrainian and Swedish coverage concerns the wide employment of linguistic tools to delegitimize separatist-controlled territories and their leaders. One of *Inter's* journalists used numerous metaphors, among them "puppeteer in the Kremlin," "fake republics," "marionettes of the pseudo-republics," "spider derby" (for the political process in Luhansk), "green men" (for former Russian soldiers or even regular army), and "ukrop" (a slang word for a Ukrainian patriot, literally "dill"). Such a news style is typical for Ukrainian TV channels, whereas the press and online media were reserved.

In general, Ukrainian media provided comprehensive coverage of the JIT report on 'Malaysian Flight MH17'. In total, we found 26 pieces, of which 20 items were produced by the two online outlets, *LB.ua* and *Pravda.com.ua*. The online media coverage was most comprehensive since they managed to report on various angles of the news story. For instance, online media paid more attention to international reactions, that is, statements of various international

actors, including Russian officials. In contrast, TV channels and the newspaper *Segodnya* omitted the Russian position, and *Gazeta po-ukrayinsky* did not have any story on the JIT report. While *Pravda.com.ua* and *LB.ua* had several news items completely devoted to the Russian position—that is, comments by Vladimir Putin, his spokesperson, and Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs—this position was generally not found to be an essential element of news about the JIT report. If there was some reaction from the Russian side (e.g., disseminated by the international news agencies), journalists would make separate news pieces on that, but if the position was missing, it did not look like the journalists would seek it. In general, the tone of the coverage was quite neutral; journalists largely refrained from evaluative comments and focused their narrative on the official findings. However, one of the reports by *TSN (1+1)* contained the caption "Chronicle of lies," referring to official Russian versions. This video story did not precisely refer to Russia's position; however, the caption conveyed journalists' evaluation and challenged Russian actors' statements.

The 'situation of Crimean Tatars' was covered the least by Ukrainian media. We could only identify four stories during the period under investigation, all of them produced by online media. The material represented a rather routine type of news, with no major change or significant development. All four stories dealt with the violation of Crimean Tatars' rights by the Russian authorities in Crimea. Three out of four stories reposted news from *Krym.Realii* (translated as *Crimea. Reality*), a special project of *Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe*. One of the stories published by *LB.ua* was written by one of its reporters. In the three stories, every statement was based on only one source from the Tatars' community. The authors did not mention any attempt to crosscheck the provided information, leaving an impression that the voices of Crimean Tatars are considered trustworthy by default. It was also notable that Ukrainian journalists seemed unwilling to obtain information from Russian authorities, even though all analyzed stories linked reported tribulations of Crimean Tatars to Russian authorities. For example, one of the news stories on both *LB.ua* and *Pravda.com.ua* reported about two missing Tatars. The reports did not mention political activism; however, the background paragraphs contained a claim that "after Russia's annexation of Crimea, prosecution of Crimean Tatars aggravated on the peninsula," which implicitly connects the reported cases to a broader trend.

Given the emergency of the 'Kerch Strait incident' and its implications for Ukraine, most media coverage on the analyzed date was dedicated to this case. Due to the large amount of content, we had to reduce the sample for this case. Because neither *Segodnya* nor *Gazeta po-ukrayinsky* publish on Mondays (and our sample was limited to Monday, 26 November 2018), we analyzed only TV and online news. The researched media appropriated and reproduced the official Ukrainian narrative; there were no attempts to challenge the Ukrainian version

of the incident. There was some criticism of the Ukrainian president's decision to introduce martial law, but it was mostly concerning the possibility of postponing the presidential election planned for March 2019. The attack was given critical importance in the coverage, but the Russian position was scarcely present. Russian sources were mostly mentioned in cases when they were the sources of information about the wounded Ukrainian soldiers, but Ukrainian media did not adhere to the Russian version of the events. One might expect the emergence of critical stances toward the official Ukrainian narrative during later dates, while the coverage immediately after the attack was very much in line with the official framing of the incident.

SWEDISH JOURNALISTS' ASSESSMENT OF OBJECTIVITY IN SOURCING AND NARRATING

Our content analysis indicated that Swedish coverage was authoritative and opinionated, favoring the Ukrainian side when the Russian side was perceived as aggressive or morally wrong. This alliance broke when Ukrainian actors violated morals, e.g., professional (Arkady Babchenko) or humanitarian norms (e.g., anti-Semitism). In Ukraine, we found less opinion, yet a tendency to omit scrutinizing one's own position and omitting the other side. In the following, we investigate the journalists' assessments of their sourcing and narrating practices: How many sides are heard and disseminated, and how do they reflect on the separation between fact and opinion?

As a general mindset, the Swedish journalists we interviewed upheld the objectivity norm and sourcing requirements that come with it. An illustration:

> We did a very advanced trip to Ukraine: Kyiv, Odessa, and Charkov. We met a lot of people which we interviewed, from different perspectives, both Ukrainian nationalists and pro-Russian politicians. I prefer those fully objective ask-two-sides articles; this is what I usually do in Swedish journalism…. But this [article] is a sort of analysis. An opinion piece, so it should be this way. [Interviewee at *Aftonbladet*]

The Swedish journalists mentioned two key external reasons why they strive for objectivity in conflict reporting. First, they perceived objectivity as an expectation of their audience. Our interviewee at *Swedish Television* mentioned regular reactions and even death threats from "shall we say, the Putin lovers?" He reasoned:

> [S]ometimes me and my colleagues, too, become a little cowardly. And when it comes to Swedish Television, the review board is there. And when you report on Israel, you get indicted very often… you are aware that someone

is watching… Ukraine, Russia, and Venezuela are the areas where I usually get indicted because it's so polarized there. [Interviewee at *SVT*]

Sweden's increased cooperation with NATO is another area where journalists are under attack from several sides, accused of biased reporting:

> I mean, it has not affected my reporting, but attacks, Twitter attacks and things like that, suddenly you are portrayed as a CIA agent due to this polarization. Either you are a radical leftist or radical right-winger, and people say that I hate US imperialism. In these situations, you get confused: Have I failed in my own reporting because people don't understand it? [Interviewee at *Swedish Radio*]

Second, departing too much from objectivity increases the risk of becoming persona non grata. Journalists could endanger their relations and future interactions with sources but also their privileges:

> And when you do not have balance, you can assume that you end up on a Russian list somewhere. There are lists of journalists, those who sometimes write along the line, 'you who are the worst' and so on … and of course, we want to give both sides the chance to say theirs. [Interviewee at *Dagens Nyheter*]

Accordingly, this interviewee's colleague at *Dagens Nyheter* assumed that the reporting style could have been a reason why he did not manage to get an accreditation to areas controlled by separatists, while the public service broadcasters did.

In addition, limited resources and time pressure make striving for objectivity harder. One interviewee's average workload, for instance, was between 8 and 11 articles a night. In addition, in less open and transparent political systems, it was perceived as a challenge to get access to and reach trustworthy sources that could represent the different sides of a conflict:

> This is some kind of 'Kremlin-ology.' That you sit there and see the power positions from a distance, with no insights, so you must guess what has happened… And even if you would have been to Luhansk, you couldn't get the right answers from these persons. [Interviewee at *Aftonbladet*]

Apart from screening the pro-Russian or pro-Ukrainian news flow, a workaround to tap into harder-to-get information on the ground was to contact foreign correspondents. One of them was our interviewee at *Swedish Television*, who saw his role in mediating the Russian official stances, the Russian media

discourse, and the voice of "a person on the street" to the audience back home. However, he did "not have access to the presidential administration and [I] do not know the spokesman Peskov and so on, but I go for what is official and public."

Following up on that, for one of our interviewees at *Dagens Nyheter*, source problems seem to appear mainly in original or investigative reporting, while desk reporting and analyses were less challenging. The interviewed desk reporters had never talked to any of the involved actors, such as Babchenko or Pasetjnik. Our interviewee at *Expressen* even disclosed that he had not followed the case too closely. Changing the presentation mode from "fact" to analyses or "opinion" even seemed to be a way to circumvent verification requirements (Springer et al., 2022). Both factors—the dependency on correspondents and the tendency to shift the narrative mode to avoid issues with and unnecessary time investment in verification—may explain the authoritativeness of the conflict coverage we analyzed. Our interviewee at *Swedish Television* also thought it is possible for a journalist to report factually about opinions, even if sources were not always truthful in their claims. In a similar vein, our interviewee at *Expressen* said that "democrats are the ones you tend to trust, and the authoritarians are the ones you are more skeptical against." However, Swedish journalists did use untrustworthy, partisan sources, either for sourcing diverse opinions on controversial issues or as proof of how media institutions such as RT (former Russia Today) were entangled with political power and acts of propaganda.

Thus, adhering to the objectivity ideal seems to be a pragmatic decision. If objectivity is journalistic pragmatism rather than ideology, it is easy to understand why it would not be defended against all pressures. The content analyses of the minority groups' treatment suggest that the objectivity ideal recedes when an advocacy role gains importance. Such a motivation can be assumed to impact journalistic routines (e.g., Tandoc, Hellmueller & Vos, 2013; Zeng, 2018). Even for professionals, it can be tough to discard personal emotions and watch their values being neglected:

> The reason for this [article] was a bad conscience because we have not sufficiently followed what has happened in Crimea after Russia annexed… [T]he starting point is really that they have opened this bridge and that it is perceived as a stink by Crimean Tatars. So, the combination with the triumph in Russian TV media… there was very much upset among the Crimean Tatars, of course. They have quite a lot of media too. [Interviewee at *Swedish Radio*]

The same holds if a journalist had been personally threatened, as was the case for one reporter in our content analytical sample. However, our interviewee also observed that there was a shared stance in Swedish journalism:

"(…) there's a general position among many journalists that what Ukraine does is always correct because Russia is always evil. It is so black and white. But I think we must question both sides because both have their interests." One interviewee at *Dagens Nyheter* sees the same tendency of coverage negativity:

> Often, we write very negatively about Russia, and sometimes I feel can we really write yet another article? But we do write what we believe is true and worth publishing. Of course, I cannot say that I am unaffected—because you are, absolutely. I can understand that certain countries we often report about negatively, that they also perceive it negatively. I rarely report positive news. [Interviewee at *Dagens Nyheter*]

His colleague also supports the stance that no party involved can be free of charges:

> When we talk about the severe situation of 2014/15, the Ukrainians were not as skillful as the Russians, producing fake story after fake story. But the Ukrainians were notoriously discreditable when it came to the actual war… That's why we were there with teams nearly all the time… to see with our own eyes what was going on. [Interviewee at *Dagens Nyheter*]

Our interviewee at *Swedish Radio* even believes that the dissemination of cold war stereotypes about Russia is something the Russian government gladly sees in Western media—to strengthen the country's discursive power internationally;

> I don't think that it affects my way of reporting on Ukraine. I would put it differently and say that what happened in Ukraine has made us increasingly aware of something that has been going on for a long time, but no one has listened to: that Russia can say one thing but mean something else, that you cannot always be sure about what they will do. I am not writing in my reports that Russia is dangerous to us… because it is what Russia wants us to do. It is part of their relatively successful information warfare. They want to be seen as a bigger threat than they really are. It is part of their rhetoric, that they have attained a stronger position in the world. [Interviewee at *Swedish Radio*]

Finally, our content analysis, as well as the interviews, illustrated that political sources are often referred to through national metonyms such as "Moscow" or metaphors such as "Russia." While journalists see this as a standard linguistic variation, it implies a consensus within a society. It equates the acts of those in power with the broader citizenry, even though the connection between the

political and the public agenda can be very weak in authoritarian or semi-authoritarian societies. Our interviewee at *Expressen* emphasized that this practice is particularly suitable for headlines where information must be brief to attract readers: "[I]t has been like that for quite a long time… you just sort of think that your reader will understand that you are talking about the Russian government." All journalists noted that nation-states or capitols refer to governmental sources and never to members of parliament or the opposition. However, the interviewee at the news agency said that abbreviating would go against their policies and routines.

UKRAINIAN JOURNALISTS' ASSESSMENT OF OBJECTIVITY IN SOURCING AND NARRATING

As with the Swedish journalists, Ukrainian journalists generally commit to the objectivity norm: All interviewed journalists asserted that they try to balance their stories. However, as one of our Swedish interviewees described the media landscape in Ukraine was characterized by substantial diversity:

> You can find all sorts of angles and opinions in Ukrainian press and television, but there seems to be less free and more the type of journalism that, in someone's interest, is trying to throw dirt at someone who in turn tries to throw dirt… So, there are a little more of such oligarchs and self-interests that bump into each other. In Russia, there are, indeed, organizations that try to tell us in general quite well 'this is what happens.' They are not that many, and not many people watch or listen and read. [Interviewee at *Swedish Television*]

In Ukraine, TV channels are owned and controlled by oligarchs with various political stances and interests. Online media have more independent voices, and the press is in critical decline nationwide. In general, Ukrainian journalists were quite reserved in discussing how to secure balance in coverage on those issues that touch upon the interests of their media owners.

> That's a sensitive question. I can say that I work in the news program and that's different from other information programs that we have on our TV channel. But I think and I'm convinced that at TSN, we try to adhere to the standard of balance. And it usually works out well. I personally often make stories on such sensitive topics. But in my stories, I still try to get the opinion of the second part, or the third. Maybe it will not be represented as vividly, as the opinion of the first part. But still… [Interviewee at *1+1*]

In terms of editorial policies, the daily newspaper *Segodnya* seems to stand out among the analyzed media. There are stringent rules concerning the balance

and representation of the other side in their materials. One journalist there described the situation in the following way: "I was taught that there should be a balance of positions. If there is not, there would be a lawsuit. And nobody wants a lawsuit. We never give a one-sided [story]." Sometimes, the only way to get balanced news is to get balance in time:

> We should write that we called [the other side] even if we failed to get the other side's comment, to push the other side to give us a comment and to show to the reader that we have not forgotten about the other side. [Interviewee at *Ukrayins'ka Pravda*]

Our content analysis suggested that the issue of balance was most acute in cases that concerned Russian actors or relations. The journalists noted that there were no specific editorial decisions to omit Russian positions. In one case, the journalist explained the lack of Russian positions with the time pressure for the video story she had been working on. Another journalist said that Russian positions were hardly accessible: If available, they were covered, if not, journalists would not seek them. This was the same pattern we noticed for Swedish journalists (see above). Keeping up balance was especially challenging when it came to news on the occupied territories since this was hardly an accessible area for Ukrainian journalists. When information was taken from the separatist media on the ground, the source of information might be omitted, something we noticed while analyzing the Ukrainian content. We learned through the interviews that such sources were not cited because of the possible reaction from the audience: It could lead to accusations of propagating the separatist media. There could also be security concerns for the sources from the Ukrainian army or Ukrainian intelligence services.

Another interviewee freely suggested that the lack of Russian positions in some material could be the result of the individual patriotic view of particular journalists. Similarly, an interviewee at *Ukrayins'ka Pravda* explained:

> It might be a result of the situation that Russia is an aggressor, and there is an attitude that their right of reply is diminished to some extent. But this is my personal feeling. [Interviewee at *Ukrayins'ka Pravda*]

It is notable that some journalists admitted that Russian positions should be present to satisfy a standard of balance, but there was significant skepticism toward positions voiced by Russian officials or other actors representing the Russian political mainstream. For instance, the freelance reporter covering issues related to Crimean Tatars for *LB.ua* described this dilemma when covering political persecution in Crimea: "I see how they lie. In their statements, testimonies.

[Y]ou see a guy who says that everything was another way around. It's hard to provide his viewpoint as a balance."

The issue of morally improper behavior of sources brought up by Swedish journalists thus was also observed by our Ukrainian interviewees. In addition, journalists on the ground can have personal relations with sources. A freelance journalist reporting for *LB.ua* and *Inter TV* explained: "There are my sources, some of them are already like my friends. But I verify everything, because there were cases when people were lying." In general, the interviewed journalists expressed critical opinions on and general skepticism toward Ukrainian politicians and officials as sources of information. This mistrust could also be a consequence of situations when politicians used their connections with journalists to share insider information with them. Very often, this was not insider information but a so-called leak the politicians used to spread specific messages for their political purposes. One interviewee said journalists should always understand that political sources were trying to use them, and all information provided by politicians should be verified carefully. Thus, the interviewed journalists noted that there should be a critical attitude toward all sources of information by default. Nevertheless, and similar to their Israeli colleagues (Godler & Reich, 2017; Reich, 2011), Ukrainian journalists largely treat official statements as credible information. One of the *1+1* reporters noted:

> In any case, if it's an official statement of some official—that is a source of information. Even if they later reject that information, they have already published it. And they as an authority are responsible for this information. Therefore, even if this information is not true, we can say 'they said so, but then repudiated.' [Interviewee at *1+1*]

CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to investigate how journalists from a country involved in a conflict (Ukraine) and observing it from a distance (Sweden) relate to the objectivity norm in sourcing and narrating seven conflictual news cases in Ukraine (2017 to 2018).

Regarding Ukrainian journalists' work products (RQ1), we found that most of the Ukrainian material was the product of desk journalism. Unattributed statements were also common. The bulk of Ukrainian content was news, and journalists tended to avoid opinionated pieces. Instead, the coverage was mosaic-like: It was difficult to find one fully balanced story with the positions of all key actors. Moreover, some of the researched media seemed to disregard the

other side's position as an essential element of the stories—a phenomenon Liebes (1992) labeled "excising."

Swedish journalists' articles (RQ2), by contrast, were most characterizable as opinionated and authoritative. Many articles would have deserved the caption "commentary" or "analysis." Sources and their information were often woven into the journalists' narratives, so it was tough to discern whether journalists provided their own interpretations or referred to accounts of others—that is, actors with their own agendas. We found that taking a protagonist's perspective happened more often in cases that centered around a victimized person or group. The point of departure, however, differs: In the case of Sentsov, the coverage followed his narrative, while in the case of minorities (Jewish and Tatars), journalists structured the stories and made good use of protagonists that then stood prototypically for the respective situation they wanted to illuminate. Here, we saw how advocatory role perceptions materialized in the content.

On the one hand, our interviews corroborated the content analytical finding of quite opinionated Swedish conflict narratives (RQ2). On the other hand, Ukrainian journalists often worked for media owners with political interests. They were aware of the risk of being used for interests by sources and tried to avoid this with a critical perspective. However, they also might not have had access to versions from both sides, and sources in separatist areas were not trusted or possible to use openly due to audiences' attitudes. Patriotic attitudes were mentioned as well (RQ1).

We also found some common perspectives. According to our interviewees in both countries, the Russian government regularly went beyond the line of what is acceptable due to its aggression and mistreatment of values such as being truthful and humane. Russian actors were not usually approached for a comment; their statements were disseminated if available but mostly compacted and often evaluatively framed. In the Swedish coverage, Ukrainian perspectives usually received considerably more space and benefit of the doubt, as long as they adhered to these values. However, our results indicated that a value-based ally loyalty is less stable than a tribe-based bond: Mistreatment of religious minorities in an allied country, for instance, is unacceptable and breaks this figurative bond. In addition, while we could see that Ukrainian official perspectives had been undisputedly disseminated in Ukraine, we could not find that they were generally positively laden, as one would expect when patriotic journalists rally around the flag. We assume that differences in trust in public institutions could moderate the levels of patriotic behavior and, thereby, patriotic journalism. According to the World Values Survey (2017–2022) and the Israel Democracy Institute, these levels are high in Sweden and comparatively low in Ukraine. The US is somewhat in the middle, and Israel is quite divided, depending on the respective institution. This assumption would be for future studies to test.

The results also show a relation between the degree of geographical closeness to the conflict, the autonomy of a media system, and whether objectivity as a norm is followed. Contrary to what one would expect theoretically, the Swedish coverage from a distance is more opinionated in favor of Ukraine against Russia. For Ukrainian journalists, the situation is more complicated in the cases studied in this article due to different powers within the society, such as media owners, oligarchs, government, and military/security. Ukrainian journalists in the middle of the conflict tended to be closer to traditional objectivity and fact-reporting, probably as a strategy to defend their integrity against these external influences.

In the present situation of war (Spring 2022), analyses like this one might come to different results. When society unites against a common enemy, the prerequisites for journalistic objectivity, i.e., "hearing both sides," change dramatically (Nygren et al., 2018). How this materializes in the ongoing war is still to be studied.

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ANNEX

Table 1. Sample Overview (content analysis, number of articles in news outlets)

Case	News outlets (SWE)	SUM	News outlets (UKR)	SUM
1: Oleg Sentsov	2x *Dagens Nyheter (DN)* 1x *Svenska Dagbladet (SvD)*	3	4x *Ukrayins'ka Pravda* 2x *1+1* 1x *Gazeta po-ukrayinsky* 1x *Inter* 3x *LB.ua*	11
2: Arkady Babchenko[1] (1 day)	2x *Aftonbladet* 2x *Expressen* 3x *DN* 1x *SvD* 1x *Swedish Television (SVT)* 1x *News agency (TT)*	10	5x *Inter* 10x *Ukrayins'ka Pravda* 1x *Segodnya* 5x *1+1* 1x *Gazeta po-ukrayinsky* 7x *LB.ua*	29
3: Luhansk	1x *Aftonbladet* 1x *DN* 1x *SvD*	3	3x *Inter* 3x *1+1* 6x *Ukrayins'ka Pravda* 2x *Segodnya* 1x *Lb.ua*	15
4: MH17 report	1x *SvD* 1x *DN* 1x *Expressen* 2x *SVT* 1x *TT/Aftonbladet* 1x *TT/AFP*	7	3x *Inter* 10x *Ukrayins'ka Pravda* 1x *Segodnya* 2x *1+1* 10x *LB.ua*	26
5: Jewish population	1x *SvD*	1	-	0
6: Crimean Tatars	1x *SvD* 1x *DN* 1x *SVT*	3	1x *LB.ua* 2x *Ukrayins'ka Pravda* 1x *LB.ua*	4
7: Kerch[2] (1 day)	1x *DN* 1x *Aftonbladet* 1x *Expressen* 1x *SR* 2x *SVT* 1x *TT/AFP/Reuters*	7	10x *Ukrayins'ka Pravda* 5x *Inter* 5x *1+1* 10x *LB.ua*	30

We thank Emma Andersson for her assistance with the qualitative
content analysis of the Swedish material.

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1 We selected in total 29 items on Babchenko's case, although the total number of news stories was 46 in Ukrainian media. We had to reduce the sample for online media and TV channels. For online media, we selected the ten longest and densest news for each day, and for TV channels, we took the first five stories from the bulletin. We assumed (based on the theory of priming) that the first items are considered to be the most important ones for the TV-bulletins.

2 We missed two stories broadcasted by the Swedish Radio on the Kerch case due to de-publication, thus only seven of nine published stories were available for our analysis.

Table 2. Sample Overview (guided interviews)[3]

Case	Journalists (SWE)	Journalists (UKR)
Case 1	-	1x *Ukrayins'ka Pravda*
Case 2	1x *DN* 1x *Expressen* 1x *SR*	2x *Segodnya* 1x *Inter* 1x *Ukrayins'ka Pravda* 2x *1+1*
Case 3	1x *Aftonbladet*	1x *Inter*
Case 4	-	1x *Ukrayins'ka Pravda* 1x *1+1*
Case 5	-	-
Case 6	1x *DN*	1x *LB.ua*
Case 7	1x *SVT* 1x *TT*	-

3 Almost all interviews were conducted with the authors of the content we analyzed. We first contacted the most important journalists who had written several news stories in our content analytic sample. If the request was declined, we contacted additional authors of the respective media, depending on the relevance to our content analytical material. If the authors were not mentioned in the news we analyzed (*SVT, TT*), we searched the Ukraine coverage of the respective channel for relevant authors.

Migration Coverage in Europe, Russia and the United States: A comparative Analysis of Coverage in 17 countries (2015-2018)

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Abstract: Six years after the so-called 'refugee crisis' in 2015, the European Union remains divided on questions of migration and asylum policy. The issue also remains high on the agendas of the USA and Russia, two other key destination countries with immigration from Latin America and the Post-Soviet space. This article presents results from a comparative study of news coverage in 17 countries, focusing on 10 EU member states in Western and Central Eastern Europe (CEE), the USA and Russia. The intensity of coverage was remarkably different, with Hungary's and Germany's media standing out while Russian media displayed relatively low levels of coverage. Individual migrants and refugees were most visible in the two outlets from the USA. Media in CEE countries tended towards a more critical approach than media in Western Europe. However, differences between most countries' pairs of analyzed media outlets indicate a more pluralistic debate than frequently assumed.

Keywords: comparative analysis; journalism; migration; refugee; media coverage.

INTRODUCTION

The 'refugee crisis'[1] of 2015 has had a deep impact on public debates and political landscapes across and beyond Europe. Almost 2.5 million asylum-seekers submitted asylum claims in the European Union (EU) during 2015 and 2016.[2] Pictures of Syrian refugees making their way towards Europe on foot, fences erected at European borders, and boats in the Mediterranean overload with migrants and refugees, became iconic images.[3] At the same time, Russia saw migration from European and Central-Asian countries, while political discourse on migration and refugee matters in the USA during the Trump presidency was arguably even more controversial than in Europe.

However, numbers of first-time asylum applicants varied considerably across countries. The debate was particularly relevant in the EU as political leaders have continuously negotiated distribution across EU states ever since 2015. Until the outbreak of COVID-19, migration and asylum policy had dominated media agendas in European transit and destination countries alike (e.g., Haller, 2017; Krüger & Zapf-Schramm, 2016; Moore et al., 2018). The discussion had a considerable impact on election outcomes, and has shed light on a sharp divide between EU countries (Harteveld et al., 2018), arguably affected by distinct migration histories. For example, while the former colonial powers of France and the UK have decades-long experience as destination countries, Italy and Spain were, until a few years ago, also origins of migration to Northern Europe. The CEE countries have been, and still are, countries of origin for intra-EU migrants (e.g., Balabanova & Balch, 2010). At the same time, Poland hosts more than 1.3 million Ukrainian citizens (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2020). Germany's 2015 decision to accept an unlimited number of refugees – consequently, 60% of asylum-seekers in Europe in 2016 were registered in Germany (Eurostat, 2020) – needs to be interpreted in the historic context of World War II.

The 'European refugee crisis' also became a major topic in the USA, adding to increased migration from Latin America and a heated discussion on plans of a border wall and the legal status of various groups of immigrants. The USA is home to the highest absolute number of international migrants (United Nations, 2019). From 2017, Donald Trump implemented highly controversial measures to limit immigration (Schmidt, 2019). Almost simultaneously, Russia received approximately one million Ukrainian citizens after the outburst of armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine in 2014 (Bessudnov, 2016). Even before, Russia had been the world's second biggest attractor of immigrants (mainly from former Soviet republics) between 1990 and 2015 (United Nations, 2019). On the other hand, emigration of up to 2 million well-educated specialists – ascribed to authoritarian trends since 2000 – remains virtually de-thematized in Russia's public discourse (Herbst & Erofeev, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Broad comparative studies into coverage of recent migration and refugee matters are sparse. The meta-analysis of English-language research since 2000 conducted by Eberl et al. (2018) lists 78 studies, but only 9 comprise more than two countries.[4] The focus of these works includes factors shaping media coverage, but also social or political effects of that coverage (Bleich et al., 2015: 857).

MIGRATION COVERAGE IN EUROPE

Generally, research into European coverage of migration and refugee matters points to a focus on negative frames such as security issues and possible threats to receiving countries' cultures (Caviedes, 2015; Eberl et al., 2018; Esses et al., 2013), especially for migration from outside the EU (Eberl et al., 2019). In contrast to this, studies on the events of 2015 conclude that migrants (mainly refugees from Syria) received more positive coverage (Berry et al., 2015; Fotopoulos & Kaimaklioti, 2016; Lawlor & Tolley, 2017).[5] However, migration was still depicted from a European perspective with little attention to contexts, the situation in countries of origin, or individual stories (Chouliaraki et al., 2017; Ramasubramanian & Miles, 2018).

The majority of comparative studies on migration coverage in Europe focus on Western Europe (e.g., Caviedes, 2015; Chouliaraki et al., 2017; Fotopoulos & Kaimaklioti, 2016), few add media from CEE countries (e.g., Eberl et al., 2019). A comparative analysis of the media coverage of Aylan Kurdi – the little boy found drowned on the Turkish coast in 2015 – showed that the pictures received far more attention in Western European than in CEE countries (European Journalism Observatory [EJO], 2015).

MEDIA COVERAGE IN THE USA

News coverage of immigrants in the USA is largely episodic, marked by surges around important events such as elections (Mastro, 2019). The border with Mexico constitutes a predominant issue in USA newspapers, with an estimated 200 000 border news stories published from 2010 to 2014 (Davis, 2016). This coverage is characterized by sensationalist storytelling that focuses on themes like illegal immigration and organized crime, and relies heavily on official sources (Davis, 2016; see also Somaini, 2019). However, the tone changes in coverage of young immigrants who benefit from the DACA program (known as "Dreamers"): Pro-immigrant quotes appeared over four times more frequently than anti-immigrant quotes (Patler & Gonzales, 2015). Rendon et al. (2019) found that both English and Spanish-language newspapers present DACA as a sound public policy. A study of three media networks (CBS, Fox, NBC) found that reporting on Muslim refugees was predominantly negative, with terrorist activities and conflict accounting for 75 % of the coverage (Stone, 2017).

Analyzing USA and European differences in coverage of immigrants, Benson (2015) contends that American journalists emphasize emotional narratives about individual immigrants, whereas European journalists tend to put more focus on immigration as a social process. On both continents, scholars have documented the 'objectification' of immigrants by news media (Arcimaviciene & Baglama, 2018; Markowitz & Slovic, 2020; Somaini, 2019). Research suggests that USA media tend to conflate the term 'migrant' with 'refugee' (Hoewe, 2018). Finally, research also shows that USA media commonly portrayed refugees as locally situated, often totally divorced from the circumstance and context which led them to flee their homeland (Hickerson & Dunsmore, 2016).

MIGRATION COVERAGE IN RUSSIA

Media in Russia have been criticized as reinforcers of natives' alienation from and hostility towards numerous groups of migrants mainly from former Soviet republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus, by highlighting the nationality of criminals in case of crimes committed by migrants (Malashenko, 2011). Hutchings and Tolz (2015) have found that migration-related TV content follows indecisive and controversial state policies in the area of migration. Research on social media discussions around anti-immigrant bashings in 2013 has shown an institutional vacuum in protecting immigrants' interests in online discourse (Bodrunova et al., 2017). Instead, conflicts related to immigrants have provoked radicalized discussions (Bodrunova et al., 2019). Xenophobic attitudes towards labor migrants have increased in recent years (Levada Center, 2019), whereas migrants from Ukraine are being perceived more neutrally (Bessudnov, 2016: 56).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the research results summarized above, the following research questions guided our analysis:

RQ1: How visible is migration as a topic, and how does the quantity of coverage develop over time?

RQ2: Can the coverage be differentiated by geographical region and (if applicable) the political position of news outlets in terms of…

a) … topics covered?

b) … actor selection?

c) … portrayal of migrants and refugees?

d) … opinions on migration represented in coverage?

METHODOLOGY

A structured, comparative content analysis was conducted to analyze quantity, focus, themes, actors and tone of coverage. The sample involves two agenda-setting print or online media outlets in each of twelve countries: In addition to the USA and Russia, the 10 EU member states are the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the UK[6] (n=1 889). The original dataset also includes data for two outlets each in Albania, Belarus, Ukraine, and Switzerland, as well as one online outlet for Greece (for all 17 countries n=2 417 articles). While some insights into coverage from these latter 5 countries will be included, the paper focuses on the initial 12 countries.[7] National partners selected print or online media with a high impact on the national news agenda and public debate, striving for the largest-possible functional equivalence within media systems in our sample. In many Western European countries, this role is still occupied by leading quality newspapers; in many CEE countries, online portals have taken over this function. Where media outlets have an identifiable political stance, partners considered media with contrasting positions; for Russia, this duality was represented through inclusion of government newspaper *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* and privately owned *Kommersant*.

PRE-STUDY: VISIBILITY OF THE TOPIC OVER TIME

While a database-driven sampling approach may have allowed the gathering of data for longer periods of time, full and comparable database access was not available for all media. The consortium decided to pick six natural weeks: Three between August 2015 and January 2016, and three between October 2017 and March 2018 as a more recent period for comparison. The weeks were identified during a pre-study conducted in selected media from 8 of the sampled 12 countries. In each half year, the objective was to identify weeks with a particular increase of coverage as compared to the previous one.

The pre-study included outlets from the EU and beyond: Germany (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*), France (*Le Monde*), Greece (*Efimerida ton Syntakton online*), Spain (*El País*), Czech Republic (*MF Dnes*), the UK (*The Daily Telegraph*), as well as Russia (*Rossiyskaya Gazeta*) and the USA (*New York Times*).[8] Most of the analyzed outlets showed significant increases in coverage during the same weeks. Converse trends, i.e., outlets producing less coverage when the general trend was to report more, were very rare. Thus, we may conclude that the six selected study weeks indeed represent moments of increased media interest, with *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* in the week in January 2016 being the only exception.

Figure 1. Quantitative development of coverage on migrants and refugees August 2015 – January 2016 (total: 3 187 articles)
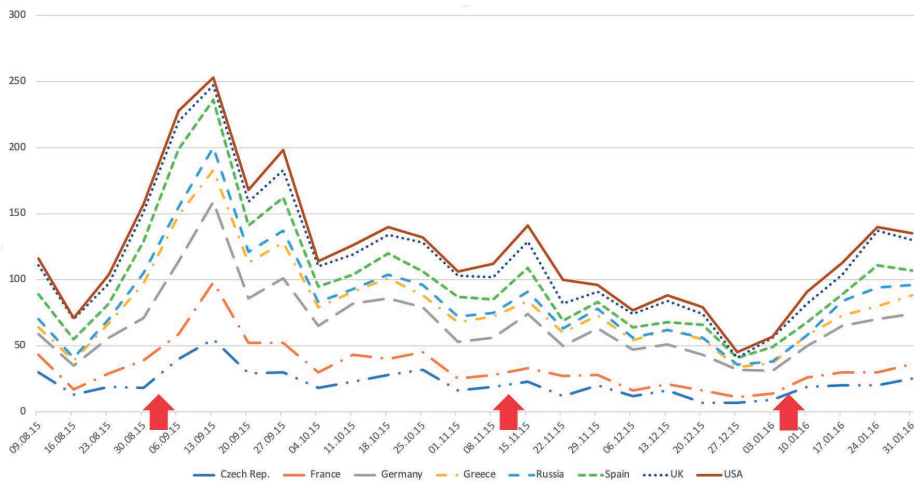
Figure 2. Quantitative development of coverage on migrants and
refugees October 2017 – March 2018) (total: 1 245 articles)
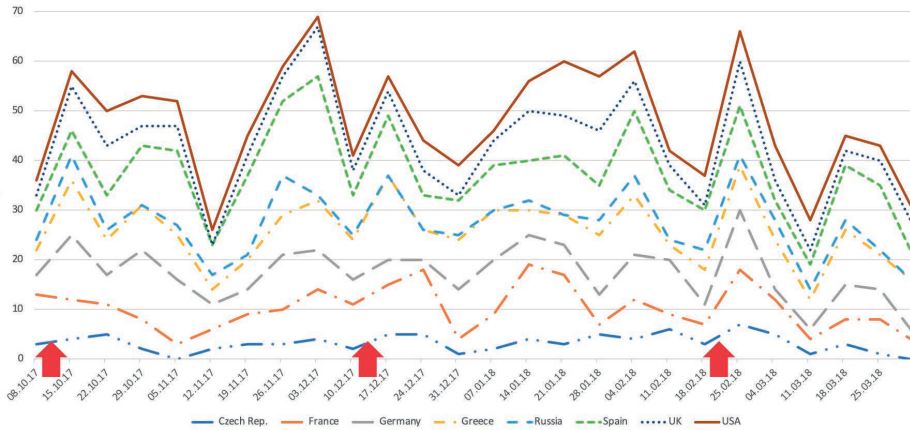
Source: Authors. Note to Figures 1 & 2: Accumulated article numbers.
In total, 4 432 articles were identified in the eight outlets of the pre-study.
Selected weeks for the main study are marked by arrows

A comparison between the study periods of 2015/16 (Figure 1) and 2017/18 (Figure 2) reveals a decrease in coverage over time. While migrants and refugees clearly dominate media agendas across countries in summer 2015, coverage remains at a high level in autumn 2015 (more than 100 articles per week in the outlets of the pre-study). However, coverage already decreases in late 2015, and intensifies again only in January 2016, most likely triggered by the events of New Year's Eve in several German cities. In contrast, less than half as many articles were published in the 2017/2018 study period.

The following weeks were selected on the basis of the pre-study: August 31—September 6, 2015; November 9—November 15, 2015; January 4—January 10, 2016; October 9—October 15, 2017; December 11—December 17, 2017; February 19—February 25, 2018. National partners collected relevant articles for these six selected weeks, using online databases as well as non-searchable archives.

SAMPLING AND CONTENT ANALYSIS

Table 1 provides an overview of the outlets selected, channel of distribution (print/online), and editorial line. It also shows article numbers found and analyzed. The large variety in article numbers required a further reduction of the number of articles for in-depth analysis in media with particularly intensive coverage. For outlets with up to 100 articles (n=13), all articles were coded. For outlets with more than 100 articles in total (n=11), 100 articles were randomly selected. This allowed both limiting the workload for partners as well as avoiding

an over-representation of few outlets with very many articles. The sample for the final coding process in the 24 outlets comprised 1 889 articles.

Table 1. Pairings of media outlets and the quantity of analyzed articles for each of the 12 sampled countries; plus the aggregate of the number of first-time asylum applications per country for 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 (EU countries; Eurostat, 2020).

Country	First-time asylum applications 2015–2018	Media Outlet	Print/ Online	Political Leaning	Articles Total	Articles Sample
Czech Rep.	4 925	*aktualne.cz*	Online	no political affiliation	106	100
		MF Dnes	Print	moderately conservative	102	100
France	365 905	*Le Figaro*	Print	conservative	74	74
		Le Monde	Print	center-left	59	59
Germany	1 126 595	*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*	Print	center-right	303	100
		Süddeutsche Zeitung	Print	center-left	703	100
Hungary	206 400	*Index.hu*	Online	no political affiliation	1 282	100
		Magyar Hírlap online	Online	right	301	100
Italy	383 965	*Corriere della Sera*	Print	center	56	56
		La Stampa	Print	center-left	35	35
Poland	25 445	*Gazeta Wyborcza*	Print	center-left	58	58
		Rzeczpospolita	Print	center-right	40	40
Portugal	3 835	*expresso.pt*	Online	Portugal's papers traditionally avoid a political profile	89	89
		público.pt	Online		80	80
Romania	9 725	*adevarul.ro*	Online	center-right	137	100
		hotnews.ro	Online	center-right	63	63
Russia[9]		*Rossiyskaya Gazeta*	Print	official government newspaper	51	51
		Kommersant	Print	considered independent	26	26
Spain[10]	115 935	*El País*	Print/ Online	center-left	113	100
		La Razón	Print/ Online	conservative	103	100
UK	151 715	*Daily Telegraph*	Print	conservative	68	68
		Guardian	Print	center-left	300	100
USA[11]		*New York Times*	Print	center-left	216	100
		Washington Post	Print	center-left	90	90
Total					4 455	1 889

Source: Authors

The consortium followed a "project-language procedure" (Rössler, 2012: 463) with English as the working language for coordination, codebook development and testing. Partners then worked with material in their national languages. Thus, the project strived to both establish shared standards for all steps in the research process and the utilization of specific expertise of partners on political contexts, media systems, and journalistic cultures (Wilke, 2008: 243-4). This was achieved by closely involving all partners in every research step. The codebook was jointly developed and pre-tested with material from the study countries as well as with articles in English. After thorough revision, the final draft was tested for intercoder reliability.[12]

FINDINGS

QUANTITY OF COVERAGE (RQ1)

Before limiting the number of articles for further analysis, a total of 4 455 articles focusing on cross-border migrants and refugees was retrieved: 1 983 of these articles appeared in the Western EU countries, 2 089 articles in CEE countries. While attention was high in the USA (306 articles), coverage in Russia (77 articles) was limited. Germany and Hungary – the two countries with highest numbers of first-time asylum applicants in 2015 – were standing out (Figure 3): The two Hungarian online outlets published 1 583,[13] the two German newspapers 1 006 articles. Additionally, outlets targeting an international readership published more articles: *The Guardian* accounts for 300 of the 368 British articles, *The New York Times* (USA) published more articles (216) than *The Washington Post* (90).[14]

Over time, article numbers in most outlets developed similarly to trends seen in the pre-study (Table 2) with 39.4 % of all articles appearing in the first study week, while 74% did so in the three study weeks in 2015/2016. These trends are most pronounced across Western and Eastern EU countries, and to some extent in the USA, while the Russian media seem to follow a different pattern with peak coverage in November 2015 (33.8 % of their articles) and no coverage in the study week in January 2016.

Figure 3. Number of articles published by each media outlet during the six study weeks
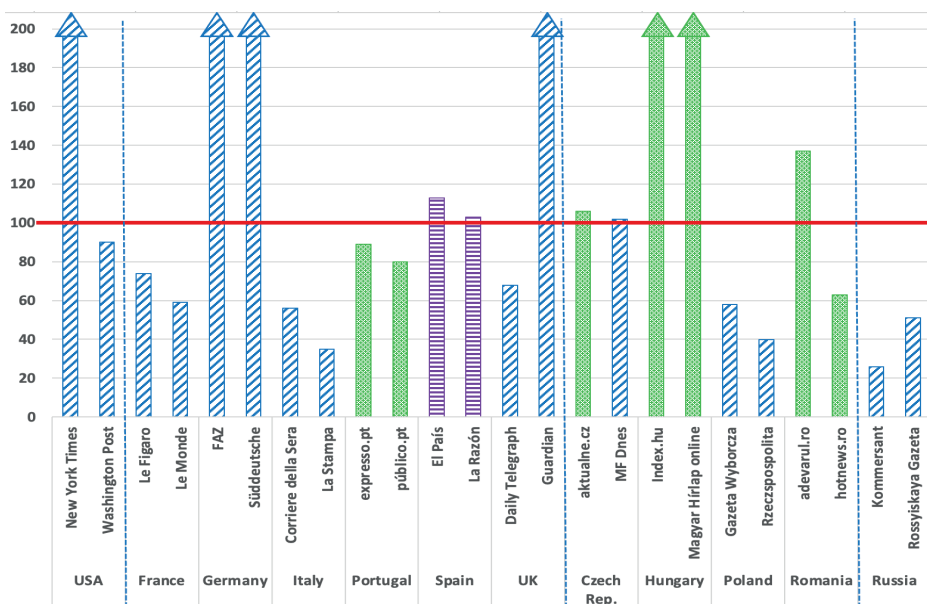
Key: FAZ – Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

Striped = print media, dotted = online media, lines = combination of print and online
(Spain). For outlets with more than 100 articles, 100 articles were random-selected

Source: Authors

Table 2. Coverage Over Time (N=4455, n=1889)

Study Week	USA	Western EU	Eastern EU	Russia	Total
Aug/Sep 2015	47	374	309	14	744
	24.7 %	38.9 %	46.7 %	18.2 %	39.4 %
November 2015	40	204	110	26	380
	21.1 %	21.2 %	16.6 %	33.8 %	20.1 %
January 2016	32	133	109	0	274
	16.8 %	13.8 %	16.5 %	0.0 %	14.5 %
October 2017	31	76	31	15	153
	16.3 %	7.9 %	4.7 %	19.5 %	8.1 %
December 2017	19	83	49	12	163
	10.0 %	8.6 %	7.4 %	15.6 %	8.6 %
February 2018	21	91	53	10	175
	11.1 %	9.5 %	8.0 %	13.0 %	9.3 %
Total	190	961	661	77	1 889

Source: Authors

MAIN TOPICS (RQ2A)

Political debates are the focus of almost half of the articles found (Table 3). By contrast, only 17 % of articles cover the situation of migrants and refugees (e.g., on transit routes, in camps, etc.), 7 % cover aid initiatives, and 4 % individual stories. Also, background stories (on "economic aspects", "statistics and background", "culture and religion"), which would help to contextualize information, have a rather low combined share of 10 %. The Russian coverage is particularly limited to political debates and to a lesser degree to articles on problems with migrants: These two topics alone shape almost two thirds of the Russian coverage.

Table 3. Main topics per region (N=4455, n=1889)

	USA	Western EU	Eastern EU	Russia	Total
Political Debates	100	449	267	40	856
	52.60 %	46.70 %	40.40 %	51.90 %	45.30 %
Economic Aspects	2	31	21	4	58
	1.10 %	3.20 %	3.20 %	5.20 %	3.10 %
Cultural & Religious	1	52	16	5	74
	0.50 %	5.40 %	2.40 %	6.50 %	3.90 %
Situation of Migrants	29	145	134	5	313
	15.30 %	15.10 %	20.30 %	6.50 %	16.60 %
Personal Stories	13	39	17	2	71
	6.80 %	4.10 %	2.60 %	2.60 %	3.80 %
Problems w/ Migrants	16	55	74	11	156
	8.40 %	5.70 %	11.20 %	14.30 %	8.30 %
Support for Migrants	9	86	36	1	132
	4.70 %	8.90 %	5.40 %	1.30 %	7.00 %
Reactions vs. Migrants	17	25	45	3	90
	8.90 %	2.60 %	6.80 %	3.90 %	4.80 %
Statistics/Background	3	33	26	3	65
	1.60 %	3.40 %	3.90 %	3.90 %	3.40 %
Other	0	46	25	3	74
	0.00%	4.80 %	3.80 %	3.90 %	3.90 %
Total	190	961	661	77	1 889

Source: Authors

Comparing key topic areas over the six study weeks reveals remarkably different patterns of coverage between Western European and CEE countries. The overall shares of articles focusing on politics and context information were similar, but CEE media report notably more on 'problems with migrants' and 'protests against migrants'. Analyzed over time, the share of articles on 'situation & help'

(i.e., situation, personal stories, and support categories of Table 3 combined) was highest both in Western (36.1 %) and Eastern (37.5 %) EU media in the first study week, but with a sharp ensuing drop in CEE media (Table 4). The share of articles on 'problems & protests' (i.e., problems with & reactions against migrants of Table 3 combined) in Western EU coverage is continuously lower than in CEE countries, and in five out of six weeks also lower than in Russian and USA media. In the USA, there is a general shift of attention towards the situation of and support for migrants in the last two study weeks. This shift is mainly at the expense of the political realm. For example, American newspapers dedicated more than 60 % of their coverage to political debates in both weeks in 2015 and October 2017 (and 43.8 % in January 2016, always considerably more than European media). By contrast, the share of politics dropped to 26.3 and 38.1 % in the last two study weeks, making way for a stronger focus on situation and help.

Table 4. Share of articles on 'situation & help' and 'problems & protest', as percentages of total coverage (762 articles in these categories, percentages refer to all articles)

	Situation & Help				Problems & Protest			
	USA	Western EU	Eastern EU	Russia	USA	Western EU	Eastern EU	Russia
Aug / Sep 2015	25.5	36.1	37.5	0.0	10.6	3.5	7.1	14.3
Nov 2015	20.0	22.5	25.5	15.4	12.5	8.8	17.3	23.1
Jan 2016	15.6	22.6	11.9	-	37.5	21.8	54.1	-
Oct 2017	29.0	27.6	16.1	20.0	6.5	7.9	12.9	20.0
Dec 2017	36.8	26.5	28.6	0.0	31.6	7.2	12.2	16.7
Feb 2018	47.6	17.6	20.8	10.0	14.3	8.8	17.0	10.0
Total	26.8	28.1	28.3	10.4	17.3	8.3	18.0	18.2

Source: Authors

The most remarkable changes happen in the study week in January 2016, right after the events of New Year's Eve in Germany. Coverage of problems and protests rose steeply, with 21.8 % of all articles in Western EU, as much as 54.1 % in Eastern EU media, and 37.5 % in USA media.[15]

This first week of January 2016 also illustrates a double division not only along regions, but also political profiles of media in the EU. While the shift towards problems and protests was more pronounced in media of Eastern member states, adding political stance (where applicable, see Table 1Table 1) provides a more nuanced picture: In contrast to conservative media, left/liberal media across Europe reported more than three times more on the situation of and help for refugees even during this particular study week than right/conservative outlets (Table 5).

Looking at coverage of problems and protests in all study weeks, the topic occupied substantially more room in conservative media across Europe, as well as in CEE countries in general: There is a continuum from "Western EU&liberal" over "Western EU&conservative" and "Eastern EU&liberal" to "Eastern EU&conservative". However, it is conservative media in Western EU states that reported the least about situation and help. Western EU liberal media published 4.9 times more articles on situation and help than on problems and protests. This rate was 1.5 in Western EU conservative/right-wing media, 2.0 in Eastern EU liberal and 1.4 in Eastern EU conservative media.

Table 5. Share of articles on 'situation & help' and 'problems & protest' by political stance of analyzed left- and right-wing outlets in the EU, as percentages of total coverage (461 articles in these categories, percentages refer to all articles)

| | Situation & Help | | | | Problems & Protest | | | |
| | Western EU | | Eastern EU | | Western EU | | Eastern EU | |
	left/lib.	r./cons.	left/lib.	r./cons.	left/lib.	r./cons.	left/lib.	r./cons.
Aug/Sep 2015	38.3	27.3	29.6	35.7	2.1	8.3	0.0	7.1
Nov 2015	24.1	15.5	27.3	22.9	10.3	10.7	9.1	18.6
Jan 2016	35.1	10.4	25.0	7.4	17.5	25.0	62.5	57.4
Oct 2017	43.8	4.0	0.0	11.1	3.1	4.0	50.0	11.1
Dec 2017	34.2	8.0	42.9	23.8	7.9	8.0	0.0	14.3
Feb 2018	28.2	10.3	0.0	20.0	2.6	10.3	33.3	20.0
Total	33.8	17.0	27.6	25.8	6.9	11.1	13.8	19.1

Source: Authors

The analysis included three news perspectives (domestic, foreign and foreign with national involvement) and the directions of migration and refugee movements covered. Generally, Eastern EU media reported mostly on migration into other European countries (72.3 %), while Western EU (35.3 %) and particularly USA media (46.8 %) focused on migration into their own countries. But there are national differences. Most notably, German and Italian newspapers covered migrant and refugee matters largely as a domestic topic (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 79 %, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 57 %; *Corriere della Sera* 64 %, *La Stampa* 40 %). In line with this domestic focus, Germany's outlets (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 65 %, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 79 % of the articles) as well as Italy's *Corriere della Sera* (76 %) mainly covered migrant and refugee movements *into their own countries*. Also *The Washington Post* (52 %) and *Kommersant* (56 %) focused on movements *into their own countries*. *The New York Times* seems to rather assume the role of a 'global chronicler', being the only outlet reporting mainly on migrants and refugee issues *on other continents* (53 %). By contrast,

most outlets in both Western and Central Eastern Europe covered migrants and refugees like remote phenomena, as movements *into other countries* on the continent. These results are especially relevant as the perspective is linked to topic selection: Articles dealing with support for migrants and refugees are more frequent in domestic (12.1 %) than in foreign coverage (5.0 %). Problems with migrants are reported more frequently in foreign (12.9 %) than in domestic coverage (6.5 %).

ACTOR SELECTION (RQ2B)

Politicians and political institutions are the main actors in 51 % of all articles.[16] Citizens and representatives of society are featured as main actors in 18.4 % of the articles, they are particularly visible in the Russian media (Table 6) and even more present in the German outlets (35 % of articles in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and 30 % in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*).

Table 6. Various actor groups in coverage from non-EU and EU-countries, the USA, and Russia; as percentages of all articles in each group of countries (N=4455, n=1889)

	USA	Western EU	Eastern EU	Russia	Total
Government	34.7	33.7	38.1	44.2	35.8
Opposition	3.7	2.9	1.8	2.6	2.6
International Organizations	5.3	10.7	8.0	7.8	9.1
Collective political terms (e.g., "the West")	4.7	0.8	3.2	1.3	2.1
Individual migrant	11.1	5.6	5.0	7.8	6.0
Small group of migrants	2.6	2.7	3.5	0.0	2.9
Large, anonymous group of migrants	22.6	18.9	20.0	3.9	19.1
Social actors, citizens, judiciary, etc.	14.2	18.7	18.2	26.0	18.4
Other	1.1	5.8	2.3	6.5	4.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Authors

About a quarter (28 %) of all articles presented migrants and refugees as the main actors. However, they are often represented as large, anonymous groups (19.1 %) rather than individuals (6.0 %) or small groups like families (2.9 %). *Magyar Hírlap* covers the topic without a single migrant or refugee as a main actor. While the statistics are relatively similar across the EU, they differ from the non-EU countries. In the USA, individual migrants and refugees are much more visible as main actors as compared to all other study countries (11.1 %

of the articles). In Russia, the overall focus on political actors and citizens took attention away from migrant actors.

REPRESENTATION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES (RQ2C)

Only 639 articles (34 %) were specific about a *country/region of origin* of migrants and refugees: In 244 articles, the actors were from Syria. 'Africa' – as a continent, without specifying a country – was mentioned in 53 articles. Other frequent origins are Myanmar (28 articles), Afghanistan and Iraq (13 articles each).

Analysis across countries reveals specific geographic patterns (Table 7). USA outlets focus almost as intensely on migrants and refugees from Latin America (33 %) as from the Middle East (32 %). The Middle East is the main focus in most Western EU countries (48 %), but migrants and refugees from Africa play a central role in Italy (57 %, *La Stampa* did not publish a single article mainly on Middle Eastern origin) and France (32 % for both African and Middle Eastern origin). Coverage in Eastern EU countries focuses on migrant and refugee flows from the Middle East without exception. European countries of origin played a considerable role in coverage in Poland (30 % of articles with specified origin), and even more so in Russia (33 %, more pronounced in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* with 44 %) where migrants and refugees from Europe (most notably Ukraine) were the most visible group.

Table 7. Origin of migrants and refugees per region (n=639)

	USA	Western EU	Eastern EU	Russia	Total
Africa	6	80	41	7	134
	8.2 %	25.2 %	18.8 %	23.3 %	21.0 %
Asia	15	37	31	6	89
	20.5 %	11.6 %	14.2 %	20.0 %	13.9 %
Middle East	23	153	122	6	304
	31.5 %	48.1 %	56.0 %	20.0 %	47.6 %
Europe	4	31	23	10	68
	5.5 %	9.7 %	10.6 %	33.3 %	10.6 %
Americas	24	16	1	1	42
	32.9 %	5.0 %	0.5 %	3.3 %	6.6 %
Oceania	1	1	0	0	2
	1.4 %	0.3 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.3 %
Total	73	318	218	30	639

Source: Authors

In addition to main actors, we have established the number of individual migrants in each article. In the 1 889 articles, only 632 migrants and refugees

could be identified. The USA newspapers stood out, accounting for 187 or 30 % of these individuals. Indeed, almost a quarter of all articles featuring migrants and refugees as recognizable individuals have appeared in the *Washington Post* (average of 0.84 recognizable migrants per article) and in the *New York Times*, which is the only outlet featuring an average of more than 1 migrant per article (103 migrants in 100 articles). In Europe, the highest shares were found in *Aktualne. cz* (average of 0.44 per article), *Gazeta Wyborcza* (0.48), *El País* (0.46) and *La Razón* (0.67). It was especially low in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (average of 0.09 migrants per article), *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (0.02), and *Magyar Hírlap* (0.04).

**Table 8. Individual Migrants and Refugees represented
and quoted in articles (N=4455, n=1889)**

		USA	Western EU	Eastern EU	Russia	Total
Individual Migrants / Refugees	*Total*	187	296	143	6	632
	Avg per article	0.98	0.31	0.22	0.08	0.33
… among them quoted	*Total*	122	152	74	1	349
	Avg per article	0.64	0.16	0.11	0.01	0.18

Source: Authors

Migrants and refugees rarely speak for themselves (Table 8). Among 632 identified individuals, only 349 were directly or indirectly quoted; only 11.4 % of the articles gave a voice to at least one migrant or refugee. In EU media, slightly more than every second migrant or refugee appearing in the coverage is also quoted (Western EU: 51.3 %; Eastern EU: 51.7 %). USA media quote migrants and refugees more frequently (65.2 %). None of the migrants and refugees appearing in *Magyar Hírlap* (four individuals) and *Kommersant* (five individuals) were quoted.

PLURALITY OF THE DEBATE ON MIGRATION (RQ2D)

Finally, we assessed which opinions on migration were represented and whether the each of paired media per country offered distinct perspectives. To this end, all non-migrant speakers (NMS) quoted in the articles were registered and their positions about migrants and refugees analyzed. The study found 3 640 NMS, more than 10 times more than migrant speakers (349).

Quotes from 2 025 NMS (55.6 %) were identified as neutral or ambivalent.[17] A total of 1 615 NMS voiced either positive (24.4 %, n=889) or negative attitudes (19.9 %, n=726). Among those NMS with a clear opinion, Western EU (62.6 %) and USA outlets (58.3 %) quoted more speakers with positive attitudes towards migrants and refugees than CEE media, where NMS with negative attitudes prevail (58.2 %).[18] In Russian media, negative voices are even more visible (63.3 %).

Again, debates are not uniform in the paired media outlets for each country as contrasting perspectives are being offered (Figure 4). In Germany and the UK, news organizations represent strikingly different perspectives. In many other countries, one outlet displays an almost balanced selection of positive and negative quotes, while the other prefers speakers with negative (Italy, Hungary, Romania, Russia) or positive attitudes (Poland, France, USA). Only in Spain and Portugal both outlets feature predominantly positive quotes; in the Czech Republic, both outlets feature predominantly negative quotes.[19]

Figure 4. Ratio of opinionated non-migrant speakers

Outlet	Value
USA: NYT	0,38
USA: Washington Post	-0,09
France: Le Figaro	-0,05
France: Le Monde	0,31
Germany: FAZ	-0,16
Germany: SZ	0,44
Italy: Corriere della Sera	0,02
Italy: La Stampa	-0,33
Portugal: Expresso.pt	0,28
Portugal: Público.pt	0,43
Spain: El País	0,50
Spain: La Razón	0,27
UK: Daily Telegraph	-0,29
UK: Guardian	0,43
Czech Rep.: Aktualne.cz	-0,31
Czech Rep.: MF Dnes	-0,28
Hungary: index.hu	-0,02
Hungary: Magyar Hírlap online	-0,38
Poland: Gazeta Wyborcza	-0,03
Poland: Rzeczspospolita	0,23
Romania: Adevarul.ro	0,06
Romania: hotnews.ro	-0,41
Russia: Kommersant	-0,09
Russia: Rossyiskaya Gazeta	-0,41
TOTAL	0,10

Source: Authors. In this figure, the share of negative quotes was deducted from the share of positive quotes, to reach values between -1 (all non-migrant speakers with a clear position are quoted with negative attitudes towards migrants/refugees) and 1 (all non-migrant speakers with a clear position are quoted with positive attitudes towards migrants/refugees)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Generally, our study points towards a diverse and more nuanced coverage of migrants and refugees in the specific context of the 'refugee crisis', as indicated by Berry et al. (2015). Coverage appears less negative than in the studies conducted e.g. by Caviedes (2015), Esses et al. (2013), and to some extent Eberl et al. (2019) for time periods *before* 2015. Our data not only confirm a prior analysis by EJO (2015) pointing towards differences between Western European and

CEE media, they clearly show how news media in different countries within the EU tell a completely different migration story. For example, in Germany and Italy, migration takes place at home, into the country.[20] The emphasis on citizen actors and support for migrants and refugees in German coverage may be read as proof for Hafez's (2002: 61) thesis about negativism in foreign coverage being contrasted by a "positive-harmonic" domestic world. On the one hand, differences in coverage of Western and Eastern EU media may fuel doubts about a European public sphere on matters of migration and asylum, with a negative impact on the political process. Europe not only disagrees in terms of solutions, but in part also in the perception of a common problem. While many European media outlets covered the topic extensively from their country's point of view, a European perspective or a look into other countries' discourse was rare. It is here that a more Europeanized discourse might have helped to bridge perceived gaps between EU members states and to find common political strategies. On the other hand, compared to the Russian coverage – limited both in quantity and thematic variety – differences between the EU's West and East shrink considerably. In *Rossiyskaya Gazeta,* the EU migration crisis was often politicized to show Europe as weak and disunited; this explains why topics beyond politics and problems with migrants were left virtually untouched.

Our study supports Chouliaraki et al. (2017) and Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti (2016) who argue that media in Europe paid little attention to the contexts of migrants and refugees and under-represented them as individuals in news coverage. Like Haller's (2017) and Maurer et al.'s (2019) studies for Germany, our analysis finds serious differences in coverage between liberal and conservative outlets across countries – the latter focusing on rather negatively connoted topics and choosing more speakers critical of migration.

In line with McNeil and Karstens (2018), journalistic traditions might impact on reporting patterns. The high number of migrants and refugees quoted in the USA coverage may be explained by the tradition of feature articles, and the impact of professional standards. The Society of Professional Journalists encourages explicitly to give "a voice to the voiceless" (Society of Professional Journalists, 2014). By contrast, post-Soviet political journalism often assumes an analytical perspective with less emphasis on personal stories. Nevertheless, the American newspapers shifted towards covering the situation of migrants and refugees (allowing for the emotional storytelling described by Benson, 2015) mostly in the later study weeks, while earlier coverage had a strong focus on politics. This shift can be explained by a much calmer political debate in Europe by 2017, indeed from a foreign perspective, the European discourse with less obvious conflict and the involvement of lower-ranking politicians was less newsworthy. Also, the situation within the USA had changed. The coding period in November 2015 coincided with a court ruling that blocked President Obama's proposed

immigration overhaul, and the discourse on migration was thereafter, between 2015 and 2017, shaped heavily by candidate and later President Trump. After years of major political discussion on border wall funding, travel bans and the end to the DACA program, media were possibly looking for different approaches that brought to the fore the human effects of these policies. This is also reflected by a shift in staff allocation away from political to dedicated migration reporters (Orme, 2015).

A distinction of political profiles (liberal/conservative bias) was not feasible in several countries where political identification was neither clear nor consistent. It also needs to be noted that study weeks have sometimes coincided with major national events likely to have impacted on the news agenda (e.g., terrorist attacks in France in November 2015 and December 2018 affecting French coverage). While this study has shed light on divisions of media content along the lines of geographical regions, the political stance of media outlets and professional standards, the interplay between these factors is undoubtedly very complex. Although a challenging task for a similarly broad set of countries, studying the journalists' motivations for the coverage they have offered may help to better understand this interplay. In addition, future research needs to address shifts in media coverage resulting from the new situation generated by the war in Ukraine, also in comparison to our findings on the 2015-2018 time frame.

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NOTES

1 The use of terms such as 'crisis' in this context has been critically discussed by scholars like Petersson and Kainz (2017).
2 1 256 580 asylum applications in 2015 (+123%), 1 206 055 applications in 2016 (-4%). From this plateau, numbers started to drop with 654 620 in 2017 (-46%) and 602 520 in 2018 (-8%) (Eurostat, 2020).
3 UNHCR (2018) argues for a clear separation of the terms "refugee" and "migrant" – those who are refugees cannot be migrants; those who are migrants cannot be refugees. In contrast, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the EU use a wider definition of "migrant", which is explicitly independent from the motivations (European Commission, 2018: 252; IOM, 2019: 130).
4 Special issues of the European Journal of Communication (2019, Vol. 34, No. 6) and Communications (2018, Vol. 43, No. 3) contain several national studies on migration and refugee coverage and related issues.

5 The events of 2015 also inspired a number of studies into coverage in single countries. Germany is a good example: Haller (2017: 136) concludes that German news were dominated by voices close to the government and had little interest for the actual situation of those arriving between February 2015 and March 2016. Maurer et al. (2019: 28-30) argue that Germany's media presented the phenomenon of migration as a risk (see also Greck, 2018; Hestermann, 2020), while portraying individual migrants and refugees rather positively.

6 Please note that for the duration of the study—2015 to 2018—the UK was still an EU member state. It was not until 31.12.2020, that the UK officially left the EU.

7 The focus on the USA, Russia and 10 EU member states was chosen in order to allow for a more thorough comparison. While there are important differences between EU countries, they are bound by a common political framework and at least an aspiration to common asylum policies, so a differentiation of Western and Eastern EU members combines countries in reasonably similar situations. Going into detail on the diverse situations of Albania, Belarus, Switzerland and Ukraine would go beyond the scope of this article, while Greece was excluded because data is limited to only one media outlet.

8 The search term comprised translations of the following English-language search strings: refuge*, flee*, escape*, *migra*, asyl*, where the * can represent any number of characters. Lists in the national languages could include more items (where one English term translates into a number of words) or various wildcard arrangements for prefixes and suffixes or combined words. Results were filtered for ambiguous use of the defined keywords (e.g., criminals fleeing from the police, bird migration etc.) as well as duplicate results.

9 Data on first-time asylum applications is not available. For reference, Russia's Federal Service of State Statistics Rosstat (2020) reports net growth of foreign population of +245.384 for 2015, +261.948 for 2016, +211.878 for 2017 and +124.854 for 2018.

10 Due to the varied forms of distribution of Spanish papers (exclusive content in the print edition of El País), the articles were retrieved in a procedure that combined print and online versions.

11 Data on first-time asylum applications is not available. The Yearbook of Immigration Statistics lists an aggregate of 231 004 refugee arrivals from 2015 through 2018 (US Department of Homeland Security, 2019: 39).

12 For the intercoder reliability test, the 15 coders involved coded 30 English-language articles. In the 'motivation' category (pairwise .598 / Krippendorff's α .283), the 'other' option was used noticeably often and with differing meanings. Further clarifications in the codebook led to a more expected use of this residual category (3.9 %). The other categories resulted in acceptable (pairwise .677 - .978 / Krippendorff's α .699 - .999) and sometimes critical (topic, main actor, number of non-migrant speakers; pairwise .478 - .675 / α .501 - .598) reliability scores. It was decided to keep these three categories – with the necessary caution in interpretation – based on the fact that the English-language texts in the test caused specific problems, exacerbated by the high number of countries involved, while coders were working in their native languages during the main coding.

13 Magyar Hírlap 301 and index.hu 1 282. A possible objection could be that online media like Hungary's have more 'space' at their disposal than print newspapers. However, there is no systematic difference between article numbers in online and print media (see Fig. 3); the outlet in our total sample of 17 countries with the lowest number of articles, Belorussia's Nasha Niva, is an online news portal.

14 In Switzerland, the German-language Neue Zürcher Zeitung with its considerable readership in Germany and Austria published 183 articles. The Francophone Le Temps, mostly limited to the French-speaking Swiss market, published only 97 articles.

15 Our Russian consortium partners note that their country's media only picked up the topic with some delay and thus after the week included in this study.

16 For each article, one (the most prominently featured) actor was coded as main actor.

17 If one speaker was featured with more than one quote, coders assessed the overall tendency of all quotes in the article, so several contemplative statements could lead to "ambivalent" coding.

18 Poland is an exception (52.1 % positive).

19 Outside the EU, this was also true for Belarus where negative voices made up 64.3 % of all non-migrant speakers (NMS). The two Albanian media were most polarized when selecting opinionated NMS.

20 This was also true for the solitary Greek outlet.

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"Untouched by your Do-gooder Propaganda": How Online User Comments Challenge the Journalistic Framing of the Immigration Crisis

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Abstract: The role of the media in polarizing the debate on immigration has been subject to a growing amount of research; yet little is known about whether and how online comment sections related to news articles on immigration reshape the journalistic narrative. This study examines readers' reactions to the media coverage by employing a quantitative content analysis of over 6,000 users' comments responding to 128 online news articles on immigration. It concludes that generally the discussants' perspective does not differ significantly from the medium's framing of the issue with one important exception: the human rights frame accentuated by the medium is strictly refused by the discussants. The discussants also bring the economic and cultural aspects of immigration into the debate. The article thus contributes to a more general understanding of the role the users' discussions play in shaping the debates on controversial political issues.

Keywords: online news comments sections; online public sphere; immigration crisis; media framing; political polarization.

INTRODUCTION

Even years after its peak, the refugee wave from predominantly Muslim countries to Europe is a strong issue attracting the attention of many institutional as well as individual actors in European societies and serves as a polarizing topic used not just by populist political actors to gain votes (Deacon & Smith, 2017). Although unprecedented in scope, research shows that the media coverage

of the refugee crisis does not differ dramatically from established representations of immigrants and framings of immigration (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Urbániková & Tkaczyk, 2020).

Nevertheless, regardless of the rather stable journalistic routines related to the coverage of immigration issues, the rise of online media in recent decades poses questions about whether and how the public debate on the issue has been altered, given that virtually anyone can publicly comment on it. Did the discourse become more varied, less dependent on media routines and perspectives as the online news' public comments sections became a standard of current media communication?

Inspired by studies that stress the importance of the Web 2.0 spaces in the political communication of citizens (Kreis, 2017) and the prominence of the immigration topic in these discussions (Wright, Graham, & Jackson, 2017), we aim to describe how online discussions reflect or reshape the media coverage of the European immigration crisis. We believe that such an approach can contribute to a more general understanding of the role that readers' online participation plays in political communication.

In our study, we focus on whether and how the representations of the immigration crisis constructed by one of the most popular Czech online news outlets, iDnes.cz (www.idnes.cz), relate to readers' representations of the respective issue published in the medium's public comments section. We are specifically interested in how the medium and its audience agree or disagree on accentuating the aspects of the events, and the selection of actors and valence towards the issue.

The case of the Czech Republic serves us as an example of a national context in which xenophobia is a prominent feature of public opinion and discussion. The country displays one of the most anti-immigrant attitudes in the EU (Eurobarometer, 2018), immigration represents a significant topic on the media agenda (Urbániková & Tkaczyk, 2020) and hateful stances towards immigrants are common among the Czech public (Zavoral, 2015). The country was among the most critical members of the EU concerning the migrant quota and other issues related to immigration and the topic strongly polarized the Czech public, although the country was not significantly affected by immigration (Prokop, 2019). Above all, the importance of immigration as a public topic continuously increased between 2015 and 2017 and remained on the top of the public agenda until recently, while the prominence of the issue decreased in many other European countries (Prokop, 2019, pp. 104–108).

THE EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION CRISIS AND ITS MEDIA FRAMING

Public discussion related to the refugee crisis in Europe has been affected by either or both strongly anti-immigration and anti-Islamic sentiments in many European countries (Fekete, 2017; Kreis, 2017), with the Czech Republic being a typical example of such trends (Zavoral, 2015). Images of refugees as a threat started to dominate the discourse following the traditional "securitization" of the immigration issue (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Huysmans, 2000; Korkut, 2014; Urbániková & Tkaczyk, 2020). Korkut (2014) connects negative attitudes toward immigrants with prevailing conservative socio-political leanings in European societies in which "the issue of immigration remains very central to understanding notions such as national identity" (p. 620). The public rejection of any "foreignness" influences, according to Korkut, the attitudes to immigration even in national contexts where immigrants do not settle in large numbers (p. 621). Recent studies on the media framing of the European immigration crisis reveal "stereotyped interpretations of refugee and asylum issues" – as in the past, the immigrants are represented mainly as a threat and destabilizing force and/or economic burden in the media (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017, p. 1749), following the trends documented since the 1980s (Huysmans, 2000). Significantly less attention is paid to the refugees' situation from a humanitarian perspective (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). In the context of the Czech Republic, Urbániková and Tkaczyk (2020) documented how mainstream dailies represented immigrants mainly "as a burden on host society, as victims of a humanitarian crisis and, to a lesser degree, as a security threat" (p. 1).

Some authors suggest that immigration not only arouses strong anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic sentiments but is also related to "current trends in Europe where nationalist-conservative and xenophobic right-wing groups gain power and establish a socially accepted discourse of racism", defining themselves in strict opposition to domestic actors perceived as liberal (Kreis, 2017, p. 1). According to Bhatia and Jenks (2018), who analyzed the US media representations of Syrian refugees, it is possible to identify a humanitarian perspective ("victimized refugees escaping from their tragic pasts") related to the immigration discourse promoted by the liberal media on the one hand and a perspective pushed by the conservative media which "portrays refugees as a threat to national security" on the other (p. 223). Kreis (2017) reveals the "growing sentiments against immigration and refugee policies and practices in some parts of European societies," which she connects to the rise of "nationalism and right-wing populism in Europe" (p. 14).

Scholars show how explosive topics such as the immigration crisis influence national political debates by turning the issue of an "external" enemy into a national political issue, mainly by the populist political actors (Reinemann et al., 2019). According to Fekete (2017), post-communist nationalist leaders

in Central and Eastern European countries use the refugee crisis (among other topics) to take the attention away from their failures, corruption and "perversion of power". Fekete specifically names Germany and Merkel, the visible representatives of the EU, as targets of criticism by nationalist populists. In the context of the Czech Republic, Prokop (2019) connects the growing societal intolerance towards the immigrants with "the political crusade against anything foreign and 'abnormal'" (p. 94).

THE ROLE OF COMMENT SECTIONS IN ONLINE NEWS CONSUMPTION

The role and potential contribution of users' comments related to news coverage are often dismissed by critics for not representing public opinion. Research also points out the uncivil and polemic character of user discussions (Coe, Kenski, & Rains, 2014) and Ziegele, Quiring, Esau and Friess (2018) presume that "the pessimistic perspective of user comments seems to have gained the upper hand" (p. 2). Nevertheless, a growing number of scholars consider the discussions a crucial part of the online public sphere and as new modes of participation and stress positive impacts of the online users' discussions on readers (Thorson, Vraga, & Ekdale, 2010). According to Rowe (2015), comments sections included in news websites may challenge the "traditional unidirectional flow of messages" and lead to citizens' greater control over news content (pp. 539–540). Similarly, Nagar (2011) considers user comments on mainstream news sites a forum for the exchange of ideas and expression of public opinion, and according to Gonçalves (2018), online news comment sections represent some of the "most promising forums for discussion" (p. 604).

Scholars often also conclude that comments help the readers understand the issue better and look at it from new perspectives (Gonçalves, 2018, p. 605; Jahng, 2018). Some believe that online comments can change the readers' perception of the original content (Thorson et al., 2010) or even result in readers questioning their previous views on the topic (Jahng, 2018, p. 145). Ziegele et al. (2018) conclude that comments serve readers to form their opinions, attitudes, and judgements about news issues (p. 2). On the other hand, Kreis (2017) thinks that social media and discussion spaces "may be used to disseminate racial and xenophobic opinions, resulting in 'anti-social media'" (p. 14). Buonfino (2004) similarly explains that public opinion and mass media mutually collaborate at the national level in developing of anti-immigration discourses.

As concerns our research topic directly, there are not many studies on the relationship between the media framing of the events and their representation by the online discussants. Coleman, Thorson and Wilkins (2011) found that readers did not follow the framing of health stories offered by the media and insisted

on their own perspectives on the issue in the comments. On the other hand, Ziegele et al. (2018) point out the importance of the media agenda as commenters usually develop their discussions around journalistic frames. Nevertheless, the dissonance between the journalistic and users' frames may be higher in cases where the users consider the media coverage of the issue biased or unbalanced. In this case, they are urged to publish disapproving or corrective comments (Ziegele et al., 2018, p. 11). Koltsova and Nagornyy (2019) perceive news readers discussing the issues online as rather independent of the medium's perspectives and framing. According to them, readers contribute significantly to a shift in the debate as they "make their own conclusions and generalizations bringing their background knowledge into the discussion" (p. 153).

METHODOLOGY

In our present research, we aimed at exploring whether and how public debate on the issue of immigration represented by the user comments to online news articles differs from the media coverage of the immigration issue. Although various aspects of online media comments sections have been widely studied (Rowe, 2015; Nagar, 2011; Gonçalves, 2018), the relationship between the article agenda and the content of subsequent comments has so far been rather neglected in academic research (Coleman et al., 2011). Given the lack of previous knowledge on the issue, we refrained from attempting to formulate clear hypotheses. Instead, we focused on the readers' construction of themes related to immigration in the online news comment section and looked for patterns connecting the user generated content with the medium's framing of the issue. The following main research question guided our research:

- RQ1: What is the relationship between the media representations of immigration and those introduced by the discussants?

We were further guided by the following questions considering more specific aspects of the above outlined relationship:

- RQ2: What patterns can be observed concerning the accentuation of specific aspects of the topic by the medium and the subsequent discussants' reactions?
- RQ3: How are the media's mentions of actors related to actors mentioned in comments and the valence of the comments towards both the actors and immigration as such?

We have chosen the highly polarizing topic of the European immigration crisis, as immigration is one of the issues with the potential to provoke the most extensive

discussions (Ernst, Esser, Blassnig, & Engesser, 2018). We focused on the second-most-read online news server in the Czech Republic, iDnes.cz, with 1.4 million unique users per day (www.netmonitor.cz); accessed February 5, 2021. Based on the profile of its readers, the online daily can be described as center-right and belongs to the Mafra publishing house associated with the former Czech prime minister Babiš (Urbániková & Tkaczyk, 2020). Both facts may have influenced the content of both the articles and the readers' comments, as right-wing political leaning may be related to anti-immigration stances (Bhatia & Jenks, 2018; Kreis, 2017). It would thus be useful to compare the content of iDnes.cz with a center-left online daily, but, unfortunately, comment sections related to such a daily and the most read online news server (Novinky.cz with 2.25 million unique users per day) are not available in the archive. Our analysis thus represents a specific case study focusing on one of the most popular non-tabloid online dailies in the Czech Republic.

As we were interested in the relation between specific article features and the content of the comments, we have conducted a quantitative content analysis of articles related to the issue of immigration and their follow-up comments.

SAMPLE

In the first step, we searched for all articles that could relate to the issue using predefined tags ("the influx of refugees to Europe", "immigration") and keywords ("immigration", "refugee", "Islam", "Muslim") in the titles of the articles.[1] We processed them manually and finally identified 960 articles related directly to the European migration crisis and published on www.idnes.cz in 2016–2017. Our selection of the years was motivated by our effort to focus on a relatively recent period and on the two years during which the media focus on immigration decreased, while also considering the importance of the topic in the public agenda. Prokop (2019) stresses that in the Czech Republic, the importance of the topic continuously increased between 2015 and its peak in 2017 and remains at the top of the public agenda, unlike in other European countries (pp. 104–108). We also archived all comments related to the articles. Given that we were interested in how the agenda of articles reflects in the content of the comments, we only selected first-level comments for our analysis in which the user interacts with the original article. According to Ksiazek, Peer and Lessard (2016, p. 502), this user-content interactivity is more information-oriented, unlike user-user interactivity, which is rather driven by the need for social interaction. Additionally, because randomly selected comments from different phases of the discussion threads often lack necessary context, these user-user

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1 Automated download from iDnes.cz was performed by the Scrapy library in the Python programming language.

comments were not always enough comprehensible in terms of coding. Using a two-stage random selection, we finally obtained a sample of 6033 comments related to 128 articles. We aimed to code 50 randomly selected comments for each of the 100 randomly selected articles to code approximately 10% of the articles in the dataset and achieve a sufficient sample of comments. Since not all articles generated the required number of first-level comments, we have slightly increased the number of articles included in the analysis. On average, the articles generated 181 first-level comments (SD=160), our final sample represented 3.5% of all first-level comments.

VARIABLES

We first looked at how the medium frames immigration, both in the text and through the visual material accompanying the article. We manually coded the sample of articles for traditional framing related to immigration issues, i.e., *security frame, economization of the problem, cultural differences including gender relations, political-administrative frame* or *human rights dimension* (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Urbániková & Tkaczyk, 2020). The main motive (differing representations of immigrants, the EU and its symbols, politicians, police and army, barriers etc.) of the opening photo related to the article was also coded and assigned to one of the frames mentioned above. The securitization frame included photos of refugees – men, barriers and the police or army. If there were women, children or other vulnerable people in the photos, they were coded as including the human rights frame. The political-administrative frame was included if a politician or, for example, the EU symbol appeared in the photo. We searched for the same set of frames in the user comments but allowed the coders to identify more than one of the listed frames in the user comments, whereas only one frame had to be selected for the analyzed articles. This decision was made because discussants typically combined several frames when formulating their arguments, whereas trained journalists usually select the frames much more specifically.

Based on a preliminary analysis of 50 articles and 300 comments, we identified the most frequently mentioned actors in the migration debate on iDnes.cz and coded articles and comments for the *presence of predefined actors in their content* (selected Czech, foreign, and EU politicians, NGOs, or countries most affected by the migration crisis). We were also interested in the *presence of pro-immigration and anti-immigration actors* and whether the article gives voice to the *immigrants* by quoting or paraphrasing them. To better understand the construction of specific actors of the immigration discourse in the comments, we focused on the presence of *criticism towards immigration proponents* (including their specific labelling), *non-profit organizations, the European Union, Angela Merkel, and Germany.* We also coded the data for the *presence of populist rhetoric* (addressing

politicians, the media or elites in general). Finally, we coded the *valence* of the articles and comments *towards the topic of immigration.* Two team members attended numerous rounds of coder training until they acquired an acceptable level of intercoder reliability. The acceptable level was when the Krippendorff alpha reached a minimum value of 0.850 for all variables apart from six: (i) valence of the comment towards the immigration (0.788); (ii) populist rhetoric (0.835); (iii) the human rights frame (0.797); (iv) an article photo (0.836); (v) valence of the article towards the EU (0.801) and (vi) the article frame (0.815). The two trained coders tested the intercoder reliability on 50 articles and 300 comments, after which they conducted the coding.

FINDINGS

ALTERNATIVE FRAMING AND REJECTION OF POSITIVE MEDIA IMAGES: MEDIA'S VS USERS' REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ISSUE

The comparison of the framing of the immigration topic by the online daily on the one hand and the accentuation of immigration aspects and actors in the discussion section on the other revealed that the discussants contribute significantly to a shift in the narratives presented by the medium. Nevertheless, the pattern was in no way simple and was tightly connected with the valence the medium attributed to the immigrants and their stories, as the data presented below show.

The analysis of the articles' framing (Figure 1) revealed a dominance (37%) of the political-administrative frame (quota, political negotiations, etc.). The human rights frame and securitization of the issue followed in 30% and 29% of the articles, respectively. These results indicate that besides following the typical immigration framing (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017), the medium also provides space, less typically, but following a more general trend in the Czech Republic (Urbániková & Tkaczyk, 2020), for employing human rights framing. The coverage frequently mentioned tragic events, but also covered extremist attacks on migrants or unsatisfactory conditions in the refugee camps. The need to close borders to the immigrants and crime linked to immigration (mostly smuggling) were the issues that dominated within the security-oriented articles. The absence of the economic frame in the sample may be interpreted as a lack of reflection of both causes and effects of immigration, which may reveal the medium's reluctance to contextualize the issue. References to cultural differences were also almost absent from immigration articles.

Figure 1. Thematic frames in articles and comments
(N=128 for articles, N=6033 for comments)
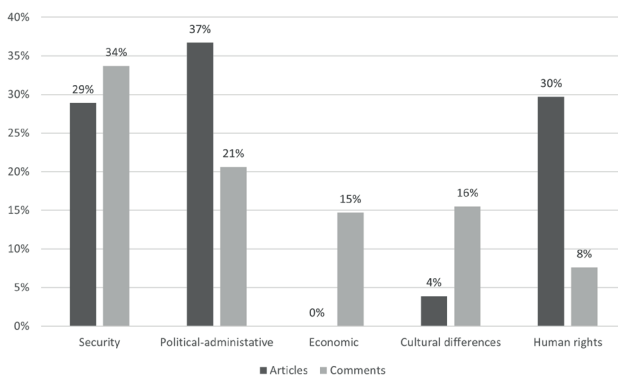
Source: Authors

The analysis of the discussion section (Figure 1) reveals that, compared to the news, the discussants often accentuated various aspects of the issue.[2] The most common of the discussants' comments (34%) was concerned with security risks (the need for border surveillance and fears of the invasion of immigrants dominated in their comments). Comments on the role of the EU in the crisis and its immigration policies (the political-administrative frame) comprised 21% of all comments. Cultural differences and the economic aspects of immigration, which were almost absent from the articles, scored relatively high in comments (16% and 15%, respectively). Unlike the online daily, discussants are thus much more concerned with the impact of immigration on the state budget and with cultural differences, including attitudes and behavior towards women, thus to some extent shifting the focus of the public debate on the issue. Human rights were mentioned rather rarely in the comments (8%), although they were frequently present in the medium's agenda.

Despite the differences, when comparing the thematic frames of the articles and the aspects of immigration accentuated in the subsequent comments (Table 1), we found that for the three most frequently used frames, in the comments that followed, the readers were most often discussing the topics raised by the articles. This relationship was statistically significant for the securitization and political-administrative frame (Adj. res = 16.7 and 16.5, respectively) but also applies to the human rights frame (Adj. res = 6.8).

2　In total, 6033 comments in our sample were published by 2343 users, i.e., each wrote 2.6 comments on average. The 27 most active users (1.1%) were responsible for 10% of the comments, but most often, the discussants left only one comment. The discussion environment was clearly oriented against immigration, with 80% of comments coded as negative in relation to the issue (and only 2% of comments identified as clearly positive).

Table 1. Bivariate analysis of articles' frames and frames and actors in the comments (N=6033, column percentages)

Comment frame / Article frame	Security	Economic	Cultural	Human rights	Political-administrative	Merkel	NGOs	Germany	EU	Populism - politicians	Populism - media
Security	42.3%	23.6%	26.3%	21.7%	29.4%	37.9%	20.5%	43.7%	29.9%	35.9%	22.0%
Economic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural	2.1%	1.9%	2.6%	5.2%	1.4%	1.0%	1.7%	2.2%	1.2%	2.9%	8.4%
Human rights	26.3%	29.9%	42.6%	45.4%	13.4%	14.1%	61.2%	18.5%	13.5%	18.3%	45.6%
Political-administrative	28.6%	44.0%	27.5%	27.2%	55.4%	47.0%	16.3%	35.2%	55.0%	42.6%	20.4%
Other	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%	3.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Phi	0.219	0.083	0.109	0.094	0.246	0.116	0.163	0.135	0.242	0.122	0.162
χ^2	288.407***	41.834***	71.173***	53.112***	364.337***	80.632***	161.140***	110.025***	352.445***	89.124***	159.245***

Note: *p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001.

Source: Authors

When we look at the discussants' reactions to the human rights frame more closely, a pattern became visible that could be one of the most interesting findings in our data. The human rights frame set by the medium triggered almost the same percentage of comments that agreed with the human rights framing and comments that stressed the cultural differences between the Europeans and the immigrants (45% and 43%, respectively). Nevertheless, the compassionate, positive human rights framing was typical for the pro-immigration discussants. Immigration opponents frequently employed the frame of cultural differences in reaction to the human rights framing by the medium or agreed with the human rights framing but rejected its positive valence (i.e., they were sarcastic about the situation of the immigrants or wished them bad luck). The data thus showed that the medium supported the positive (or compassionate) reactions among the immigration advocates by publishing human interest stories but provoked an intensely disapproving reaction among the anti-immigration discussants. Their negative response to a more positive framing of the topic by the medium was also evident in the relationship between the article framing and the media criticism (Table 1). When the journalists concentrated on human rights, readers reacted by labelling such articles as "propaganda worse

than the Bolsheviks'" or as "multiculturalist propaganda" and condemned the medium as belonging to the "ruling elites". Our data reveal that the rhetoric identifying the media as propagandists in the service of the elites was mainly present (46%) in the comments reacting to articles framing immigration in the human rights context.

A similar tendency was evident when we looked at the connection between the human rights media framing and the occurrence of some specific actors of the immigration discourse in the comments. The human rights framing was followed by the highest percentage of criticism of immigrants' proponents (36%), showing that the frame increases discussants' need to publicly reject those who supported or at least defended the immigrants. Any NGOs, whose critique appears mostly below the articles dealing with human rights issues (Table 1), are frequently the target of such criticism for helping immigrants and refugees.

The results comparing the themes of the articles' lead photos and the thematic frames in the comments (see Tab 2) showed that certain visual media representations of immigration are accompanied by particular reactions in the comments. We found a statistically significant association between photographs supporting the securitization framing of the immigration crisis (photos of male refugees, barriers or the army and police) and the securitization perspective in the comments. Nevertheless, photographs of refugees were followed by comments that highlighted the economic implications of the European migration crisis more often, a result that supported our previous findings about the importance of the economic framing of the issue by the discussants. Photos of the EU symbols or representatives and pictures of other politicians triggered the political-administrative accent in the comments most often. Discussants reacted to the presence of mixed groups of migrants or their vulnerable representatives (such as women, children and the elderly) in the photos by referring mostly to the assumed differences in cultural values in a rather negative way.

We can thus see a clear pattern in our data: the anti-immigration majority of the discussants reacted negatively to any positive representation of the immigrants by the medium. This tendency supports previous research findings summarized above, which suggested that readers' comments were rather independent of the medium's framing of the issues (Coleman et al., 2011; Koltsova & Nagornyy, 2019), specifically in case readers considered the media coverage biased (Ziegele et al., 2018). Given the controversial nature of the immigration topic and the prevalence of anti-immigration stances among Czechs, we may understand this finding as supporting the conclusions of Koltsova and Nagornyy (2019): the discussants did seem to bring their previous perspectives on the issue to the debate and made their own conclusions. When these perspectives concorded with the medium's framing of immigration (for example, as a security problem), the difference between the framing in the articles and in the comments was

small. But when the medium framed immigration in contrast to the dominant perception of the issue, as a humanitarian catastrophe, the readers brought "their background knowledge into the discussion" (Koltsova & Nagornyy, 2019, p. 153) and strictly refused such a framing.

Table 2. Bivariate analysis of articles' lead photos and frames in adjacent comments (N=6033, column percentages)

| Frame comment / Photo article	Security	Economic	Cultural	Human rights	Political-administrative
Refugees - men only	16.6%	22.4%	16.1%	15.0%	9.7%
Refugees - women/children/old	4.9%	5.3%	12.6 %	8.7%	3.4%
Refugees - mixed	17.5%	25.9%	23.2%	26.5%	19.1%
Detention facilities/barriers	14.2%	14.7%	11.4%	14.8%	14.8%
EU and its symbols	2.5%	4.2%	1.4%	2.4%	11.8 %
Politicians	10.2%	6.5%	7.9%	6.5%	24.7%
Police/army	21.0%	13.7%	15.9%	10.2%	12.4%
Opponents	3.0%	1.0%	2.0%	3.0%	0.7%
Supporters	4.8%	4.7%	4.1%	9.1%	1.9%
Others	4.5%	1.0%	4.3%	3.0%	1.0%
No photo	0.7%	0.6%	1.2%	0.7%	0.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Phi	0.165	0.190	0.153	0.135	0.327
χ2	164.479***	218.630***	140.526***	109.503***	644.448***

Note: *p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001.

Source: Authors

Comparison of the presence of specific actors in the analyzed immigration coverage and related discussions (Figure 2) is another way of considering the relationship between the medium's agenda and its readers' reactions. When we focused on the associations between the presence of the most prevalent individual and institutional actors in the articles and users' comments – Angela Merkel, Germany, EU, and the NGOs (Figure 2), we can see that there is a statistically significant link between the mentioning of all these four actors in the article and their subsequent presence in the comments (Table 3). The articles' agenda was thus clearly mirrored in the agenda of the readers. The strongest association was observed in the case of the EU (Phi = 0.322, p < 0.001), whose presence in the article seemed to enhance its appearance in the comments notably, but the correlation was strong in all four cases. However, despite relatively robust

associations, 51% of comments discussing Merkel were still not related to articles mentioning her name. This suggests that the readers tend to bring Merkel into their comments following other cues, e.g., the reference to the EU (64% of comments mentioning Merkel were linked to such articles) or to Germany (77%). It could also indicate that the discussants entered the discussion with their pre-definitions of important actors of the immigration discourse and were not entirely dependent on the actors mentioned by the medium (Koltsova & Nagornyy, 2019).

Figure 2. Actors in articles and comments on iDnes.cz
(N=128 for articles, N=6033 for comments)
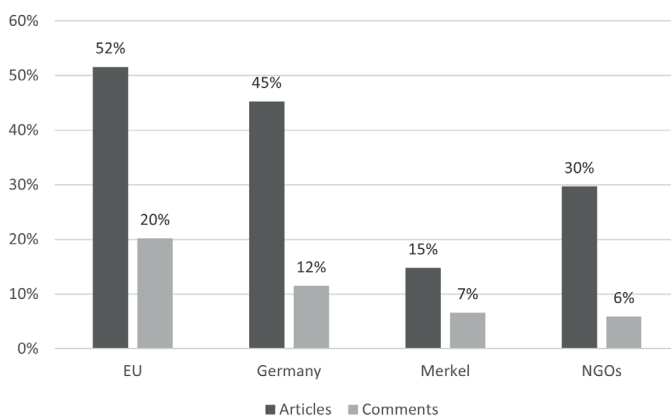
Source: Authors

Table 3. Associations between actors in articles and comments (% of mentions in the comment that is associated with the presence in the article; Phi values; N=6033)

Comments Articles	EU	Merkel	Germany	NGOs
EU	83%	64%	41%	65%
	0.322***	0.070***	-0.073***	0.072***
Merkel	18%	49%	35%	6%
	0.034**	0.244***	0.191***	-0.069***
Germany	44%	77%	81%	30%
	-0.014	0.167***	0.252***	-0.078***
NGOs	26%	12%	21%	78%
	-0.051***	-0.104***	-0.072***	0.259***

Note: *p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001.

Source: Authors

It is also worth noting that the mere presence of similar actors in the articles and the comments does not have to be a sign of a general agreement of the discussants with the media narratives on immigration. Whereas the medium may be successful in setting the actors to be discussed, the evaluation of these actors by the discussants may be very different, as in the case of the EU (mentioned in 52% of articles and 20% of comments). When the article attributes a positive role to the EU, 41% of related articles mentioning the EU are negative, whereas the percentage of negative comments decreases to 26% when the article evaluates the EU negatively. This suggests that the discussants tended to mobilize against the positive media images of the institution, as in the case of immigrants themselves or their advocates. Another example of such disagreement are NGOs (mentioned in 6% of the comments) which were covered rather neutrally or positively by the medium but mainly represented objects of the discussants' criticism for an allegedly positive approach towards immigration.

Figure 3. Valence towards the immigration in articles and comments (N=128 for articles, N=6033 for comments)
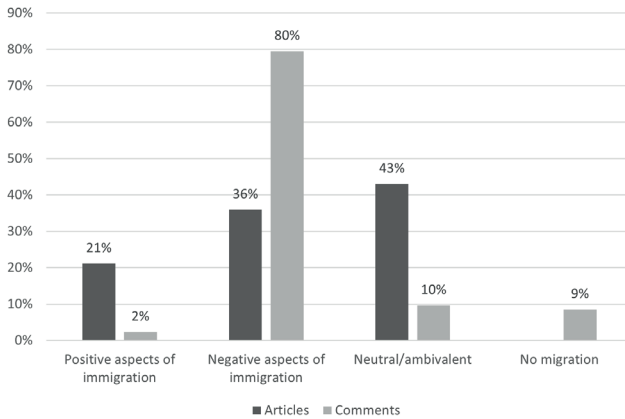
Source: Authors

Similarly, the presence of immigrants as active actors who are given a voice by the medium (in 15% of the articles) triggered more positive (3.2%) as well as negative (83.1%) comments (Phi = 0.100, p < 0.001). This personalization of immigration thus seems to mobilize both groups, opponents and supporters, one negatively against immigrants, the other positively for their defense or support. The presence of immigrants in the article increases not only the probability of human rights focus in the comments, but also the presence of comments stressing cultural differences. It thus mobilizes advocates of immigration to emphasize the difficult fate of immigrants and, at the same time, inspires their opponents to accentuate the cultural differences in a generally negative way.

Results related to the relationship between the valence of the medium and that of the discussants towards the issue generally supported our argument that the framing of the topic by the medium did not change the perspective of the discussants.

Table 4. Associations between valence in articles and comments
(N=6033, Cramer's V = 0.093, p < 0.001)

Valence article	Valence comment			
	Pro-immigration (2.3% in total)	Anti-immigration (79.5% in total)	Ambivalent/neutral (9.6% in total)	No migration (8.5% in total)
Positive	3.9%	81.3%	11.2%	3.5%
Negative	1.4%	82.3%	8.4%	7.8%
Neutral	2.2%	76.3%	9.8%	11.6%

Source: Authors

The discussants usually brought their unambiguous attitudes towards immigration into the discussion, so even though neutral articles dominated, almost 80% of the subsequent comments were negative (Figure 3). We found an association between the articles highlighting the positive aspects of immigration and pro-immigration comments (Adj. res = 4.4) and those highlighting the negative issues related to immigration and anti-immigration comments (Adj. res = 4.0). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that positively framing an article does not decrease the percentage of negative comments significantly, again revealing a minimal influence of the medium on the convinced anti-immigration discussants (Table 4).

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to explore the character of online debates related to news articles on immigration and their relationship with the medium's agenda on the issue. In focusing on the online debates, our paper sought to fill the research gap in the contemporary scholarship on media and migration in Europe, which has so far favored the analysis of media content. News users' perspectives and participation in the debates stemming from the articles have been given relatively marginal attention, despite their potential role in framing the issue summarized in the theoretical introduction to our research. We also believe our paper to be a possible contribution to media practice by providing media professionals with detailed information about the relationship between their production and the readers' reactions.

In response to our research question, we can generally state that the medium set the agenda to some extent, but its positive framing of the issue was visibly rejected by a majority of the discussants. The most interesting pattern in readers' commenting, which our research identified relates to the human rights frame. When the medium framed immigration positively or with empathy, for example, by covering human stories related to the suffering of the immigrants or their integration in Europe, it predominantly provoked an opposing, negative reaction among the anti-immigration discussants. The same happened when the medium provided immigrants with a voice in the coverage or promoted the positive role of the NGOs or the EU in the immigration crisis. In such cases, the anti-immigration discussants reacted by reinforcing the frame of cultural differences presenting the immigrants' culture as incompatible with European culture, with more negativity in general and with a stronger criticism of both pro-immigration actors and the medium itself. This suggests that the readers who were active in the discussion and held anti-immigration positions were rather independent of the medium in their perceptions of the issue. A more compassionate framing of the issue or attention paid to the dominantly rejected sides (the immigrants, the NGOs, some pro-immigration politicians) by the medium seems to have contributed to an even more intense rejection of these sides by opponents.

We further found that the discussants diversified the immigration discourse by offering framing of the issue that the medium did not focus on. Specifically, the discussants perceived the issue, unlike the medium, through the economic lens as they were often concerned about the impact of immigration on the state or EU budget. They also saw the issue through the prism of cultural differences in that they focused on the alleged cultural incompatibility of the immigrants and the Europeans among which they pointed out the attitudes and behavior towards women. In the case of the German Chancellor, the discussants often included her in their comments even though she was not mentioned in the article.

The findings summarized above raise questions about the possible sources of the resistance of the anti-immigration discussants to some perspectives offered by the medium. Our data may indicate, in accord with previous research (Koltsova & Nagornyy, 2019; Ziegele et al., 2018), that the discussants entered the debate in the environment of the mainstream online medium with a previously formed set of meanings and interpretations of the crisis. That made them probably less dependent on the framing of the issue by the medium, especially when the medium offered frames that are inconsistent with the readers' opinion. The conclusion by Tóth et al. (2022, p. 4) that "polarization could sometimes be driven by exposure to opposing views, rather than by exposure to content one agrees with" also supports this interpretation.

Our data and our knowledge of the broader national context of the issue, enables us to further interpret the readers' refusal of the human rights frame and refugees' perspective in the articles. Their refusal is a result of the influence of populist political actors who became a significant part of Czech political culture. They spread hatred not only against immigrants but also against various liberal actors (the EU, the NGOs) and, specifically, the media (see Csehi & Zgut, 2020, Kreis, 2017 or Fekete, 2017) and thus legitimize and normalize this hostile approach. We can confirm previous findings that immigration is usually connected with strong anti-immigrant sentiments and anti-liberalism (Bhatia & Jenks, 2018; Deacon & Smith, 2017; Kreis, 2017). One of the most robust discussion environments related to online news in the Czech Republic turned out to be substantially anti-immigration and anti-liberal oriented. Most of the commenters were approaching the issue negatively, with a significant presence of populist attacks against allegedly liberal politicians, political institutions and the media. They strongly criticized some specific actors of the discourse, such as the EU and the immigration supporters (including the NGOs). This is in line with previous research considering Euroscepticism and illiberalism among the main characteristics of recent European populism (Csehi & Zgut, 2020).

Our research focuses on a particular national context in a specific period and on a selected medium and its comment section. These choices limit the possibility of generalizing our findings. The Czech Republic also represents a specific approach to the immigration crisis, which the country shared partially with other CEE or Visegrad countries. It would be useful to further test our findings on more diverse data, in different national contexts and in relation to various media and news topics.

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Media Ownership Transparency and Editorial Autonomy as Corporate Social Responsibility in the Media Industry: The Case of Latvia

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Abstract: This paper focuses on media ownership transparency and editorial autonomy in Latvia from the point of view how media companies engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. This article takes a critical look at a representative sample of media outlets that relate to Latvia's national peculiarities. The conclusion is that the ability of national media policy to really facilitate media ownership transparency and the editorial autonomy of media primarily does not depend on legal regulations, instead relies on co-regulation which links incentive national support policy for the media and their participation in a self-regulatory system.

Keywords: media ownership transparency; editorial autonomy; corporate social responsibility; media policy; media industry.

INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is known as a values-laden umbrella concept that refers to the way in which the interface between business, society and the environment is managed. Also as the way in which business consistently creates shared value in society through economic development, good governance, stakeholder responsiveness and environmental improvement (Visser, 2017, p. 4). An important aspect of it, certainly in the context of the media industry, is how to earn more, as not accidentally stated in the subtitle of first Latvian book about CSR (Pētersons & Pavāre, 2005). Because of this business orientation,

> CSR is both a means and an end. It is an integral element of the firm's strategy – the way the firm goes about delivering its products or services (*means*). It is also a way of maintaining the legitimacy of the firm's actions in the larger society by bringing stakeholder concerns to the foreground (*end*) (Chandler, 2017, p. 8).

CSR is based on voluntariness and self-binding, also economic self-binding, and summarizes the actions of company internal measurements regarding responsibility. The information policy of such companies changed from pure visibility to pro-active transparency on different levels in order to foster consumer's trust (Karmasin et al., 2014, p. 234).

In the scientific literature there prevails, on one hand, the understanding that the subjects of CSR are media enterprises (companies) as organizations, respectively their management or their managers and not the editorial staff (e. g. Bachmann, 2017, pp. 88, 197–198; Altmeppen, Greck & Kössler, 2015, pp. 612, 614). On other hand, there are differences in regard to which media responsibilities belong to a broad understanding of CSR (obligatory CSR) and which to the narrow understanding of CSR (voluntary CSR). In this broad understanding, the apodictic normative standards are distinctive and characteristic for the first type of CSR, including making a profit and law abidance (Bachmann, 2017, pp. 90, 208–209; Raupp, Jarolimek & Schultz, 2011, p. 11).

However, in practice (e.g., by the European Commission) CSR activities are mostly understood as voluntary economic, social and ecological initiatives doing more than the law requires, which is the essence of corporate social responsibility (Raupp, Jarolimek & Schultz 2011, p. 12). That is mainly discussed later in this point of view article, together with the empirical part, which offers the conceptualization and deeper analysis of media ownership transparency and editorial autonomy in Latvia from the perspective of CSR for the first time. Moreover, this paper—mainly in the broader framework of Economic Theory of Journalism—tackles the journalistic issues from the actors' economic, respectively, information (content) and attraction market perspective (Fengler & Russ-Mohl, 2005; Russ-Mohl & Fengler 2007; Fengler, 2015; Rau, 2015; Franck, 2020, pp. 96, 104). Indeed, the borders between media responsibility that refer to journalism and journalists among other things (Bachmann, 2017, pp. 87–88) and CSR of a media company are blurry. Both concepts partly overlap as editorial staff is also part of a media company as a labor force and the core business of media company is both content production (editorial staff) and distribution (media organization) (Altmeppen, Greck & Kössler, 2015, p. 614).

Media responsibility is also impossible without the conscious and active support of a substantial number of consumers, particularly in terms of critical users of the media, for those media outlets which do engage in such CSR. If the media do not undertake voluntary responsibility in terms of own transparency,

they not only do not follow the demand of the democratic public sphere to themselves (Habermas, 1999, p. 311) but also lose credibility as their main capital and fail in the media business. While, at the same time, demanding transparency from other participants in socio-political processes.

THE TRANSPARENCY OF PRODUCTION PROCESSES AS AN EXAMPLE OF CSR

Media transparency, at least partly called also media accountability, including transparency related to the ownership of the media, is necessary to regulate and limit media concentration so as to ensure media diversity (cf. Jastramskis, Rožukalne & Jõesaar, 2017; Act Relating to Transparency of Media Ownership 2016 from Norway). Liberal democracy cannot exist without free speech and the expression of freedom by definition and so the preservation of media freedom and media diversity (which precondition is the limitation of media concentration) is the main task for the media policy of democratic governance. This is the other side of the same coin as the notion that media businesses basically cannot exist outside of the social functions of the media without the media's main values— credibility and media transparency (Weder & Karmasin, 2009, p. 334).

Given that media with their specific public functions are not just another business (Rožukalne, 2013), democratic government can limit media concentration by special regulations in competition law, which usually are more restrictive in comparison to other industries, at least in North-Central European media system model to which the Baltic States historically belong (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Bærug, 2005; Beck, 2017, p. 237). Democratic government cannot ensure media diversity (including national support policies for the media) without information about media ownership or rather media ownership transparency. The need for such information is based on the logic that media owners under the conditions of democracy and market economics have fully justified rights to dictate the editorial line of their media outlets also on the basis of ideal values (e. g. so called Tendenzschutz in Germany, see Noelle-Neumann, Schulz & Wilke, 2009, pp. 271–272). Media owners do not have to make use of them, but they are certainly part of their ownership rights.

In transitional countries, e.g., Latvia, business oligarchs typically engage in state capture of democratic institutions, which leads to a failed state. This means it is all the more necessary to insist on higher demands of media policy related to media ownership transparency and commercial and owner influences over editorial content (regarding such high risks for Latvia see MPM, 2021; Jastramskis, Rožukalne & Jõesaar, 2017, 43; Valsts prezidenta paziņojums nr. 14 2021, p. 3). These activities would facilitate trust in the media system,

as well as media literacy. That is because media markets are typical of so-called lemon markets, in which it is hard to achieve high levels of quality if market participants are satisfied with a low level of quality (Russ-Mohl, 2017, p. 54). Moreover, higher requirements related to editorial autonomy (independence and freedom) relate to routine editorial decisions by editorial staff so as to guarantee and defend the authority of journalists as important actors of democracy (cf. Bentele, Brosius & Jarren, 2006, p. 223).

That is mostly the legal perspective, but socially responsible and good business practices are generally stated as a corporate social initiative in any industry. As Kotler and Lee (2005, pp. 23–24) point out:

> A corporation adopts and conducts discretionary business practices and investments that support social causes to improve community well-being and protect the environment," including "external reporting of consumer and investor information" as characteristic practices: "*Providing full disclosure* of product materials and their origins and potential hazards. (ibid., pp. 209–210).

For example, ERR (Estonian Public Broadcaster) is a unified public media outlet, which according to opinion survey "is assessed as being politically independent by the smallest percentage of respondents, and they are last satisfied with the information ERR provides about its organizational functioning" (Jõesaar & Kõuts-Klemm, 2019, p. 109). However, such transparency is the main aspect, which media and communications scholars believe in terms of how this media company can improve (ibid., pp. 111–112). Unfortunately, data concerning how the audiences evaluate the transparency of the Latvian public service media companies production processes, including editorial autonomy, are not available, at least not in published sources.

It must be concluded, therefore, that the specifics of media company's corporate social responsibility rest on media ownership transparency and editorial autonomy being directly based on CSR requirements about the transparency of production processes in the core operations of these companies. Transparency of media ownership and collegial editorial autonomy belong to the transparency of production processes, are both discretionary practices and preconditions for media credibility as the basis for audience trust and journalistic quality.

At the same time, the particular challenge for the core business of media companies is growing. Companies must, on one hand, not only manage the business viably, but also to comply with the regulatory framework for responsible journalism in terms of objectivity, diversity and adherence to the truthfulness by implementing appropriate media accountability measures, namely, self-regulation on the level of a media system. On the other hand, media companies must also manage CSR on their organizational level. These two strategies together

form a specific concept of 'media social responsibility' as an organizational ethic (Koinig et al., 2019; Raupp, Jarolimek & Schultz, 2011, p. 11; Altmeppen, 2011, p. 248).

Karmasin and Bichler (2017, p. 142) have observed the opposite practice stating "[m]ost media corporations seem to have CSR on the agenda, but when it comes to institutionalization, there is a long way to go." Instrumental CSR without changing and affecting the core business seems to dominate instead of holistic (integrative) CSR as a comprehensive and voluntary objective integrated in the core business activity of media enterprises

> CSR is instrumentally used as a tool to foster trust and credibility – but holistic approaches are scarce. So, the media industry obviously does not set the benchmark for competing with integrity. In general, the media industry seems to underestimate the potential of CSR for its business… (Karmasin & Bichler, 2017, pp. 142–143; cf. Weder & Karmasin, 2009, p. 326).

From the macro or system perspective, research has primarily focused on political and economic institutions, while the organizational level, which also provides context for journalism work and change, is currently understudied (Peruško et al. 2020, p. 1631). There are also media ethics tools at the organizational level for the protection of journalists and the quality of journalism, such as individual media ombudsmen, public editors, codes of ethics, appropriate personnel policies and others (Weder & Karmasin, 2009, p. 327). So, as an example and a good pattern, the US and the UK have developed stronger internal quality assurance mechanisms in media outlets, e. g., editorial agreements, which strengthen editorial autonomy not only against purely commercially motivated influences on media content but also internal editorial control (Donsbach, 2001, pp. 69, 71, 74).

Media journalism (including media criticism) is also important in the attention economy (e. g. Franck 2020) on both levels, organizational and also media system level. This ensures the transparency of the media industry and to highlight the added value of journalism (along with content created by advertising, organizational communication and social media users) (Russ-Mohl, 2017, pp. 235, 237). Media journalism is a specialist field both in general and in specialized media auditing the media itself, journalism, and public relations and advertising (ibid., p. 316).

GLOBAL TRENDS IN A TRANSITIONAL MEDIA SYSTEM

Significant and topical global trends of the media industry should be considered when discussing specifics of Latvia's media system. The social responsibility of the media is manifested primarily in the decisions of media companies and editorial boards that concern the creation, presentation and distribution of media editorial content, so the core business of each news media. Such rulings have a decisive impact on the further development of the media industry especially in the current phase of dominance of social media platforms, both in terms of media use and the media advertising market. They include rulings by media owners, publishers and broadcasters (which nowadays rarely are the same natural or legal persons, but there is a separate highest management in publishing houses and broadcasting companies) on transparency of production processes, including editorial autonomy or so-called editorial independence/freedom (when daily editorial decisions are made by the editorial staff only).

This paper argues that in the context of global media industry trends, two factors – media ownership transparency and editorial autonomy – are increasingly impacting the decision-making powers of editors and journalists. They are, ultimately, important for the professional performance of media and the competitiveness of media companies vis-à-vis both public relations (organizational communication) and advertising (bought space and broadcast time clearly separated from the editorial content). These professional communication industries, in turn, operate not only according to other, much narrower professional standards in terms of social responsibility (e. g. Russ-Mohl, 2017, p. 301), but they are also funded not by the media audience (public) as media are, but by a much narrower customers groups – spenders of public relations and advertising services.

It can be said that the media is returning to its beginnings, without advertising playing a decisive role in the dual media business model: from protected journalists to the credibility of editorial content and then from the trust of an audience created by credible content to audience payments for such media content (proved by empirical research and practice cf. Bachmann, 2017, pp. 175–177, 199; Fengler, 2015, p. 242; Spillmann, 2020, p. 301) – credibility via trust consequently leads to media competitiveness in the modern attention economy where information (content) is changed to the attention (e. g. Davenport & Beck 2001; Fengler & Russ-Mohl, 2005, p. 38; Fengler, 2015, p. 237–239, 241; Franck 2020).

A recent study by the World Economic Forum *Understanding Value in Media: Perspectives from Consumers and Industry* acknowledges: "The main question for media companies is whether they can convince consumers that they will deliver enough value to make them start paying" (World Economic Forum, 2020, p. 19).

Thus, the crucial question for media companies now and in the future is whether they can *convince* consumers that the media offer enough benefits for users to pay for (e. g. there are signs that overall growth of payment for online news may be levelling off, see Newman et al., 2022, p. 10). The media actually first and foremost creates (or, conversely, does not create) the willingness of users to pay for a special professional performance of the media (the first part of the dual media business model besides advertising incomes) that meets the information, identification and entertainment needs of media users.

Here we will also look at Latvia's national peculiarities: in particular (1) the different competing journalism cultures (Dimants, 2018, 2019; cf. to close connections between the concepts of journalism cultures and media systems: Lauk, 2008, pp. 193–194; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; McQuail, 2005) and (2) the legal positivism of media policy actors (relying mainly on legal regulation) as opposed to good media business practice.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR NATIONAL MEDIA POLICY

The above-cited study further states, "leading news publishers are taking advantage of the scale offered by the internet to deliver quality content alongside profitability" (World Economic Forum 2020, p. 4). From here it can be concluded that in a small market such as Latvia's, especially in the Latvian language, quality (serious) content must find other financing (e. g. direct payment from the audience) as it is very unlikely that the financing will be derived from their economies of scale by advertising incomes for popular content in the Internet. "For news, 53% would be willing to pay in the future, up from 16% who pay today" (ibid., p. 5). The future, when users will be willing to pay for journalistic content, can therefore be hoped for, but such a future can be purposefully and deliberately brought closer by appropriate audience trust creating activities of media companies. A recent study by the Trust in News Project concludes that

> [t]o the extent that many users are looking for greater guidance on how to navigate between sources online, that suggests that news organisations would benefit from providing clearer cues and signals about who they are, their histories, what they stand for, and how they do their work (Toff et al. 2021, pp. 40–41).

> Across countries, young people (aged 16–34) are the most likely to pay for content. …we see a greater proportion of paid news subscriptions among higher income or higher status individuals (there is no consistent pattern for entertainment services). …concerns of emerging 'information inequalities',

where wealthier consumers have access to more or higher-quality information, are very real (World Economic Forum 2020, p. 5)

Similar observations on media use are made in Latvia in the exacerbating conditions of the pandemic crisis (see Mārketings pret COVID-19 2020). Those are mostly younger, wealthier and more educated people who are willing to pay, so, *inter alia*, it turns out that the average quality content for everyone, especially in a small market like Latvia, can be provided mainly by public service media which is funded by all taxpayers.

Latvian newspapers, primarily dailies, suffered a lot under the pressure of business oligarchs and the ensuing loss of credibility and trust. The proportion of newspapers within the distribution of advertising expenditure was only 4% in 2017, compared to 17% in Estonia (Donauskaitė et al., 2019, p. 10) despite both nations historically having the same tradition of reading newspapers. But the whole print press in Russia attracted less than 4% of all advertising revenue in 2018 (Goble, 2019).

Original highlights in the World Economic Forum study, "*Questions persist about how to fund the production of valuable content.*

> The success of some news and entertainment providers demonstrates that consumer revenues can be genuine alternative to advertising. This trend suggests increasing awareness among consumers about their role in financing content production… consumers expect governments to take a bigger role in funding news versus entertainment, as well as identifying advertisers as important contributors to financing content production. (…) These questions will need to be resolved if the important social functions of media are to be preserved (World Economic Forum 2020, pp. 5, 19).

It follows from such developments in the media industry that the role of a purposeful state (governmental) media policy is to support journalistic content in the media rather than entertainment, as well as to provide incentives for advertisers who place advertisements in (mass) media rather than social media.

On the other hand, not only are the position of media owners, publishers and broadcasters, but also the support of users with their wallets crucial for the successful corporate social responsibility of the media, which includes offering quality or serious (informative analytical, etc.) content in journalism. Amongst other strategies, an increase in micropayments is expected, provided that media companies are able to make them really convenient and fast to use: "news executives about the future of their industry, around two-thirds expected an increase in the use of micropayments to consume news" (ibid., p. 16).

In the age of social media, the mass media still remains the main agenda-setter for the public, and the effects of the mass media system on other sub-systems of society (political, economic, legal, socio-cultural) are ever permanent (e. g. Luhmann 1996; McCombs 2004), as is the dependence of individuals' socializing on mass media information by that agenda setting. These theories are far from being overturned, despite the growing influence of social media content on the media agenda, as evidenced, e.g., by the high proportion of media content on social media platforms and their use, especially in crisis situations (see Mārketings pret COVID-19 2020). The social media are increasingly powerful in defining the agenda in the era of digital media, e.g., the winners of the last Riga City Council elections on August 2020, social liberals (electoral list *Attīstībai Par/Progresīvie*), are good example for that, especially in mobilizing young urban voters. However, the agenda taken by social media users is still becoming the agenda of society at large through the mass media agenda and not without mediation by them. In all events, there is no empirical evidence for the opposite, at least in Latvia.

Social media platforms obviously account for a great share of the content created for organizational communication, including strategic communication, which is frequently propagandistic (one-sided) public relations. There are media of authoritarian states, false news, trolls, etc. Amount to about 40%, in conversations conducted by bots in Russian-language messaging about NATO's presence in Poland and the Baltic States, in comparison to the content created by social media users (cf. NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence 2020). In this situation, reliable media content and users' media literacy are growing in importance.

THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LATVIAN MEDIA: TWO COMPETING JOURNALISM CULTURES

A substantial but not strongly dominant share of the media outlets that are focused on highly professional standards represents the modern journalism culture in Latvia. These outlets typically have actual, not just declarative self-regulation and codes of ethics. There are professional associations, particularly the Latvian Association of Journalists (LŽA, 2021), which has used its professional code of ethics since 2010 (Ētikas kodekss, 2014), the Latvian Association of Broadcasting Organizations (LRA, 2021), the Latvian Association of Press Publishers (LPIA, 2021) and the Latvian Advertising Association (LRA, 2021a), as well as the first national Latvian Media Ethics Council that was established in 2018 (cf. LMĒP, 2020). This council is the result of co-regulation and unites all the most powerful legal persons in media industry:together more than

40 media companies and all the above mentioned associations. It was initiated by and is financed by the state (regulation), but the media sector self-regulates itself independently by historically first drafting a joint code of ethics (LMĒP ētikas kodekss, 2019) and then supervising it (self-regulation).

> Public broadcasters and private, commercial media companies have to invest into CSR measures, especially considering globalization and convergence trends." This might be achieved by developing and communicating the responsibility principles and appropriate instruments as mission statements or codes of conduct. The basic rules and guidelines are put into words and therefore institutionalized. „A major part of public self-binding is the publication of the mission or internal codes (Karmasin et al., 2014, pp. 235, 239).

Organizational ombudsmen and company guidelines, "highly influential on daily routines, (…) a typical tool of CSR, focus on the specific structure and needs of each media outlet" (ibid., pp. 234, 243–244). The qualitative, interpretative assessment of Latvian media and their belonging to various competitive journalism cultures as a set of professional norms and practices was made mostly on the bases of open, published data (editorial content about itself and other media, media websites, especially the section "About Us", company guidelines, etc.). However, these published sources (see references to respective information about ownership/highest management and the codes of ethics, both if available, hereafter in brackets) were also cross-checked by a survey of 25 representative Latvian media organizations. This was a sample of the largest mass media organisations, representing each relevant media type, both in Latvian and Russian languages, all mentioned below. The most senior media managers (editors-in-chief or senior members of the board) were interviewed by the author together with a communication student of Riga Stradins University in August–September 2021.

The modern journalism culture is represented by the largest but not absolutely dominant group of media, orientated towards high journalistic professional standards and practicing holistic CSR. Primarily they are Latvian media, which provide the abovementioned features of media corporate social responsibility. Secondly, if they are political mass media outlets in terms of content, they have ongoing own independent political agendas. Third, they are Latvia's leading media outlets (cf. Donauskaitė et al., 2020; Donauskaitė et al., 2019; Dimants, 2018, 2019):

1) The main news media outlets (having the largest audiences) in Latvia are the two most popular Internet portals – *Delfi.lv* (which has started to offer fee-based and original content since 2019; Delfi redakcija, 2021 – with reference to LMĒP ētikas kodekss, 2019) and *TVnet.lv* with a fee-based content segment since 2020 (Mūsu pienākums, 2021; Aljas et al. 2022);

2) An equally massive and profitable media outlet is *TV3* (Rīcības un ētikas kodekss TV3 programmai, 2019; All Media Baltics, 2021), which is the most popular and profitable commercial television station;

3) The market leader in the newspaper sector is the nationalist and conservative *Latvijas Avīze* (AS "Latvijas Mediji" žurnālistu ētikas kodekss, 2021; Vadība, 2021);

4) The liberal weekly news magazine *Ir* has been published since 2010 (Ētikas kodekss, 2021; Par IR, 2021);

5) The largest and most profitable magazine publishing company is *Žurnāls Santa* (SIA "Žurnāls Santa" žurnālistu ētikas kodekss, 2021), which publishes more than 20 magazines and has an Internet portal (which was launched only in 2019 together with fee-based section *Santa+*);

6) The absolute majority of local newspapers, e. g. daily *Kurzemes Vārds* in Liepāja (Izdevniecības "Kurzemes Vārds" žurnālistu ētikas kodekss, 2012), *Neatkarīgās Tukuma Ziņas* in Tukums (Kontakti 2021 – with the reference to Ētikas kodekss, 2014), *Zemgales Ziņas* in Jelgava (Ētikas kodekss, 2021a), *Druva* in Cēsis ("Druvas" žurnālistu ētikas kodekss, 2016; Kontakti, 2021a), *Rēzeknes Vēstis* in Rēzekne (Kontaktinformācija, 2021);

7) The public service media (with the smallest budget in the Baltic States) include *Latvian Television* (Rīcības un ētikas kodekss, 2020), *Radio Latvia* (Rīcības kodekss, 2017) and their jointly organized Internet portal *LSM. lv*, which has rapidly become very popular (it was established in Latvian, Russian and English in 2013); and

8) The independent investigatory journalism center Re:Baltica (About us, 2021).

Most important in the context of this article's topic, all above mentioned media provided for the empirical research both, a transparent structure of ownership and convincing proof of editorial autonomy by editorial practice, not only declarative statements.

The Economic Theory of Journalism speaks to the actors' economic (market) perspectives and to a visible and broadly distributed instrumental and authoritarian journalism culture in Latvia, which does not operate on the basis of public payments upon which the media business depends, as well does not ensure media ownership transparency and editorial autonomy of media. When it comes to the political agenda, the operations of these media outlets by definition mean public relations. That is because when it comes to the political issues they are not independent, instead being subordinated to instrumental aspects of the political system without a distinctive separate role (see Luhmann, 1996). These are no longer media outlets that are financed by political parties, but this dependency ensures political parallelism to some of the parties that are controlled by specific business oligarchs.

This culture of journalism is represented by fairly large and numerous mass media outlets (cf. Donauskaitė et al., 2019; Dimants, 2018, 2019):

1) The most typical ones are the *NRA.lv* portal and the daily newspaper *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* (Code of ethics, 2001), which suspended its print edition in May 2020. Since 1999, the newspaper has served the political and business interests of the mayor of the Baltic Sea port town of Ventspils, Aivars Lembergs.

2) The second largest daily newspaper, *Diena*, was sold by the Swedish Bonnier Media group in 2009 during the financial crisis. Latvia's print media lost 65% of their advertising income during that period, and *Diena* and other publications from the joint stock company were basically handed over to a group of Latvian business oligarchs – Lembergs, Ainārs Šlesers and Andris Šķēle (cf. Donauskaitė et al., 2019). The trend in Latvia, however, is that such "tendency press" receives subsidies from other businesses and lost millions of euro each year. This means that the economic market system does not support them (Luhmann 1966, 51; Donauskaitė et al., 2019, pp. 24–25). Furthermore, these media outlets cripple a healthy market;

3) Instrumental journalism culture is also represented by the second-largest magazine publishing house, Rīgas Viļņi (Uzņēmuma vadība, 2021), which more or less openly sells also editorial content due to overdone commercialization;

4) The largest Russian language television channel for twenty years was *PBK Latvia* (The Board, 2021), which since March 2020 stopped producing local content in Latvia, particularly in terms of news reports, which was a small but influential part of its programming. Afterwards the channel presented only programs from the Russian state-controlled *Pervyj Rossijskij kanal* channel until October 2021 when this broadcasting license was canceled by NEPLP, the national regulatory authority for audiovisual media services. This cancellation was due to the indictment of breaking EU-sanctions against Vladimir Putin's closest circle; in fact, *PBK* remained available in Latvian cable networks with the valid licenses of *PBK Estonia* and *PBK Lithuania* channels until the 'special operation' in Ukraine started in February 2022, which led to NEPLP ceasing all *PBK*'s retransmissions April 2022 (cf. Aljas et al. 2022, p. 35);

5) Latvia's most popular weekly is *MK Latvija* (O nas, 2021), published in Russian as a localized and a mostly week-day practical advice-oriented version of *Moskovskij komsomolec*, which is popular (tabloid) media outlet in Moscow;

6) The only daily in Latvia in Russian is *Segodnja*, more widely available on the Internet (Vesti segodnja until 2017; Etičeskij kodeks, 2021 – with the reference to Ētikas kodekss, 2014);

7) Some local and regional newspapers, like the local *Ventas Balss* in Ventspils (Ētikas kodekss, 2021b), *Latgales Laiks* in Daugavpils (Laikraksta SIA "Latgales Laiks" žurnālistu ētikas kodekss, 2017), which function to a great extent under the financial influence of respective local governments, and the regional newspaper *Vietējā Latgales Avīze* (owned by the local dairy producer in Preiļi);

8) Some small television and radio channels (seem questionable because of nontransparent financing of programs, e. g. *RīgaTV 24*), etc.

All of the media outlets in Latvia that represent the instrumental journalism culture are non-transparent when it comes to their print run, sources of information, production processes, purchased editorial content, ownership and editorial autonomy. It is notable that employees of these media are members of a separate and former Soviet journalist organization – the Latvian Union of Journalists (LŽS, 2021), which adopted a code of ethics in 1992 (Latvijas žurnālistu ētikas kodekss, 1992). This organization exists still on paper and without any institutional oversight of its code implementation but in 2018 formally created an alternative council in opposite to the Latvian Media Ethics Council (Latvijas Žurnālistu Mediju padome, 2018).

The instrumental journalism culture also applies to most of the local government media outlets that have been established since 2009, when administrative and territorial reforms took effect in Latvia. These publications imitate media and by no means limit themselves to legitimate public relations; they take part in local media markets, cripple competence for independent local media outlets, and pretend to offer journalism while actually presenting the political propaganda of the majority in the local government. These publications, moreover, are paid for by all taxpayers in the relevant market. The result is a semi-authoritarian media system which facilitates a corresponding political regime in a territorial miniature in one administrative district or town, e. g. such as Jelgava. These trends clearly endanger local democracy, but despite a few attempts, the state has proven to be basically helpless when it comes to bringing these authoritarian trends to an end.

THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MEDIA IN LATVIA: A LEGAL APPROACH VERSUS GOOD PRACTICES

Higher demands related to transparency in terms of media ownership have not been effective in law nor particularly in their application. Therefore, the real beneficiaries in practice can remain anonymous despite direct regulations in Article 102 of the law on the press and other mass media outlets (Latvijas Republikas likums, 1990; Grozījumi likumā, 2011). This article states: "The

founders and owners of mass media outlets who represent capital enterprises shall be obliged to inform the commercial register institution about their true beneficiaries in accordance with the events and procedures referred to in the Commercial Law." The ineffectiveness by implementation of this amendment basically offers additional evidence of the fact that transparency in the area of media ownership is an aspect of voluntary corporate social responsibility.

On the other hand, steps taken by the government to prevent money laundering at banks have been effective, and that shows that the relevant mechanisms of governance are resource-capacious but possible. This is also seen in the European Union's Directive on Audiovisual Media Services. Article 5, Paragraph 2 for the first time includes requirements related to the transparency of media ownership (AVMSD, 2018):

> Member States may adopt legislative measures providing that, in addition to the information listed in Paragraph 1, media services under their jurisdiction make accessible information concerning their ownership structure, including the beneficial owners. Such measures shall respect the fundamental rights concerned, such as the private and family life of beneficial owners. Such measures shall be necessary and proportionate and shall aim to pursue an objective of general interest.

Regulations in Article 15 of the same Latvia's mass media umbrella law refer to the same declarative regulations, this time related to editorial autonomy. The law refers to possible "civil law relations between founders or publishers and editorial institutions" (Latvijas Republikas likums, 1990; cf. similar regulations by German media law: Meyn & Tonnemacher 2012, pp. 184–185). Article 16 (as amended in 2011) addresses the autonomy of editors-in-chief, but has also proven to be less that productive in practice: "The editor (editor-in-chief), in carrying out his duties, shall be editorially independent." This leads to the conclusion that editorial autonomy is basically more dependent on the voluntary corporate social responsibility of a media company than on legal regulations by the state.

CONCLUSIONS

To summarize, although there is a need for further research from the perspective of media users, it must be already concluded that the ability of a country's media policy to facilitate media ownership transparency and editorial autonomy of the media as a part of corporate social responsibility depends mostly—not on legal regulations—but on co-regulations. They could link an incentive government

support policy for those media which take part in the self-regulation system (Karmasin & Bichler 2017, p. 143). Specifically, in Latvia, there is the issue of the Media Ethics Council, its code of ethics, and the extent to which journalists take it into account (see LMĒP, 2020). Therefore, even compliance-driven CSR linking media subsidies to membership in Latvian Media Ethics Council would be a more stimulating means without touching press freedom by regulating the media via laws (cf. Karmasin et al., 2014, pp. 232, 234–235). It is also true that instrumental journalism culture media products must not receive any support from the state. Instead, legal regulations in the country must become far more effective, especially by their implementation in areas where the independent media market is crippled by imitated media publications that are issued by local governments.

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Digital Reputation Management in American Cancer Hospitals: A Proposed Model

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Abstract: Cancer patients face complicated situations from an emotional, social and physical perspective. Hospitals help them through implementing corporate communication initiatives based on social media platforms. This win-win relationship allows hospitals to reinforce their brand reputation. This paper aims to better understand how cancer hospitals manage social media platforms for enhancing their brand as well as their relationships with stakeholders. To do that, we carried out a literature review about corporate communication in health organizations, as well as a content analysis about how the top 100 American cancer hospitals managed their corporate website as well as their corporate profile on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube for branding initiatives. Finally, we proposed the Reb Model for Branding Cancer Hospitals. We concluded that thanks to social media, cancer hospitals can reinforce their brand because these platforms allow them to promote human values, improve their internal processes and become a true source of scientific information.

Keywords : Hospital; Corporate Communication; Brand; Reputation; Social Media.

INTRODUCTION

Cancer patients face traumatic situations from an emotional, social and physical perspective. Their lack of knowledge about this disease and its treatments, the impact of uncertainty in their daily life, the difficulty to manage some emotions (hope, fear, etc.) and the challenge of building an emotional support network determine cancer patients' behaviors. On the other hand, facing cancer diseases constitutes a true challenge for health organizations, such as public hospitals, private clinics, patients' associations, pharmaceutical companies or public authorities. The professional management of corporate communication based on a health education perspective represents a strategic opportunity to help hospitals establish better relationships with cancer patients and, thus improve their own corporate reputation. Most cancer hospitals have already implemented a social media strategy whose main objective consists of building a reputed brand in a collective way along with stakeholders, especially patients. This paper aims to analyze how cancer hospitals manage social media platforms to improve their patients' perceptions in order to build a reputed brand. To do that, we initially carried out a literature review about cancer patients' behaviors, health professionals' skills in communication, social media platforms, branding and visual communication initiatives. Second, we conducted a content analysis about how the top 100 cancer hospitals in United States managed their social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) as well as their corporate websites to promote their corporate brands. Third, we proposed a communication model for branding cancer hospitals through social media platforms (Reb Model).

CANCER HOSPITALS' WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Most patients are willing to tell health professionals about their feelings and thoughts (Silverman, Kurtz, Draper, 2013). Nevertheless, this behavior changes for cancer patients who have a high prevalence of psychological stress, which makes communication relationships with doctors more difficult (Moore et al., 2018). When cancer patients interact with health professionals, they deal with uncertainty, intense emotions, collective decision-processes, human values and self-management processes (Blanch-Hartigan et al., 2016). Patients' characteristics (sadness, anxiety) as well as doctors' feelings (stress, alexithymia) determine their communication relationships (De-Vries et al., 2018). Cancer patients build an image of their clinicians centered on their expertise and authority and consider them as providing a safe haven in the face of threat (Beesley et al., 2016). Sharing information and establishing collective decision-making processes positively influences patients' perceptions about health professionals (Peterson et al.,

2016; Salmon, Bridget, 2017). Implementing a true dialogue based on mutual respect and empathy constitutes a priority for health professionals; otherwise, they are unable to efficiently help cancer patients (Brand, Fasciano & Mack, 2017). These professionals should also communicate with primary care physicians about cancer patients' treatments and post-cancer treatments in order to improve patients' perceptions about hospitals (Klabunde et al., 2017).

Health professionals need to be trained on how to manage emotions and social issues in order to improve their interpersonal communication performance with cancer patients (Salmon & Bridget, 2017). Some schools of medicine and nursing have already modified their study plans to integrate courses on interpersonal communication (Epstein, Duberstein & Fenton, 2017), such as ad-hoc courses about how to explain facts and adapt the information to patients' emotions (Moore et al., 2018). Research has proved that doctors' good communication skills improve effective health care as well as relationships with various types of patients (Brown, 2008). Health organizations should implement combined interventions including oncologists' communication training and cancer patients' coaching initiatives in order to foster patients' knowledge about treatments and diseases (Epstein, Duberstein & Fenton, 2017). Once both sets of stakeholders have reinforced their communication skills, they can deal with six core topics: managing uncertainty, responding to emotions, making decisions, fostering healing relationships, enabling self-management, and exchanging information (Blanch-Hartigan et al., 2016).

The professional use of social media allows health organizations to engage entire populations at low cost, develop supportive social networks, connect patients with oncologists and collect data useful for advancing cancer research (Prochaska, Coughlin & Lyons, 2017). In the United States, 95% of the top ranked hospitals manage at least a social media platform (Taken, 2017). Some hospitals such as the Mayo Clinic have even integrated these platforms in some internal medical protocols in order to improve patient's care, advance in medical research and evaluate health professionals' performance (Kotsenas et al., 2018). Managing social media helps hospitals improve cancer patients' experiences: emotional support, accurate information, learning initiatives and dialogue with health professionals (Falisi et al., 2017). Even if using these platforms also constitutes a public health constraint (Costa-Sánchez & Míguez-González, 2018), hospitals and oncologist should recognize the importance of owning their brand and protecting their digital reputation (Kotsenas et al., 2018). To do that, they can also resort to social media to launch health communities allowing patients and doctors to share accurate health content (De Las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2020).

Health professionals play an essential role when hospitals promote any of their digital services related to cancer care (Yeob et al. 2017). Doctors should implement an evidence-based practice to improve their digital relationships with cancer

patients (Sedrak et al., 2017) and social media allow cancer patients to better understand medical information and positively influence them to adhere to treatments and establish therapeutic alliances (Namkoong, Shah & Gustafson, 2017). Thanks to these platforms, hospitals understand how cancer patients conceptualize and communicate about their illness (Sedrak et al., 2016). Social media have changed the way patients search for cancer information (Attai et al., 2016) and express their emotions (Cho et al., 2018), which is why hospitals, health professionals and patients should use these platforms in a professional way in order to establish trustworthy relationships (Kotsenas et al., 2018).

Twitter, Facebook and YouTube are three of the most important social media platforms that hospital can use to improve their brand reputation (Triemstra, Stork & Arora, 2018). When health professionals use Facebook to communicate with cancer patients, they focus their conversations on six main topics: 1) documenting the cancer journey, 2) sharing emotional strains associated with caregiving, 3) promoting awareness about pediatric cancer, 4) fundraising, 5) mobilizing support, and 6) expressing gratitude for support (Gage-Bouchard et al., 2017). Thanks to Facebook, patients can also participate in digital communities, interact with oncologists, gather credible medical information and reinforce their empowerment (Attai et al., 2016). Facebook has become an important asset to evaluate medical services quality (Ivanov, Sharman, 2018), enhance patients' engagement and improve hospitals' revenues (Apenteng et al., 2020). Finally, this platform provides an infrastructure that allows researchers to interact with patients in new ways (Sedrak, et al. 2017).

In Twitter, oncologists and cancer patients prioritize three kinds of content: 1) general, sensitive, and topical health issues; 2) personal and professional projects; and 3) corporate novelties that encourage public involvement (Costa-Sánchez, Míguez-González, 2018). By meeting patients in a digital environment, doctors can improve patients' care and further their trust in the hospital (Sedrak et al., 2017). Some oncologists and patients resort to Twitter to create digital communities and journal clubs allowing them to implement health education initiatives related to cancer prevention (Cho et al., 2018). Health organizations must disseminate accurate content that could be easily shared by patients and other stakeholders (Sutton et al., 2018).

Implementing visual communication initiatives on social media to disseminate cancer-related content helps patients to better understand their treatments and diseases, as well as reinforce their engagement with their own welfare (Basch et al., 2015). Using images and videos to educate cancer patients is one of the most efficient strategies that health organizations can implement. For this reason, YouTube has become an essential tool in digital cancer communication (Fernández-Gómez & Díaz-Campo, 2016). YouTube is a powerful education platform that allows patients to better understand cancer diseases

and treatments; nevertheless, some videos are not produced by experts in this domain, which constitutes a public health risk (Míguez-González, García Crespo & Ramahí-García, 2019). Hospitals should improve their presence on YouTube in order to analyze in a more accurate way how cancer patients behave and why they take some decisions concerning their treatments (Balasooriya-Smeekens, Walter & Scott, 2015).

METHODOLOGY

To understanding how American cancer hospitals manage social media platforms to promote their corporate brand and improve their reputation, we have analyzed the U.S. News & World Report Hospital Rankings & Ratings, a reference study that reviews hospitals' performance in 16 specializations (cancer, cardiology, diabetes, etc.) according to different indicators. To define these indicators, this ranking considers a variety of data coming from several sources such as the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Standards Analytical File Database, the American Hospital Association, different professional associations, etc. All indicators used to evaluate hospitals are grouped in four main categories: a) outcomes (survival rate, rate of discharge to home, etc.), b) patients' experience, c) care-related factors, and d) experts' opinion obtained through physicians' survey. This annual ranking analyzes 4,653 hospitals, which represents all US community inpatient facilities.[1]

According to this ranking, we identified the 100 top cancer hospitals in the United States (see Annex 1 List of all hospitals that were analyzed).[2] Afterwards, we carried out content analysis in order to evaluate how these organizations managed four digital platforms: 1) their corporate website, because it centralizes their whole digital communication strategy (Lee et al., 2015); 2) Facebook, the most used social media platform in the world[3]; 3) Twitter, one of the best platforms that health organizations can use to engage corporate conversations with patients (Park, Reber & Chon, 2016); and 4) YouTube, the best social media platform for sharing videos, which is especially useful for health organizations when disseminating scientific content (Kotsenas et al., 2018). We carried out this analysis from 1st March to 22 April 2020.

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1   More information about this methodology is available on: https://health.usnews.com/health-care/best-hospitals/articles/faq-how-and-why-we-rank-and-rate-hospitals. Document retrieved on 21th February 2020.

2   Document retrieved on 7th January 2020 from: https://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/rankings/cancer.

3   In January 2020, more than 2,449 million people in the world used this platform. Document retrieved on 2nd February 2020 from: https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/

To analyze how these hospitals managed these four digital platforms, we considered 48 indicators grouped into three main categories: a) identity, b) communication activities, and c) patients' engagement (see Table 1). Most of these indicators aimed to verify whether hospitals disseminate brand related content, such as mission, vision, logo, awards, etc. As much as possible, we tried to homogenize these indicators in the four digital platforms; nevertheless, we also displayed the distinct kind of statistics and content provided by each platform. We only considered each hospital's corporate profile on these four digital platforms; in other words, we did not evaluate any other kind of profile: events, departments' profiles, non-official profiles, etc.

Table 1. Performance Indicators (N=48)

Corporate Website	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube
Identity*			
1. Corporate logo	1. Corporate logo	1. Corporate logo	1. Corporate logo
2. Multilingual website	2. Links to corporate websites	2. Links to corporate websites	2. Links to corporate websites
3. Links to medical departments	3. Hospital's description	3. Hospital's description	3. Hospital's description
4. Find a doctor	4. Milestones	4. Joined date	4. Milestones
5. Find diseases	5. Awards	5. Foundation date	5. Awards
6. Links to research and education departments	6. Brand values	6. Hashtags in the description	6. Brand values
7. Link to the Press Department	7. Mission	7. Health professionals or hospital's building in the main image	7. Mission
8. Links to social media platforms	8. Vision	8. Links to other social media platforms	8. Vision
Communication Activities**			
9. Videos in the homepage	9. Videos integrated	9. Number of Followings	9. Playlists
10. Press releases on the homepage	10. Events	10. Media section with videos	10. Channels
Patient's engagement***			
11. Patients' platform	11. Number of likes	11. Number of likes	11. Number of subscribers
12. Mobile apps	12. Number of followers	12. Number of followers	12. Number of views

*Homepage in the Corporate Website and Twitter; and About Us section on Facebook and YouTube

** Homepage in all platforms

*** Homepage in all platforms

Source: Authors.

We chose to analyze 100 units (hospitals) in order to evaluate four variables (three social media platforms and the corporate website) according to three main categories (identity, communication activities and patient's engagement). All 48 indicators were analyzed according to the binary system, except for seven that were evaluated as absolute numbers: Facebook (11, 12), Twitter (9,11,12) and YouTube (11,12). For each indicator, we only considered inputs that we could immediately see on the homepage or the About Us section, and not those for which we needed to do more than one click and then browse through different menus. Finally, the Mayo Clinic used the same website and corporate profile on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube for its three branches in Rochester, Phoenix and Jacksonville.

FINDINGS

After analyzing how the 100 top cancer hospitals in the United States managed their corporate website as well as their corporate profiles on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube for branding initiatives, we grouped our findings in four categories.

Category 1 – Corporate websites. All hospitals analyzed had their own corporate website. Most of them displayed identity related indicators: logo – 100%, links to other departments – 100%, links to research and education sections – 98%, links to other social media platforms – 95%, a search engine for finding doctors – 86%, a link to the Communication Department – 76%, a search engine for finding diseases – 28%, and a multilingual website – 25%. Concerning communication activities, 71% of hospitals included press releases on their homepage, but only 31% published videos. Finally, as to patients' engagement, 69% of hospitals proposed a patients' platform, but only 7% have a mobile app. Finally, 4% of hospitals displayed 11 indicators (see Table 3) whereas 70% showed between 7 and 9 indicators see (Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of Indicators

Number of indicators	Number of hospitals
12	0
11	4
10	8
9	26
8	21
7	23
6	11
5	5

Number of indicators	Number of hospitals
4	2
3	0
2	0
1	0
0	0

Source: Authors

Table 3. Hospitals Displaying at least 10 Criteria

Number of Indicators	Hospitals
11	University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
	Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center
	Jefferson Health-Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals
	University of Miami Hospitals and Clinics – Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center
10	H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute
	UCSF Medical Center
	UCLA Medical Center
	University of Chicago Medical Center
	UT Southwestern Medical Center
	Mount Sinai Hospital
	Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center
	Abbott Northwestern Hospital

Source: Authors

Category 2 – Facebook (FB). Almost all hospitals – 99% – have a corporate profile on FB. Most of them displayed the main identity related indicators: links to corporate websites – 100%, logo – 98%, corporate description – 92.93%, mission – 59.60%, milestones – 57.58%, awards – 26.26%, vision – 3.03%, and values – 2.02%. Concerning communication activities, 98.99% of hospitals integrated videos and 98% proposed an event section. For patients' engagement by the number of FB's likes (See Table 4) and by followers (see Table 5).

Table 4. Hospitals by Facebook (FB) Likes

	Hospital	Number of FB likes
1	Cleveland Clinic	2 042 922
2	Mayo Clinic*	1 161 046
3	John Hopkins Hospital	622 233
4	University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center	324 534

	Hospital	Number of FB likes
5	UCLA Medical Center	309 286
6	UCSF Medical Center	245 081
7	Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital	233 349
8	Mount Sinai Hospital	233 094
9	City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center	190 213
10	Vanderbilt University Medical Center	189 471

*Mayo Clinic Phoenix and Mayo Clinic Jacksonville used the
Mayo Clinic's corporate profile on Facebook

Source: Authors

Table 5. Hospitals by Facebook (FB) Followers

	Hospital	Number of FB followers
1	Cleveland Clinic	1 961 382
2	Mayo Clinic*	1 165 275
3	John Hopkins Hospital	622 096
4	University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center	329 211
5	UCLA Medical Center	308 647
6	UCSF Medical Center	245 900
7	Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital	238 871
8	Mount Sinai Hospital	238 504
9	City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center	193 998
10	Vanderbilt University Medical Center	185 876

*Mayo Clinic Phoenix and Mayo Clinic Jacksonville used the
Mayo Clinic's corporate profile on Facebook

Source: Authors

Category 3 – Twitter. Most hospitals – 98% – have a corporate profile on Twitter. Nevertheless, many of them did not display all the identity related indicators: logo – 100%, date of joining – 100%, links to corporate websites – 98.98%, corporate description – 84.69%, hashtags in their description – 36.73%, health professionals or buildings in their main profile image – 14.29%, foundation date – 3.06% and links to other social media platforms – 2.04%. Concerning communication activities, all hospitals included a media section with videos; for the most active in terms of Twitter following see Table 6. For patients' engagement by Twitter likes see Table 7 and by Twitter followers see Table 8.

Table 6. Communication Activities in US Hospitals by Number of Twitter Following

	Hospital	Number of Twitter following
1	Vanderbilt University Medical Center	17 361
2	Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center	13 388
3	Rush University Medical Center	8 935
4	Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital	6 808
5	Mount Sinai Hospital	6 794
6	UCLA Medical Center	5 495
7	New York-Presbyterian Hospital-Columbia and Cornell	4 499
8	Loyola University Medical Center	3 772
9	University of Virginia Medical Center	3 757
10	Massachusetts General Hospital	3 646

Source: Authors

Table 7. Patients' Engagement in US Hospitals by Number of Twitter Likes

	Hospital	Number of Twitter likes
1	UCLA Medical Center	38 570
2	University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center	22 000
3	Memorial Sloan – Kettering Cancer Center	21 700
4	Advocate Lutheran General Hospital	19 502
5	Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center	13 822
6	Jefferson Health-Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals	13 300
7	New York-Presbyterian Hospital-Columbia and Cornell	13 100
8	Elmhurst Hospital	11 802
9	UCSF Medical Center	10 500
10	UT Southwestern Medical Center	10 001

Source: Authors

Table 8. Patients' Engagement in US Hospitals by Number of Twitter Followers

	Hospital	Number of Twitter followers
1	Cleveland Clinic	2 012 299
2	Mayo Clinic*	1 982 371
3	John Hopkins Hospital	573 175
4	Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital	82 262
5	Mount Sinai Hospital	82 088
6	Memorial Sloan – Kettering Cancer Center	79 241

	Hospital	Number of Twitter followers
7	UCSF Medical Center	62 847
8	Hackensack University Medical Center	62 661
9	Massachusetts General Hospital	48 712
10	New York-Presbyterian Hospital-Columbia and Cornell	45 333

*Mayo Clinic Phoenix and Jacksonville used the Mayo Clinic's corporate profile on Twitter

Source: Authors

Category 4 – YouTube. Most of the hospitals (94%) have a corporate profile on this platform and most did not display the indicators related to identity: logo – 100%, links to corporate websites – 98.94%, corporate description – 82.29%, awards – 17.02%, milestones – 12.77%, mission – 7.45%, values – 0%, and vision – 0%. Concerning communication activities, all hospitals included playlists, and 57.5% also proposed new channels. Finally, as to patients' engagement by YouTube subscribers (see Table 9) and by number of YouTube views (see Table 10).

Table 9. Patients' Engagement in US Hospitals by Number of YouTube Subscribers

	Hospital	Number of subscribers
1	Mayo Clinic*	439 000
2	UCLA Medical Center	237 000
3	Cleveland Clinic	184 000
4	John Hopkins Hospital	167 000
5	UC San Diego Health – Moores Cancer Center	65 300
6	University of Michigan Hospitals – Michigan Medicine	63 800
7	University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center	61 700
8	Mount Sinai Hospital	55 500
9	Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital	55 000
10	Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center	46 200

*Mayo Clinic Phoenix and Jacksonville used the Mayo Clinic's corporate profile on YouTube

Source: Authors

Table 10. Patients' Engagement in US Hospitals by Number of YouTube Views

	Hospital	Number of views
1	Mayo Clinic*	142 916 852
2	Cleveland Clinic	88 773 583
3	UCLA Medical Center	45 987 500
4	John Hopkins Hospital	38 983 449
5	NYU Langone Hospitals	31 461 052

	Hospital	Number of views
6	University of Michigan Hospitals – Michigan Medicine	28 119 827
7	New York Presbyterian Hospital Columbia and Cornell	27 394 871
8	University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center	25 215 434
9	UPMC Presbyterian Shadyside	23 972 066
10	Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center	20 852 210

*Mayo Clinic Phoenix and Jacksonville used the Mayo Clinic's corporate profile on YouTube

Source: Authors

DISCUSSION

For many doctors, interacting with patients and understanding how they feel is really complicated (Silverman, Kurtz & Draper, 2013). Implementing a professional management of social media platforms constitutes an opportunity to help doctors establish better communication relationships with patients (Prochaska, Coughlin & Lyons, 2017). These platforms enable hospitals to create a new communication paradigm based on a brand-building collective process along with their stakeholders (Taken, 2017) and thus improve their own reputation (Gonzalez-Pacanowski & Medina-Aguerrebere, 2018). Social media also help to facilitate hospitals and patients to develop and establish better relationships by considering four main issues: a) communication objectives, b) main and secondary targets, c) brand positioning and d) evaluation. These four elements constitute any hospital's communication strategy on social media.

Issue 1 – Communication objectives. Defining consistent, strategic objectives constitutes the first step to implement an efficient communication campaign (Zerfass & Viertmann, 2017). Our results indicate most hospitals had a corporate website (100%) as well as corporate profile on Facebook (99%), Twitter (98%) and YouTube (94%). Moreover, most of them displayed many of the 48 indicators evaluated in this paper. These data prove that most American cancer hospitals work in a professional way and establish strategic communication objectives before launching any communication initiative on social media. Otherwise, it would be impossible for them to show so many indicators.

Issue 2 – Main and secondary targets. Social media enable hospitals to interact with patients, employees, public authorities, media companies and many other stakeholders (Griffis et al., 2014). Our findings showed that American cancer hospitals prioritize patients, but also other targets such as the whole society (98% of hospitals analyzed proposed an event section on Facebook), journalists (71% of them published press releases on their corporate website addressed

to media companies), or foreign patients (25% of hospitals had a multilingual corporate website).

Issue 3 – Brand positioning. Health organizations integrate medical information and patients' experiences in every corporate communication initiative in order to create a reputed, credible brand (Vraga et al., 2018). Our results indicated most hospitals used their logo on their corporate website (100%) as well as on their corporate profiles on Facebook (98%), Twitter (100%) and YouTube (100%). Nevertheless, most of them did not provide enough information about other corporate elements, such as their brand's values: Facebook (2,02%) and YouTube (0%). Many hospitals should reinforce these elements in order to establish an efficient brand positioning.

Issue 4 – Evaluation. To improve their presence on social media, hospitals constantly evaluate how health professionals interact with patients through these platforms (Mazor et al., 2016). American cancer hospitals used distinct criteria to evaluate their social presence, such as the number of likes and followers (Facebook and Twitter), or the number of subscribers and views (YouTube). Our results showed that the most efficient hospitals on social media were Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic and John Hopkins Medicine (by number of likes and followers on Facebook, number of followers on Twitter, and number of subscribers and views on YouTube).

Our quantitative analysis allowed us to identify three main trends. First, corporate websites are still strategic tools for most hospitals, even if many patients prefer to use social media and mobile apps when they need to contact health professionals. Second, most hospitals carried out a great effort to produce quality videos on YouTube, but most of them did not define their corporate brand architecture in an accurate way (corporate description, mission, vision, etc.). Third, most hospitals did not make a true effort to integrate their corporate website and social media platforms with mobile apps and patients' platforms.

After analyzing how American cancer hospitals managed their social media platforms, and considering our literature review, we propose the REB Model for Branding Cancer Hospitals. This communication model addresses cancer hospitals worldwide interested in improving their relationships with stakeholders and reinforcing their own corporate reputation. The model aims to help cancer hospitals manage social media in a professional way (objectives, plans, protocols, key performance indicators) so that corporate communication becomes a true profession in these organizations. Hospitals should adapt this model to their local context: cultural elements, social constraints, legal framework, etc. This model is based on four main elements: a) a social media department, b) communication principles, c) annual content plan (brand architecture, messages, target and platform) and d) key performance indicators.

Element 1 – Social media department. Hospitals should integrate this unit within their corporate communication department. This unit is led by a social media manager (SMM), who leads a team of several experts in communication, public health, medicine and artificial intelligence. Their main responsibility consists of implementing an annual digital communication plan as well as a range of protocols in order to structure all communication initiatives and thus build a reputed, credible brand. The SMM need to actively collaborate with health professionals and integrate some of them on social media campaigns.

Element 2 – Communication principles. Cancer hospitals respect ten main principles. First, publishing only accurate information in order to become a credible brand from a scientific perspective (Attai et al., 2016). Second, respecting medicine's basic principles – ethics, confidentiality, patient's integrity, etc. (Fischer et al., 2014). Third, implementing a public health approach based on patient's needs in terms of information (Miller, Guidry & Fuemmeler, 2019). Fourth, integrating human values in order to create meaningful relationships with stakeholders (Smailhodzic et al., 2016). Fifth, easing the collective processes of decision making, so that patients can actively interact with health professionals (Blomgren, Hedmo & Waks, 2016). Sixth, focusing on how to help patients improve their empowerment rather than promoting the hospital's products and services (Jones et al., 2015). Seventh, engage patients and other stakeholders in conversations, instead of disseminating commercial information (Lim, 2016). Eighth, adapting all communication initiatives to each stakeholder in order to better influence their behaviors and attitudes (Yang et al., 2018). Ninth, managing emotions for establishing an optimal communication between physicians and cancer patients (De Vries et al., 2018) and tenth, using various formats (texts, images, videos, etc.) to produce quality content (Janz et al., 2016).

Element 3 – Annual content plan. Before implementing any initiative on social media platforms, hospitals should define an annual content plan that integrates their brand architecture (identity, values, mission, vision, culture) with eight campaign-specific messages and nine main target audiences on four digital platforms – the hospital's corporate website, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (see Table 11 below).

Table 11. Hospital Annual Content Plan on digital media

Month	Brand Architecture	Key Message	Target	Platform
January	Identity	Passion for healthcare	Patients and relatives.	Twitter, YouTube
February	Brand value 1	Research-based Innovation	Hospital's health professionals	Twitter, YouTube
March	Brand value 2	Excellence	Shareholders	Corporate website, Facebook

Month	Brand Architecture	Key Message	Target	Platform
April	Mission	Health education	Media companies	YouTube, corporate website
May	Vision	Participative medicine	Public Authorities	Facebook, corporate website
June	Culture	Best practices	Other hospital's employees	Facebook, Twitter
July	Identity	Passion for healthcare	Patients and relatives	Twitter, YouTube
August	Brand value 3	Patients' empowerment	Patients' associations	Twitter, Facebook
September	Brand value 4	Ethics	Suppliers	Facebook, corporate website
October	Mission	Health education	Media companies	YouTube, corporate website
November	Vision	Participative medicine	Public authorities	Facebook, corporate website
December	Culture	Best practices	Other hospital's employees	Facebook, Twitter

Source: Authors

Element 4 – Key performance indicators. Hospitals should use five indicators for each platform: 1) corporate website (number of unique visitors, number of new visitors, bounce rate, number of leads, and average time on page), 2) Facebook (number of fans, number of likes, number of content shared, post engagement rate, and frequency), 3) Twitter (number of followers, number of link clicks, hashtags performance, number of impressions, and average engagement rate); and 5) YouTube (number of videos, number of subscribers, number of daily active users, total watch time, and video engagement).

Implementing a professional management of social media as a corporate communication tool allows cancer hospitals to reinforce their brand as well as their strategic position in the health market. Despite all quantitative and qualitative insights explained in this paper, we can identify some limitations. Unfortunately, we did not have access to all hospitals analyzed, so we could not evaluate their communication strategies in a more detailed way (internal structures, plans and protocols, budgets, indicators etc.). Moreover, we could not interact with patients going to these hospitals, so we were unable to evaluate their experiences from a communication point of view. Finally, there were no papers analyzing this same reality in other countries and using the same indicators, which is why we could not compare our results.

CONCLUSIONS

The professional management of social media as a corporate communication tool represents a true opportunity to improve hospitals' reputation as well as their relationships with stakeholders. This paper aimed to analyze how American cancer hospitals used social media platforms for enhancing their brand reputation. Our results showed that these platforms allow cancer hospitals to implement many initiatives useful for promoting their brand. We propose three ideas as conclusions. First, social media platforms cannot be considered as a marketing tool, but a corporate communication tool whose main objective is to help hospitals reinforce their credibility as a source of scientific information. Second, hospitals should take advantage of social media platforms for disseminating human values (integrity, education, transparency, etc.) in order to become a meaningful brand for all stakeholders. Third, hospitals should integrate social media in some medical protocols so that health professionals participate in communication initiatives and help hospitals build an innovative brand.

These three conclusions lead us to propose three managerial implications for cancer hospitals: a) these hospitals should recruit skillful experts on social media (public health, engineering and corporate communication) and establish protocols, annual plans, budgets and key performance indicators to work in a professional and integrated way; b) health professionals must be allowed to follow during their workdays pertinent trainings on social media in order to better integrate these platforms in their daily activities; and c) journalistic initiatives such as publishing magazines or sending press releases to media companies should be replaced by corporate communication initiatives based on a health education approach and focused on the hospital's brand as well as stakeholders' communication needs.

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ANNEX 1: LIST OF ALL HOSPITALS THAT WERE ANALYZED

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Memorial Sloan – Kettering Cancer Center

Mayo Clinic

John Hopkins Hospital

Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center

Cleveland Clinic

UPMC Presbyterian Shadyside

H. Lee Mofitt Cancer Center and Research Institute

Massachusetts General Hospital

Northwestern Memorial Hospital

City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

UCSF Medical Center

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

Seattle Cancer Alliance – University of Washington Medical Center

Universtiy of Maryland Medical Center

Siteman Cancer Center

Hospitals of the University of Pennsylvania-Penn Presbyterian

NYU Langone Hospitals

Ohio State University James Cancer Hospital

UCLA Medical Center

USC Norris Cancer Hospital-Keck Medical Center of USC

Jefferson Health-Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals

Beth Israël Deaconess Medical Center

Stanford Healthcare – Stanford Hospital

University of Virginia Medical Center

University of North Carolina Hospitals

UC Davis Medical Center

New York-Presbyterian Hospital-Columbia and Cornell

University Hospitals Seidman Cancer Center

University of Chicago Medical Center

MUSC Health – University Medical Center

University of Kentucky Albert B. Chandler Hospital

University of Michigan Hospitals – Michigan Medicine

Nebraska Medicine – Nebraska Medical Center

Dan L. Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center at Baylor St. Luke Medical Center

Montefiore Medical Center

UCHealth University of Colorado Hospital

Houston Methodist Hospital

Duke University Hospital

Emory University Hospital

UF Health Shands Hospital

Mayo Clinic – Phoenix

University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics

Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale New Haven

OHSU Knight Cancer Institute

University of Kansas Hospital

OU Medical Center

University of Wisconsin Hospitals

University of Minnesota Medical Center

Levine Cancer Institute

UCI Medical Center

UT Southwestern Medical Center

Lenox Hill Hospital

Banner University Medical Center Tucson

Mount Sinaï Hospital, New York

Mayo Clinic – Jacksonville

Med Star Georgetown University Hospital

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center

Adventhealth Orlando

Huntsman Cancer Institute at the University of Utah

University of Cincinnati Medical Center

University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital

Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital

Northside Hospital-Atlanta

University of Mississippi Medical Center

George Washington University Hospital

Indiana University Health Medical Center

University of Illinois Hospital

Ochsner Medical Center

Elmhurst Hospital

Queens Medical Center

Rush University Medical Center

Hackensack University Medical Center

University of Miami Hospitals and Clinics – Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center

UAMS Medical Center

Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center

California Pacific Medical Center

Avera McKennan Hospital and University Health Center

Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center

Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center

Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Mount Sinaï Beth Israël Hospital, New York

UC San Diego Health – Moores Cancer Center

Long Island Jewish Medical Center

Loyola University Medical Center

Memorial Care Long Beach Medical Center

Sentara Norfolk General Hospital

Fox Chase Cancer Center

NYU Winthrop Hospital

Beaumont Hospital – Royal Oak

West Virginia University Hospitals

Abbott Northwestern Hospital

Huntington Memorial Hospital

John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook Country

Miami Cancer Institute at Baptist Hospital of Miami

Medical City Dallas

St. Barnabas Medical Center

Advocate Lutheran General Hospital

Source of information: https://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/rankings/cancer (Retrieved February 23, 2020).

Communicative Analysis of Dialogical Interaction: Methodology of Research

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Abstract: Dialogue studies suggest keys to understanding communicative behavior. The purpose of this article is to put forth a more complex and comprehensive approach to the analysis of interaction that incorporates quantitative metrics to reveal its entire communicative depth. The methods of discourse-analysis, initiative-response analysis, a theory of speech acts, conversational, cognitive, stylistic, statistical analyses as well as descriptive and interpretative methods have been united in one system to interpret the procedure and results of the cooperative and conflict dialogues chosen as an example. The integrated methodology produces a broader investigative view of communication, also because it allows measuring the level of dominance of interlocutors and explaining it in terms of power relations. In this way, it contributes to a better understanding of the multifaceted nature of dialogue without any characteristics to be underestimated. The methodology is an open system and is suggested as a sample of dialogical communication research.

Keywords: methodology; communication; dialogue; power; influence.

INTRODUCTION

Today's linguistics seems more than ever to reveal its keen interest in human communication. The obvious reasons for it are globalization and virtualization processes, which greatly modify personal interactions, and the dominance of the anthropocentric episteme as a rather balanced and fruitful approach to language studies (Linell, 2015; Malchanau et al., 2018; Schmied, 2020; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2015). As a result, the problems of effective communication, understanding, and, ultimately, of genuine dialogue, which unites individuals and helps

them achieve their goals, fall into the focus of numerous investigations. So, the topicality of the paper is brought out by the general anthropocentric tendencies of modern linguistic studies that tend to acknowledge dialogue as a communicative realization of the universal and at the same time culturally predetermined concept of DIALOGUE existing in the individual and ethnic consciousness.

Even though dialogical communication has been an object of study since antique times, there is a never-ending interest in such a phenomenon mainly because it does not possess explicit outlines. Dialogue is rightly believed in Rudnick et al. (2014) to be an elusive notion and a complex phenomenon due to the communicative, cognitive, psychological, socio-cultural and physical coordinates of its realization (Linell, 2015). These are the exact reasons why dialogue has got a number of interpretations, namely as a form of speech (Kelly, 2013), communicative action (Atkinson, 2013; Carbaugh, 2013), human (or social) practice (Jensen, 2018; van Dijk, 2008), a method of cognition (Langlotz, 2015; Preston, 2017), a way of enabling learning (Martínez del Castillo, 2015), overcoming difficulties of understanding (Koike & Blyth, 2015; Vaskivska et al., 2019) and conflicts (Schmied, 2020).

These different interpretations lead to understanding that dialogue studies need to take into account a broader socio-cultural, communicative and psychological context of interactions (Fairclough, 2001; Jakubowska-Branicka, 2014; Malchanau et al., 2018; Povolná, 2016; Simić J. & Simić R., 2019). The reason is that relationships in social groups are based on communicative actions which reflect both social and individual motivation, aspirations and mutual interdependence (Searle, 1979; Tarasov, 1990), which means that individuals tend to influence each other in communication (Liu et al., 2021) and this influence is conceptualized in terms of *power* (Atkinson, 2013; Martínez del Castillo, 2015; van Dijk, 2008). Curiously enough, while interacting linguistically, people are generally not aware of the fact that a power struggle takes place in an ordinary dialogue (Fairclough, 2001), which is actually a symbiosis of cooperation and, finally, egocentrism (Honghui & Dongchun, 2019).

The research objective of this article is to demonstrate a thorough communicative analysis of dialogical interaction when a maximum number of its parameters including power as an indispensable part of a human's motivational sphere is taken into consideration. This methodological procedure is carried out in the framework of cratological (from the Greek *cratos* (power)) theory of discourse (Foucault, 1998; Potseluev, 2008; Rikjor, 2002; Shejgal, 2001). The theory is referred to critical discourse-analysis that also comprises linguistic, semiotic and socio-communicative discourse interpretations (Barthes, 1994; Fairclough, 2001; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2015).

THEORY: POWER IN COMMUNICATION

T. van Dijk (2008, vii) states that discourse and power are two fundamental phenomena in society that go hand in hand with one another. Power can be interpreted as discourse relation between interacting partners, who produce an impact on each other (Jahedy et al., 2014; Wodak & Meyer, 2015), and it is in power that an interlocutors' will is realized. Power reveals itself in communication, for example, in the person's right to speak and deprive the others of this right *ad hoc* (Fairclough, 2001; Shejgal, 2001). Power's motive reflects a desire to produce some necessary changes in a person's surroundings and leads to the best strategic line of communicative behavior elaboration.

Language, a need to communicate and power are inherent features of *Homo sapiens* nature (Barth-Weingarten, 2008; Gill & Azhar, 2018; Jakubowska-Branicka, 2014; Preston, 2017). The primary stimulus to the desire for power realization lies in the principle "the Care of the Self" (Foucault, 1998). This view of the world makes an individual do their best in taking self-care (Appiah & Bosiwah, 2015). The principle is a basis for human existence and a social practice formed in ancient times, when subordination and dominance were an integral part of prehistoric society (Spirkin, 2006). Nowadays, the cultivation of this principle is embodied in people's manipulation of each other, to which even a simple compulsion of the addressee to start an unplanned communication refers. Implicit (interactive) or explicit (status) power is revealed in strategic program construction and control over its realization in the communicative situation (Makarov, 2003; Pitts & Giles, 2008; Potseluev, 2008). Social relations are inevitably based on power, which makes them more purposeful and mobilizes individuals in their actions (Rikjor, 2002). In this way, dialogical discourse can also be defined as a cause-consequence phenomenon which shapes social relations in terms of unequal capacity to exercise control over text construction in cultural contexts (Linell, 1990).

Accordingly, even seemingly equal relations demonstrate communicators inequality. In dialogue, while one person talks, another is involved in the process of speech interpretation (Malchanau et al., 2018) and is *forced* to wait and think about how to react next. The change of the addresser and the addressee means an act of mutual compulsion or intersubject power demonstration to produce a verbal or non-verbal reaction (Barthes, 1994; Foucault, 1998; Linell, 1990). Success in dialogue depends to a great extent on the ability to regulate the whole communication process (Ivashkevych & Prymachok, 2019). Ultimately, that is the way for, as Prihodko (2018) states, "the recipient to recognize and perceive the speaker's attitude and ideas".

A discourse form of power embodiment is "communicative influence". Influence is an either or both purposeful verbal and non-verbal action meant to change

the listener's system of knowledge, emotions, attitude, behavior (Tarasov, 1990) by means of the imposition of different types of constraints on the way interlocutors process information (Potapenko, 2016). To influence in order to achieve the results is the essence of any interaction (Pitts & Giles, 2008) and reflects the addresser's capacity to control and correct the addressee's behavior. Successful influence means the fulfillment of speakers' intentions. In this context, dialogue is rightfully interpreted as a communicative space of power exercise (Potseluev, 2008). Taking all things together, we understand dialogue as a genetically inherent and socially realized cognitive-communicative human resource employed by a person when the necessary state of things in one's intellectual, psychological, physical or communicative world depends on the interaction with others.

Interlocutors' influence is directly connected with "communicative initiative". The latter is a different level of activity in their strategy implementation, a natural parameter of any communication (Makarov, 2003). Displaying partners' different language and speech competence, intellect, characters, a propensity towards conflict realization, the initiatives build a particular style and tone of communication (Acitelli, 2002; Makarov, 2003) and reveal its asymmetric character (Kucherenko, 2016). Moreover, the initiative (or leadership) means a reduction of communicative rights of the partner despite one's resistance (Potseluev, 2008). In other words, the key aspect of initiative is communicative violence which is realized in cognitive, affective and axiological intrusion into personal space (Rikjor, 2002) and can be either positive or negative. The positive presupposes a contextual or institutionally approved change of the roles of "the addresser" and "the addressee" or cooperative interventions to support one's ideas, opinions, attitudes. The negative is aggression characterized by communicative bans of partner's reactions, one's status or authority defamation and humiliation. This type is realized through the usage of swear words, imperative structures of commands, menaces, the tone of neglect, rudeness and scorn (Appiah & Bosiwah, 2015; Potseluev, 2008).

In short, the interlocutor who happens to be more active in communication has better chances of greater influence. However, from the interactional perspective, the main thing is not just about who introduces more topics or how much they talk but is about the ability and interest to sustain and actively contribute to the interaction (Linell, 1990). This means for an investigator that the study of dialogue cannot be reduced either to the number of turns and their wording, to communication acts in their cognitive, communicative or social perspectives, or to the symbols of power exclusively (Atkinson, 2013) as most studies of dialogue have used (Fairclough, 2001; Karasik, 2013; Shejgal, 2001; Wodak & Meyer 2015, etc.). To estimate the dynamics of interaction and its results properly, the researcher needs to employ an all-embracing linguistic analysis which will grasp all the communicative constructs emerging in the constantly changing interaction space

also due in no small part to contextual power realization. As Pitts & Giles (2008, p. 20) rightfully state "conversational and relational goals constantly change… the interactants can become distracted due to some factors to communicate effectively". Researchers should take everything into consideration in their research. Here we argue for the statement that a constant reference—to the motivational, intellectual, emotional, social, etc. contents of interaction—necessitates any communicative research being provided with a wide scope of various linguistic methods. Furthermore, the analysis should be enriched by an initiative-response method of analysis (IR analysis) (Linell et al., 1988; Linell, 2015), which allows dialogue to be coded from the interactional perspective (Reuzel et al., 2013).

METHODOLOGY

The investigation was conducted with the help of the general scientific methods of induction, deduction, analysis and synthesis, seven linguistic methods as well as descriptive and interpretative methods of analysis. The linguistic methods were: (i) discourse analysis—to establish strategies and tactics of communication, their consequences and pragmatics (Makarov, 2003; van Dijk, 2008); (ii) a theory of speech acts—differentiate the illocution goals and force of utterances (Pocheptsov, 1981; Searle, 1971); (iii) conversational analysis—to identify the dialogical type, genre, topics and turn-taking (Makarov, 2003; Sacks et al., 1974); (iv) initiative response analysis—to establish communicative dominance, control, initiative, asymmetry as well as initiative and response replicas (Linell, et al., 1988; Reuzel et al., 2013); (v) cognitive analysis—to characterize the conceptual side of the dialogical turns (Makarov, 2003; van Dijk, 2008); (vi) stylistic analysis—to find out stylistic devices and expressive means of influence as well as lexical units of different functional styles (Shejgal, 2001); and (vii) the method of statistics—to calculate the level of one's dominance and dialogue asymmetry (Reuzel et al., 2013).

The choice of these methods for this methodological procedure which, if necessary, is open to be further enriched with other methods seems to be logical. The linguist must focus on all the objective and subjective parameters of communication as they shape meanings in interaction (Malchanau et al., 2018). Only then such an approach will enable the investigator to produce a fully-fledged description and interpretation and to come to exact, convincing results. We hope that the elaborated methodology of research gives such an opportunity. The developed investigative strategy of looking at dialogue consistently, systematically and from different angles is an attempt made in the situation when the theory of communication is in constant search of its methodological practices (Pitts & Giles, 2008).

The acknowledgment of lingual and non-lingual signs reflecting the power aspirations of the interlocutors and, in this way, representing the dynamics of the whole communication process answers the question as to why these units appear in dialogue at all. Power manifestation has various means and ways of expression. For example, at the levels of phonetic, morphological, lexical, syntactical language, and through stylistic elements, communicative strategies, tactics, speech acts, genres (Barth-Weingarten, 2008; Karasik, 2013; Shejgal, 2001). Furthermore, communicators' different language and speech contributions to dialogue construction are explained by different levels of their initiative. Thus, from the angle of interactants' activity dialogue must also be analyzed on the "symmetry–asymmetry" scale.

The level of asymmetry can be calculated through the comparison of the level of dominance of speakers (Linell, 1990). Dominance is a complex phenomenon and consists of three types – interactional, topical and quantitative (Linell et al., 1988, p. 415). *Quantitative* dominance depends on the number of words produced (a dominant person takes more time in dialogue production). *Topical* dominance presupposes that a number of thematic concepts are introduced. Nevertheless, it is *interactional* dominance that is crucial for the whole dialogue. The dominant party is the one who manages to direct and control the other party's actions and who also avoids being directed and controlled (Linell et al., 1988). This type is revealed in *interactional turns*, the basic units of analysis, which concentrate either local or global communicative power (Adelswärd et al., 1987). Each turn is analyzed either in terms of an *initiative* or *response*, which concerns how it links to the next or previous turn. Initiatives continue communication by requesting a response from either or both the partner and by the introduction of a new topic. Responses ensure coherence with the preceding discourse by linking up to what the interlocutor said (Linell et al., 1988; Reuzel et al., 2013). Each type of the turn refers to one of the eighteen categories that can be ordered on a six-point ordinal scale from the strongest initiative (>) to the weakest response without any potential for promoting the dialogue further (—) (see Table 1, Linell et al., 1988).

The category system consists of a set of features for initiative and response that include:

1) function: initiatives and responses are coded with > / ^ :: <;
2) strength: strong (soliciting or demanding) and weakly (asserting or submissive) turns are symbolized as > :: ^;
3) adequacy of responses: adequate or inadequate are presented with < :: — ;
4) scope of links: local and non-local (linking up with preceding / more distant turn) turns have the signs: < or : :: ˙ ˙;
5) focality of links: focal and non-focal (linking up with focal or peripheral aspects of the preceding turn) turns are graphically presented as < :: :;

6) alter – or self-linked responses (linking up with the interlocutor's preceding turn/ speaker's own preceding turn) are symbolized as < :: = / < = (see Linell et al., 1988, p. 417).

Table 1. Turn Categories and Interactional Strength

1	2	3	4	5	6
		`·· <`	`··^`	`·· >`	
		`( >`	`:^`	`: >`	
		`< )`	`< = ^`	`< = >`	
	`—>`	`= ^`	`= >`		
`—`	`<`	`< ^`	`< >`	`^`	`>`
Totally dependent and not at all proactive					Independent and strongly proactive

Source: Linell et al. (1988)

The corresponding figures form the basis for computing IR indices and IR differences. *IR indices* of interlocutors are defined as the median value of the scores on the ordinal scale (Reuzel et al., 2013). The *IR difference* between IR indices is an indicator of the degree of interactional asymmetry or the level of dominance of one of the communicators (Linell et al., 1988). That is why the measurement of the activity level of partners gives a chance to look closer at the realized relations.

The level of dominance is derived from *an initiative-response profile* (IR profile) or a summary of the frequencies of the parties' turn categories on the mentioned six-point ordinal scale (Linell et al., 1988). The frequencies of various turn types as a percentage of all turns used by each partner yield interaction coefficients (Reuzel et al., 2013):

1) B(balance)-coefficient (the number of expanded responses) shows how often an individual responds to what was said and provides sufficient initiative to allow dialogue to continue on the same topic;
2) S(solicitation)-coefficient (the number of imperative or interrogative structures) demonstrates how often individuals explicitly solicit their interlocutors into responding on their initiative;
3) F(fragmentation)-coefficient shows the number of abrupt topic shifts or turns that break the interaction into fragments by the introduction of new and unrelated topics, thus contributing to local incoherence;
4) O(obliqueness)-coefficient reflects the number of turns involving self-linking responses symbolized as : or =. It is designed to capture how often speakers avoid linking up with the main content of their interlocutor's adjacent turn.

The implicit turns hold monologues, ignore a meaningful contribution of the partner, and challenge its form or function (Linell et al., 1988).

We, consequently, suggest the following procedure of communicative analysis of dialogue. First, the *genre* of the dialogue that constructs communicative practice, its *chronotope*, *socio-cultural context*, *interlocutors* (their physical, psychological, social, age, gender, etc. characteristics being in the foreground) and *relationships* (relatives, friends, lovers, colleges, etc.) are described. Second, the type of communication is established, i.e., *real* vs. *stylized*; *oral* vs. *written* vs. *virtual*; *everyday* vs. *official*, *person-oriented* vs. *status-oriented*; *stereotyped* vs. *creative*. Third, the tonality of the dialogue (*formal* vs. *informal*) and social distance (*intimate* vs. *personal* vs. *public*) are described. Fourth, the form of communicative interaction (*cooperation* vs. *conflict*) and the set *aims* of the partners are revealed. Fifth, the type of power relations (*interactive* vs. *status*) and the level of dialogue *asymmetry* are established and described. At this stage, the dynamics of communication geared by the intellectual, emotional, volitional, etc. spheres of interlocutors' consciousness and realized in the scope of their strong/weak initiatives or responses are in the focus of the investigator's attention. More than that, those new pragmatic parameters of interaction (e.g., the interlocutors' goals changed during the dialogue, situational implications, etc.) that determine the appearance of a definite unit in language, as well as its contextual semantics, are taken into consideration. The sixth and penultimate stage has the interaction viewed through *speech acts*' components, *communicative strategies* and *tactics* used. Ultimately, the strategic communicative behavior of partners is analyzed through the means of its realization on the *phonetic*, *morphological*, *lexical*, *syntactical* levels as well as through the filter of *stylistics* and *non-verbal* language. The results are then discussed and conclusions are drawn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The great value of the IR analysis that we state to be a necessary constituent of a thorough communicative analysis of any interaction is its qualitative-quantitative potential, since such power parameters as *dominance* and *asymmetry* are measurable quantities. The cooperative and conflict dialogical situations that serve as an example of the analysis are telephone conversations taken from the best-selling novels *If Tomorrow Comes* and *Angels Flight* by the renowned authors Sidney Sheldon and Michael Connelly. Here it is worth mentioning that a detailed analysis of dialogues in the genre of telephone interactions fixed in belles-lettres has not previously been presented. If with the help of the IR analysis in Linell et al. (1988) and Reuzel et al. (2013) the genres of interviews were

analyzed, then Borysov (2017) examined the genres of face-to-face conversation, talk, argument and quarrel taken from British and Ukrainian films and surely contributed to understanding the genres stylized in cinematography. Here we hope to demonstrate an explanatory power of the communicative analysis enriched by the IR method, which we applied to a few stylized dialogues found in literature.

All the turns of the chosen dialogues were coded according to the degree of their strength in the context of interaction. Inner speech and non-verbal reactions were presented in square brackets:

(1) Tracy: ^ *Hello?*
Mother: < > *Tracy… I just felt like hearing the sound of your voice, darling.*
Tracy: < ^ *What a nice surprise, Mother.*
Mother: ^ *I hope I didn't wake you up.*
Tracy: < > *No. I was reading. Just getting ready to go to sleep. Charles and I were going out for dinner, but the weather's too nasty. It's snowing hard here. What's it doing there?*
Mother: – [Silence] [*Dear God, we're talking about the weather, Doris Whitney thought, when there's so much I want to tell her. And can't*].
Tracy: > *Mother? Are you there?*
Mother: ¨^ *It's raining.*
Tracy: > *What's that noise?*
Mother: < > *That's thunder, Tracy… Tell me what's happening in Philadelphia.*
Tracy: ^ *I feel like a princess in a fairy tale, Mother. I never believed anyone could be so happy. Tomorrow night I'm meeting Charles's parents… The Stanhopes, of Chestnut Hill… They're an institution. I have butterflies the size of dinosaurs.*
Mother: <^ *Don't worry. They'll love you, darling.*
Tracy: <^ *Charles says it doesn't matter. He loves me. And I adore him. I can't wait for you to meet him. He's fantastic.*
Mother: < > *I'm sure he is.* [*She would never meet Charles. She would never hold a grandchild in her lap. No. I must not think about that*]. *Does he know how lucky he is to have you, baby?*
Tracy: < > *I keep telling him. Enough about me. Tell me what's going on there. How are you feeling?*
Mother: < *I feel wonderful.*
Tracy: > *Got a boyfriend yet?*
Mother: < > *No boyfriends… How is your job? Still enjoying it?*
Tracy: < ^ *I love it. Charles doesn't mind if I keep working after we're married.*
Mother: < ^ *That's wonderful, baby. He sounds like a very understanding man.*
Tracy: < ^ *He is. You'll see for yourself.*
Mother: > *Good-bye, my darling.*

> Tracy: < ^ *I'll see you at the wedding, Mother. I'll call you as soon as Charles and I set a date.*
> Mother: < ^ *Yes… I love you very, very much, Tracy* (Sheldon, 1985: 3).

The analyzed excerpt presents a telephone conversation that happens at *night* between two close *relatives* – daughter (Tracy Whitney) and her mother (Doris Whitney) who dwell in different *states of the USA*. The *oral* communication is *stylized*, *stereotyped* and *person-oriented*. It is the *speech* type of communication meant for informational exchange and emotional relaxation.

Though these are the *positional roles* (mother vs daughter) that are realized in the dialogue, the situation can be qualified as *socially symmetrical* or *status-neutral.* The reason is that *the social distance* is intimate, and the *informal* dialogue between good friends takes place. The interaction is *cooperative*. The *aim* of the mother who secretly intends to commit suicide is to say goodbye to her daughter and get to know about her previous months of life as well as about a future wedding; Tracy kindly produces expanded answers as her aim is two-fold: to fill her mother in and have a psychologically encouraging chat with the closest relative of hers.

The dialogue is characterized by *interactive power* demonstration from both parties of equal status. Nevertheless, according to the IR profile, it is *rather asymmetrical* because it is Tracy who controls it. The preliminary data of interlocutors' activity constitute the IR profile of the characters shown in table 2.

Table 2. The IR Profile of the Characters

The type of turns	^	< ^	>	<>	+	··^	<	Number of points
Tracy	2	5	3	2	0	0	0	51
Mother	1	3	1	4	1	1	1	42

Source: Authors

The *IR indices* are IR index1=4,25, IR index2=3,5, the *IR difference* (that shows the level of asymmetry and, thus, dominance) is correspondingly 0,75. The imbalance emerges because Tracy naturally produces much more information than her mother. The biggest number of her turns is expanded, the *B-coefficients* difference is 15,4%, cf. *B-coefficient*1=46,7% (7 expanded answers) and *B-coeff icient*2=31,3% (5 expanded answers). She confidently keeps the conversation going replying to the initiatives of her mother and thematically unfolding the dialogue on her own.

More than that, being dominant, Tracy puts as twice as many questions, which are stronger turns than Doris's. The fact is revealed in the *S-coefficients* difference (21,2%), cf. *S-coefficient*1=40% (6 questions) and *S-coefficient*2=18,8% (3 questions). Though a number of the turns which are not connected with the previous interlocutor's turns

or signalize the shift of the topic is equal – *F-coefficient*1=6,7% (1 turn) and *F-coefficient*2=6,3% (1 turn), mother introduces one turn which avoids the answer ignoring her partner, cf. *O-coefficient*1=0% and *O-coefficient*2=6,3% (1 turn).

So, Tracy controls the dialogue in all aspects. Firstly, the level of her *interactive dominance* is higher (for 15,4%) as she produces more expanded questions and answers. Secondly, the *quantitative dominance* is as twice as much higher because of the number of words used (cf. 169 vs. 84). Thirdly, Tracy naturally then dominates *thematically* employing 10 topical concepts against 5 of her mother's. The cognitive approach involved at this stage is aimed at elucidation of the topical organization of the informational space. So, the macroconcept around which the dialogical text is built is FAMILY. It is structured with the help of the concepts TRACY'S LIFE and MOTHER'S LIFE. They are united together with the emotional concept LOVE and background concepts SUICIDE and FAREWELL which reflect the mother's intention and the impulse of the call. The first one consists of such subconcepts as, for example, WEDDING, BRIDEGROOM, FUTURE FAMILY, JOB, HAPPINESS, while the second one possesses the cognitive structures of PRIVATE LIFE, FUTURE PLANS, SADNESS. The number of the concepts, the means of their verbalization shows that the initiative is firmly held by the daughter. She is an actual leader. She uses more syntactical units (cf. 33 vs. 19), including elliptical ones, creates more monologues as responses, produces more arguments as for the righteousness of the awaited event.

The analysis of the *speech act* component of the conversation established a greater tendency of *constatives* (affirmations) usage (cf. Tracy: 63,6% vs. mother: 57,9%), with Tracy being more active. While *promisives* (the utterances of promise) (cf. Tracy: 3,1% vs. mother: 5,3%) and *performatives* (the utterances perform an act instead of describing it) (cf. Tracy: 6,1% vs. mother: 10,5%) do not play a crucial role in their discourse, *menacives* (the utterances of threat) are completely absent. But the strongest turns comprise *quesetives* (questions) and *directives* (advice, instructions, requests), cf. Tracy: 27,2% (18,1% / 9,1%) vs. mother: 26,3% (15,8% / 10,5%). It is Tracy who is dominant in this aspect.

The *cooperative strategy* employed by both speakers to disclose their thoughts, emotions, views comprise such tactics of influence as the tactics of positive evaluation (e.g. Tracy: *I feel like a princess in a fairy tale,* Mother: *That's wonderful, baby*), the tactics of trust (e.g. *Mother, I never believed anyone could be so happy*), the tactics of care and support (e.g. Tracy: *Tell me what's going on there. How are you feeling?* Mother: *Don't worry. They'll love you, darling*), the tactics of sincerity (e.g. Tracy: *I have butterflies the size of dinosaurs*), the tactics of praise (e.g. Mother: *He sounds like a very understanding man*), the tactics of encouragement (e.g. Tracy: *What a nice surprise, Mother,* Mother: *Does he know how lucky he is to have you, baby?*), the tactics of solidarity (e.g. Tracy: *He is* [a very understanding man].

You'll see for yourself). The *tactics of genuine interest* by Tracy seems to have contextually changed into the *tactics of annoying request* followed by *the tactics of mother's explanation evasion* and *the change of the subject*, i.e. these are tactics of non-cooperative character: e.g. Tracy: *Got a boyfriend yet*? Mother: *No boyfriends… How is your job? Still enjoying it*? Generally, Tracy demonstrates more initiative in the aspect of tactics usage as well, as they are mostly directed to preserve the topic and subtopics of the cooperative conversation.

The tactics expression is carried out via emotional-evaluative lexemes (*adore, love, wonderful, baby, fairy tale, princess,* an idiomatic expression *to have butter-flies the size of dinosaurs* with metaphorical and hyperbolic effects), emotional-expressive constructions with direct address (e.g. Mother: *They'll love you, darling*), elliptical sentences (e.g. Tracy: *Enough about me*; Mother: *Still enjoying it?*) chosen as the best variants of influence in the pursuit of the speakers' intentions realization.

To sum it up, the interlocutors' *aims* were realized as the informational and emotional exchange was successful. Tracy got additional emotional satisfaction of sharing her bright future plans while mother rejoiced at her daughter's news and said goodbye, which was the main goal of the telephone call.

Another dialogue under analysis is a conflict one:

> (2) ^ *You bastard.*
> \> *Who is this?*
> \> *Carla Entrenkin, who do you think? Do you really think I wouldn't know what you did?*
> <> *I don't know what you're talking about. What happened?*
> <^ *I just watched Channel Four. Your buddy Harvey Button.*
> \> *What did he have?*
> <^ *Oh, he blew it up real big. Let's see if I can quote him correctly. 'A link between Elias and an Internet prostitution ring was found in Elias's office, a source close to the investigation says. It is believed by this source that Elias may have had liaisons with at least one of the women who advertised her services as a dominatrix on the web site.' I think that about sums it up. I hope you are happy.*
> <^ *I didn't—*
> \> *Don't bother.* [She hung up] [Connelly, 2002: 177-178].

The dialogue in the form of a *stylized* telephone conversation in the *late evening* unfolds between two *newly acquainted colleagues* – Harry Bosch, a detective, and Carla Entrenkin, inspector general – involved in an investigation of the murder of the famous *LA* lawyer, Howard Elias. The interaction is *stereotyped* and *person-oriented*. The interlocutors are in *formal business-like* relations, with the corresponding *status* roles. United by the common secret not to be revealed

to anyone, they are involved in the *informal everyday discourse*. The communicative situation is thus *status-neutral*, and the *social distance* is *intimate* – a quarrel takes place. It is the *speech* type of communication meant for *emotional release* and *informational exchange*. *Interactive power* is exercised in the dialogue which is a *conflict* one. The communicative *goal* of Carla Entrenkin is to blame a detective, have moral and emotional satisfaction whereas the *goal* of the man is to get as much information as possible. The dialogue is slightly *asymmetrical*: the *IR indices* are IR index1=4,6, IR index2=4,75 and the *IR difference* is 0,15 (the IR profiles are shown in Table 3).

Table 3. The IR Profile of the Characters

The type of turns	^	< ^	>	<>	Number of points
Carla	1	2	2	0	23
Harry	0	1	2	1	19

Source: Authors

Carla attempts to lead the dialogue, she is rather aggressive. The number of her expanded answers is bigger (the *B-coefficients* difference is 41,6%, cf. *B-coefficient*1=66,6% (4 expanded answers) and *B-coefficient*2=25% (1 expanded answer). It means that the level of her *interactive dominance* is higher, and the *quantitative one* is much higher (cf. 107 words vs. 18 words). The *thematic dominance* is also in her favor, *cf.* 13 topical concepts against 4 for her partner. She uses more syntactical units (cf. 12 vs. 5). The woman seems to be an actual leader in everything.

But the IR analysis proves it is Harry who is actually a director of the dialogue, the person who makes the woman speak up intensively. That is because of the strong moves one makes constantly demanding information. He talks little but asks questions, so the *S-coefficients* difference is 41,7%, cf. *S-coefficient*1=33,3% (2 questions) and *S-coefficient*2=75% (3 questions). That is Harry's strategy to reach his primary goal. The context revealed aim of his to defend oneself failed because of the overwhelming activity and emotiveness of the woman. The dialogue in itself is logical and not fragmentary (*O-/F-coefficients*=0%).

The communication generally unfolds around the macroconcept INVESTIGATION subdivided into the concepts CASE, INVESTIGATIVE AGENCIES, MASS MEDIA, CONFLICT. Contextually they are united with the concepts RESENTMENT and HONESTY/DISHONESTY. The specifying concepts are INSPECTOR GENERAL, DETECTIVE, JOURNALIST and LEAK.

The analysis of the *speech act* component revealed a natural tendency for the usage of *constatives* (cf. Carla: 66,6% vs. Harry: 40%). *Quesetives* are more peculiar

of Harry (cf. Carla: 16,7% vs. Harry: 60%), while *directives* are of Carla (cf. Carla: 16,7% vs. Harry: 0%). *Promisives, performatives* and *menaces* are absent.

Despite the fact the dialogue reveals a conflict, only one party is responsible for this. More than that, Carla eagerly answers the questions put to her. The facts lead to the statement of the conflict-cooperative character of the interaction.

The *conflict* strategy is realized in the tactics of insult (*You bastard*), anger (*Do you really think I wouldn't know what you did?*), sarcasm (*Your buddy Harvey Button*), abrupt interfering (*Don't bother*). The *cooperative strategy* is actualized in the tactics of informing (Carla: *I just watched Channel Four.* Harry: *I don't know what you're talking about*).

The tactics realization is carried out through the lexemes *bastard* (vulgar language), *buddy* (negative context connotation), an emotional one-member sentence *You bastard*, and an elliptical sentence *Your buddy Harvey Button*.

These units were used as Carla was sure of her suspicions and did not want to know whether it was Harry or not who leaked information to the press. The woman felt betrayed. That is why communication was abruptly finished by her. To lead it was quite easy, because the detective, pursuing his goal to extract information, made the scenario which she followed with pleasure. With Harry being the dominant figure, the dialogue is slightly asymmetrical. The genre frames of the telephone conversation created objective limitations to convert it into a cooperative dialogue and put a heart-to-heart talk of the characters till another time. This was not the case with the first interaction. The findings from the analysis also clearly show that either in a cooperative or conflict dialogue interlocutors revealed different initiatives in communication coordination. These activities directed at constructing coherent dialogues naturally reflect the characteristics of discourse power that the speakers demonstrated. The understanding of this is crucial because, as a rule, this parameter is missing, omitted or partly taken into consideration in those discourse studies conducted without IR analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

Quite a few studies devoted to the problem of communication progress have highlighted that interactions are based on power relations. Surprisingly, a complex and consistent methodological procedure of dialogical interaction has still not been developed. To elaborate dialogical interaction and to understand it as a dynamic cognitive-communicative construct realized in social relations of information exchange and influence is of paramount importance. Influence as discourse power embodiment is realized in mutual freedom limitation and coordinating the actions of each other by the partners. A simple acknowledgement that the interlocutors demonstrate this or that degree of communicative activity turns

out to be insufficient for a thorough dialogue investigation as quantitative proofs are needed. It is the IR methodology implementation, which is used in the communicative analysis to reveal the level of dominance and asymmetry, that produces more objective data as for the true nature of cooperative and conflict conversations.

The given methodology is a union of structural-semantic, cognitive, pragmatic, cratological, socio-cultural views on communication. In this way, the investigation promotes the statement that any communication should be analyzed rather thoroughly without overestimating or underestimating any parameter. In our opinion, the methodology generalizes the strategic line of any dialogue investigation and gives a much closer look at an unfolding interaction. The explanatory potential of the proposed procedure lies in revealing how the ability to influence the partner in communication is realized. The results of the analysis of the stylized telephone dialogues provoke a hypothesis that communicative failures in real life may result from neglect of latent aspects of communication, which usually slip out from our attention under the pressure of a stereotypical belief that the leader in the dialogue is the one who talks more. The analysis shows that it is not necessarily so. Rather, it is the unity of different parameters that defines the amount of power one can use. The hypothesis is to be verified in a thorough scientific investigation of real-life communication and may add to the theory of manipulation, which may be quite useful for understanding the mechanisms of influence on various levels of personal interaction.

The analysis procedure is in no way closed. Depending on the further aims of the research, for example, such methods as intent analysis (for a more detailed categorization and interpretation of partners' intentions) (see Vraj et al., 2020), content analysis (for revealing frequency units of the thematically united lexicon or explaining the problematic parts of the texts) (see Elo et al., 2014) can be employed.

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Public Service Media Between Theory and Practice

Interview with Professor Karen Donders

> **First, warm congratulations on receiving the Media and Democracy Karol Jakubowicz Award 2021. Your latest book, entitled "Public Service Media in Europe. Law, Theory and Practice" greatly impacted discussions on Public Service Media (PSM) futures. How did you come across the book idea? What's behind the story?**

I started contemplating that book, from the moment I published my book on European state aid policy and the impact it has on public service media across Member States of the EU. That was in 2012, not that long after I completed my PhD. In the years after 2012, I did new research and focused on publishing scientific articles. That is of course great, but with an average length of 6000 words these articles do not really offer sufficient space to elaborate on a certain statement you want to make about public service media. After all, PSM is a highly complex concept, both theoretically and legally. Furthermore, the actual practice of public service media is a multi-layered construct that adopts a variety of shapes depending on where you are.

So, I wanted to write this book to de-construct the normative, theoretical, legal, and practical aspects of public service media in Europe. Too ambitious, I know… But that essentially was what I envisaged doing. I did not manage to do that entirely. But overall, I think the book adds something to existing scholarship and the award recognizes that, and I am very happy with it.

> **So, why does society need public service media?**

I am not sure that each society does need a public service media organization inspired by the BBC or ARD model. That might sound quite revolutionary. I am convinced though that communities need media, which act in the public interest, not as a side product, but as their *raison d'être*. To date, public broadcasters in a variety of countries have proven to be the most effective as well

as efficient way of doing that. The model works, with all its deficiencies that we need to recognize and that the book elaborates on. In several countries though, particularly those countries where democracy is nonexistent or where some sort of authoritarianism is on the rise, one can question whether the public service media model that we have in Western and Northern Europe will work at all. That is a difficult truth. But as scholars we need to ask this question. Will this model, that many of us have studied and value because of its proven impact on quality content and society at large, deliver media in the public interest in countries such as Poland?

My research shows that that is highly unlikely. That is not *per se* the fault of a specific government alone, although one can hardly deny the worrisome nature of what PiS is doing. The recent denial of the rule of law by the Polish constitutional court is a case in point. Rather, it is the outcome of the combined actions of political elites, a weak public service media regime, and a socio-cultural setting that is fairly accepting towards government control over media. Public broadcasters in this are not passive victims of government policies, even if we would like to see them as such. They are also agents with power and have been socialized and institutionalized within a certain context.

Yes, I think public service media is necessary, today more than it was 20 or 30 years ago. Platformization and the continued consolidation of media markets are resulting in highly perverse practices that really harm social cohesion, informed citizenship, and even fundamental rights. In numerous countries, public broadcasters are the best even though imperfect tool to achieve this. In some countries, they might not be that and we should think about other models that could work better. Such an exercise requires scholars on public service media and scholars on community media, alternative media and emerging media organizations to talk more to each other.

Your book looks at a growing gap between normative public service media theories and their daily regulatory and newsroom practices. Why there are so many clashes between PSM models and the forms they take?

The easy answer to that is, that everything is imperfect. Practice will never be able to live up to the normative ideal. Of course, there are some public broadcasters that approach the ideal and others that remain far from it. The findings of my book show that the (mis)matches between the normative ideal, the law and practice are largely explained by political and economic factors, as well as the

cultural and value foundations on which public service media is being built. The latter aspect is, indeed, very difficult to research and I think a lot of innovative scholarly work can be done in this area.

One of your case studies is focused on the recent shifts in the PSM in Poland. Do you think there is also a gap in understanding public service media between the East and the West?

Definitely. When I first went to Poland, it was great fun and especially in a city such as Warsaw, where things seem very similar to Brussels or Berlin on the surface. But when you dig deeper, you realize you know nothing. There are huge differences at the societal, cultural, political, and economic level. That isn't a problem. However, when you start applying concepts such as public service media from a Western-centric angle to other parts of Europe, that is problematic. Moreover, we have exported these concepts to countries based on notions such as policy diffusion and policy learning. It isn't working because the countries that we have exported public service media to have no historical experience in it, and very often no inclination to genuinely adopt it. Even when such enthusiasm existed, for example at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, the lack of a professional journalism culture, the swift realization that the BBC and ARD have 3 and 9 billion plus euros respectively to deliver their remit, and disappointment with what democracy has delivered in general, ensures that the persistence of the state broadcasting system's problems resurfaces. I do not deny that a lot of scholars, journalists, citizens and activists regret that (the flawed adoption of the PSM model) and want to escape from that pattern. But escaping from patterns might be one of the most difficult things to do, both as an individual as well as society.

Next to that, what I also found striking is that despite these huge differences, there are also enormous resemblances between what is happening in the East and West. In both parts of Europe, we struggle with how to deliver the public interest in media in the context of digitization and social media platforms. There are huge problems with fake news, polarization and with populism. And nowhere, do media companies have an answer to these challenges. These are areas where we can learn from each other. Scholars from the West should not have any superiority feelings, though. There is much that is dysfunctional about our media systems too.

You have recently moved from academia at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel into the professional sphere of the Flemish PSM. How does this change your perspective when looking at public service media?

A big step. It really was a huge decision for me to leave the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and opt for a management position within a public service broadcaster. It was a great opportunity to impact public service media from within. In a way, there is not that much that surprises me. I have advised VRT for a long time. So, I knew the company quite well. On the inside, it is of course different than on the outside. I have to say what surprises me the most is the discussions on the public interest in media and how to achieve it. I think as scholars we sometimes have the impression that we talk about these things and public broadcasters themselves do not, that they are a bit self-complacent. I have to say that there in fact are a lot of discussions within our newsroom on pluralism, disinformation, accessible information for youngsters, etc. The people who are working on our audio and video services, are talking constantly about the right content mix, how to engage better with audiences and society around our content, how to position ourselves closer to society, public service algorithms, and so on. It is difficult to find the right answers. Scholars can play a big role in adding to the discussions we have within public service media.

I also see the passion of people working here for public service media as a project. That is something I think universities and public broadcasters have in common. In a way, you try to change the world.

What I underestimated a bit, was the financial planning. There is a lot of budgeting going on. So, that requires a lot of my attention. There are also a lot of rules, besides the public broadcasting specific ones, that we need to comply with. That is also something that is not visible from the outside, but it takes a lot of effort to get all of these things right.

And your academic knowledge? To what extent is this going with the PSM picture you had before?

I did not leave my academic knowledge outside when I entered the VRT building. I really try to use my knowledge for the good of VRT. The research department is also supervised by me. So, that is of course great fun because they have a lot of data – I dare say more than we have within universities on media usage.

I still think that the research I did on public service media policy and on multi-stakeholder policy is valid. I have not yet seen anything that goes against the findings from research I also did together with much valued peers such as Tim Raats, Hilde Van den Bulck and also you, Michal.

What is more important within VRT than in the academic field so far, is the very fragile position public broadcasters have in a commodified and international platform environment. That is not only about the big platform players, but also about the big media conglomerates. Local players, including public broadcasters are threatened in such an environment to continue to play their

role and serve the public interest. We are definitely no longer the center of the value chain. That makes discussions on market distortion a bit ridiculous because we in fact no longer have the power to distort the market, even if we wanted to. More research on these things would be very helpful, not only for us, but also for policymakers.

You are now dealing with critical societal challenges and responsibilities, responsible for the Public Value. What's the most challenging in producing the PSM today – from the inside (organisational cultures, structures, management systems, mindsets)?

The biggest challenge we are facing from the inside is our transition to a digital organization. That might seem a bit odd as the Internet has existed for a long time now. But we need to transform public service media organizations from broadcast-centric organizations to public service platforms. That is what we must do. It will not suffice to offer our radio and television programs online. We must develop more innovative digital formats. We also need to engage more with our audiences, take them seriously, and allow them to co-create part of our offers. This also requires change at levels that are not visible to outsiders.

The entire accounting system, all management systems, risk assessment, data management systems, … must change as well. Moreover, we need people with advanced digital skills. However, these people are needed in other sectors as well. There is a fierce war for talent. Furthermore, our mindset as an organization must become more inclusive. We need to adapt to the changes in society if we want to represent it. So, these are but a few things we need to do at the organizational level.

And finally, any ideas or recommendations for scholars who want to contribute to a healthy PSM? How can they become more active?

Spread the message. Pure and simple. If there is great research, spread it. Not the full-length paper. Five bullets, infographics on Twitter and LinkedIn, Instagram sliders, … Also scholars, not only public broadcasters, need to adapt with new formats to this environment. The digital environment gives us ample opportunities to deliver on our remit better. The same also holds for academia.

Karen Donders was interviewed by Michał Głowacki in September 2021.

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Karen Donders is Director of Public Engagement, Talent and Organization at Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroeporganisatie (VRT) – public service media in Flanders. Prior to joining VRT she worked as an associate professor at Vrije University Brussel, Belgium. Her publications include monographs, edited collections and scholarly papers on the European media policy and innovation in public service media. In 2021 Karen has received the Media and Democracy Karol Jakubowicz Award for her book, entitled "Public Service Media in Europe. Law, Theory and Practice" (Routledge, 2021).

KAREN DONDERS (2021). PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA IN EUROPE. LAW, THEORY AND PRACTICE. LONDON AND NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE, TAYLOR & FRANCIS GROUP, 313 PP., ISBN: 978-1-138-477705.

The discussion on the Public Service Media (PSM) is conducted by many actors and on many levels, most often academic and political (Głowacki & Jaskiernia, 2017). Karen Donders knowledge, as an academic analyst and media expert, combines both of these perspectives, making it possible to understand the landscape of PSM in contemporary Europe, with all its richness of diversity, but also as a whole that can be subject to general evaluation, using uniform criteria and research apparatus. Consequently, the reader receives a broad, comparative analysis of theories and a few case studies, which written with the passion of a researcher and the pragmatic eye of an expert is interesting not only to academics, but also policy makers and professionals.

Just a review of the table of contents makes it possible to assess the outstanding research project that Donders established and conducted. It includes a broad theoretical study, which assumes the analysis of PSM in many approaches: systemic, market-technological and institutional. Particularly striking is the close structural connection of PSM with democracy and citizenship, treating them as a "central" point for the construction and evaluation of the democratic nature of the political and social system. The case studies were not chosen by chance. Ireland, the United Kingdom, Flanders and the Netherlands were used to show PSM strategies in a multi-platform media environment. Poland, the only Central and Eastern European country, was chosen as a study of subordinations of PSM as political booty. The legal part considers PSM not only as a fragment of the market, but also as a field to be exploited by ideologically driven forces that do not hesitate to instrumentalize them. Modern policies towards PSM, in an increasingly cross-border, convergent and networked environment, require a modern model of governance, based on a more multistakeholder approach.

The book shows the challenges all media market players in Europe have to face after relinquishing their state monopolies and transforming into a dual broadcasting system, whereby Public Service Broadcasting is treated as a "distortion" of the system (Klimkiewicz, 2014, p. 74). The PSM monopoly came to an end in Europe during the 1970s and 1980s, which gave rise to economic, legal and ideological problems. The existence of Public Service Broadcasters (PSB), today's PSM, requires legitimacy for their maintenance by taxpayers, acceptance of their mission

by the public, and the arrangement of relations with market competition. The main feature distinguishing PSM from PSB is the "public service driven agenda" in a digital "world of clickbait". The treatment of PSM as a "democratic project", was raised by Donders as one of the key issues in the search for a new formula in the conditions of technological, legal and social convergence. The Amsterdam Protocol adopted as part of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, indicates the same arguments. In the protocol, PSB "is directly related to the democratic, social and cultural needs of each society" (The Amsterdam Protocol, 1997). For Donders, the argument is that the qualities of PSB/PSM should give them an advantage over the market - putting the fulfilment of democratic values at the center by "providing all citizens equal access to a wide range of high-quality entertainment information and education". Audience-oriented PSM also signify a deeper inclusion of audiences, their emancipation, and thus, as Donders' concept can be recognized—their democratization. The convergent environment creates many opportunities to fulfil these demands by offering services across media devices and technologies.

The construct of the new PSM for democracy, their place in the democratic order as outlets fulfilling the role of a common platform for debate and serving democracy, implies a priority approach to goals like pluralism, diversity, social cohesion, quality. The service to the "good of society" puts the "interest of citizens at the heart of what public broadcasters do". Inherent in this construct are the values, on which PSM is built. Donders refers here not only to the achievements of exemplary broadcasters such as the BBC, but connects the legitimacy of PSM to the traditions of representative democracy and the credo of the French Revolution or the Enlightenment`s tradition. The question "what the values *liberté, fraternité,* and *egalité* stand for" is an ever-present dilemma in the debate between liberals and socialists, also in the context of defining the role of the media.

Public Service Media as a societal project assumes the main objective to contribute to the wellness being and democracy. The concept of citizenship is at the center of Donders' intriguing reflections on the three main areas of cultural, political and civic citizenship. Donders sees the role of the contribution of PSB to cultural communication as multidimensional, ranging from "nation building" to "offering services that guide people from *culture* to *Culture*". The role of PSB's contribution to political citizenship throughout Europe is more difficult to delineate, as it is linked to the enormous diversity of Central Eastern European countries and Western European countries. The component of civic citizenship, referring to civic rights, duties and virtues, requires a multi-faceted analysis of the intersection of interests of different social groups and the role of the state. Achieving goals set by the above values, according to Donders, requires conditions, one of the most important of which is an adequate relationship with the state, which

can seriously undermine or even completely erode the contribution of PSBs to the public interest. Government control, party interest and politization come with a decline in trust.

Empirical evidence for the above hypothesis can be found abundantly in Europe. Donders illustrates it with the example of Poland after 2015, when the Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość - PiS) party, after winning the elections, completely subordinated PSM, especially television, to the logic of party propaganda. The public model changed to "sovereign" (Jaskiernia & Pokorna-Ignatowicz, 2017), which in this case means the instrumentalization of PSM, the transformation into "an active agent within a system" and a tool of "political engineering". This means the collapse of the fragile system of checks and balances, in which the PSM remains "independent enough to criticize government, not to be a servant of government". It thus ceases to fulfill the role of an active agent of society as a whole, a *watchdog* in the public service. The case of Poland is not isolated, as can be seen by reviewing successive Media Pluralism Monitor reports between 2014 and 2021 (Media Pluralism Monitor, 2022).

Karen Donders' book is a successful result of a wide-ranging research project in the area of ongoing controversy in Europe. It can be taken more broadly - as a study not only of PSM landscape, confronting theoretical perspectives with practice. It is a compelling, lively, and important study because of its relation to the dilemmas of public service and the role of media in democracy in the era of tectonic shift in media sectors: digitalization and commodification, polarization and erosion of political, social, cultural and civic citizenship. In the PSM model that Karen Donders proposes, the obligations of the media to empower citizens are exposed as fundamental features that distinguish and legitimize their existence. Issues of the stronger presence of digital technology, algorithms or data are not brought to the forefront. Values and goals were recognized as the resolving aspects in conceptual discussions on PSM. As Donders writes, her approach may be considered to be "too old-fashioned", but to contest such an approach would be to reject the idea of Public Service Media in general.

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ALICJA WASZKIEWICZ-RAVIV (2021). VISUAL PUBLIC RELATIONS. THE POWER OF IMAGES IN THE COMMUNICATION OF AN ORGANIZATION, WARSAW: WYDAWNICTWA UNIWERSYTETU WARSZAWSKIEGO, 230 PP., ISBN: 978-83-235-4812-6, DOI: 10.31338/UW.9788323548201

Today, the great majority of organizations, whether private, public or non-profit, use public relations (PR) tools to manage the organization's communication and image. Given the rapidly developing visual communication, which is closely linked to the expansion of social media and image culture, the subject of visual PR is a powerful tool in building an organization's brand awareness and communication with the public. Written by Dr Alicia Waszkiewicz-Raviv, the book entitled *Visual PR. The power of images in an organization's communications* is a valuable and actual work addressing the still narrow and relatively new research area of visual PR, especially in the world of social media.

The monograph is an interdisciplinary collection of research, descriptions and insights on the determinants and functions of images in the communications of modern organizations. The purpose of the book is to seek out and show the influences of selected fields of visual communication on public relations. Throughout the book, the reader can learn about the key communication tools that create the experience of visual messages, such as images, photographs and infographics on social media, promotional audiovisual messages, or animation in online spaces. The book introduces the reader to a theoretical understanding of visual PR and demonstrates in a practical way how it works in influencing audiences.

As the author points out, two paradigms dominate PR communication today. The first, the functional, dialogical paradigm, is based on a model of communication, usually two-way symmetrical between the organization and stakeholders. The second paradigm, on the other hand, is the socio-cultural current, which opposes the influence of economics and management in favor of social analysis in public relations research. It is this second paradigm that the author focuses on, noting that the socio-cultural approach helps to make sense of PR at the macro-social, organizational and individual levels. Thus, important issues for understanding visual PR are trust and legitimacy practices within the visual sphere, how power is exercised through and over images, and the understanding and self-reflection of the communication practices of the social group

that PR professionals themselves comprise. The monograph clearly states that „the times of ubiquitous creation of images and images enable communication specialists to manage perception in innovative ways and increase the effectiveness of techniques for establishing relations with the public." Considering the dynamic development of information and communication technologies, and consequently new forms of communication and message creation, especially visual, this statement is most justified. The author even refers to the economic aspect of visual communication, stating that we live in the era of the economy of images. The exchange of goods and services, striving to satisfy needs, is mainly based on images, resulting in the fact that „images are created, images are traded, and images are communicated about and through them." The visual experience created by organizations is created through the use of specific messages with informational and persuasive functions aimed at the sense of sight, which in turn is related to the aesthetic dimension of the organization's functioning, where visual PR techniques are used.

The book is divided into five parts. The first section is devoted to the theoretical embedding of visual PR in media sciences and social communication, with a particular emphasis on the communication of organizations, which is closely related to the research area proposed by the author. The next section presents a range of possibilities for the use of images and the functions they can perform in the process of implementing public relations for organizations. Key in terms of the practical aspect of the work are the remaining chapters. In the third part, the focus is on information in visual PR. Among other aspects, the chapter discusses data visualization, infographics and informotion, and presents the criteria for the visual convention of infographics along with their functions. The fourth chapter is devoted to the persuasive power of PR, in which the characteristics of images that make up the persuasiveness of visual messages are presented, and a template for evaluating the persuasive aspect of messages is discussed, to identify and determine the mechanisms of influence of signs used in visual institutional messages. Also noteworthy is an attempt at genre typologization of dynamic persuasive visual messages (in the context of PR) disseminated in the online world.

In turn, the final, fifth section deals with aestheticization in public relations messages. In this chapter, in addition to characterizing aesthetic reflection, the author presents the limitations of the theory of institutional aesthetics and introduces selected aesthetics of modern times with PR models. A key point in this chapter is the author's analysis of visual tools used in PR in a case study of the Disney corporation.

This book combines theory with PR practice, which is undoubtedly an advantage of Waszkiewicz-Raviv's book. A thorough analysis of the literature on the matter, along with numerous case studies combined with methods of observation

and in-depth interviews, indicate the author's high level of commitment and desire to explore the area of visual PR as deeply as possible. Public relations are characterized by long-term and carefully planned strategies, so it is necessary to consider the changing socio-cultural and technological environment in the process, which is also noted by the author of the book. A strength of the monograph is the presentation of specific activities and tools for practicing visual PR in the new media ecosystem. The various features and functions (information, persuasion, aesthetics) of PR have been set in contemporary realities, with an emphasis on the role of social media, making the book a very good resource not only for theorists but also for PR practitioners who are aware of how big a role visuality plays in an organization's communication in times of rapidly developing new forms and channels of communication.

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ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION: "ENHANCING INDEPENDENT AND EFFECTIVE MEDIA SELF-REGULATION IN POLAND"
WARSAW, POLAND, JANUARY 28, 2022

Since 2020, the Erich Brost Institute for International Journalism at TU Dortmund University in close cooperation with its partner universities of Warsaw and Wrocław, has been promoting high-profile dialog formats in Poland on the topic of media self-regulation and media responsibility. On January 28, 2022, the academic co-operation succeeded in bringing representatives of leading Polish media, the largest Polish and international journalists' associations, as well as local press publishers' associations and media policy institutions to a round-table discussion in Warsaw. The aim of the dialog event was to build bridges between these stakeholders and to promote the establishment of an independent media council at the national level – which ideally would be backed by all journalistic associations and publishers. The high-profile dialog in the format of a round table was initiated for a second time in Warsaw by the following academic institutions (represented by key personnel): The Erich Brost Institute for International Journalism in Dortmund (Prof. Dr. Susanne Fengler and Dr. Isabella Kurkowski), The Institute of Political Science at the University of Wrocław (Prof. Dr. hab. Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska and Dr. Michał Kuś), The Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies at the University of Warsaw (Prof. UW Dr. hab. Michał Głowacki) and the Institute of Journalism and Social Communication at the University of Wrocław (Dr. hab. Adam Szynol).

Poland has been a member of the European Union since 2004. After the fall of communism in 1989, private media have been continuously introduced and the media legislature has been brought up to international standards. The development of the media landscape was initially promising. Currently, however, the country is experiencing a strong, politically motivated polarization of the media, which the right-wing conservative government increasingly controls. State advertising, for example, often only backs media that are in line with party politics. Opposition media are not supported; on the contrary, they are publicly denounced as "not conforming to the state". The public broadcasting sector also receives state funding from the government in addition to broadcasting fee revenues, which has led to fierce public criticism from the civilian population and the media regarding political influence, especially in the 2020 presidential election year. In 2021, a controversial media law, that prohibits non-European companies from holding majority stakes in broadcasting stations, was proposed

(and later passed) via the Polish Sejm. As a consequence, the broadcasting license of TVN24 (TVN Discovery Group, owned by Discovery, Inc.), which is critical of the government, has been at risk of being revoked. The bill was vetoed by Polish President Andrzej Duda on 27 December 2021.

Photo1: Participants of the round-table discussion "Enhancing Independent and Effective Media Self-Regulation in Poland" (clockwise): Dr. Jacek Mikucki, Tomasz Miłkowski, Ryszard Bańkowicz, Paulina Pacuła, Alice Pesavento, Dr. Isabella Kurkowski, Dr. Michał Kuś, Dr. hab. Adam Szynol, Prof. UW Dr. hab. Michał Głowacki, Beata Chmiel, Andrzej Krajewski, Marta Ringart-Orłowska, Robert Feluś (Warsaw, January 28, 2022).

Photo by Dagmara Sidyk-Furman.

EU Commission Vice-President Vera Jourova criticizes these negative tendencies and points to a press freedom obligation that applies to the entire EU in order to protect media freedom and the rule of law. The increasing number of court cases against journalists and the media as well as the lack of an independently functioning media council at the national level in Poland contribute to diminished press and media freedom. During the round-table discussion, Beata Chmiel, the initiator of the Civil Pact for Public Media in Poland summarized the problem as follows: "We need a joint national Code of Conduct, which is supported by all journalistic associations and media publishers as well as a national unity as important part of the media democratic process."

Urška Umek, responsible Head of the Media Unit at the Council of Europe, presented and explained the latest Council of Europe regulations on the governance of communication and media in terms of good governance. Umek explained, "(S)elf-regulation provides a lot of clarity by its complaint system, which the legal

side cannot fulfil." Mirosław Wróblewski, from the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in Poland, confirmed this statement, as complaints from citizens to the Polish Ombudsman on the subject of the media have increased significantly in recent years. Normally, such complaints would be referred to a national independent media council.

Pamela Morinière, Head of Communications at the International Federation of Journalists in Brussels, stressed the importance of effective as well as independent self-regulation – and that media councils should be based on voluntarism, not politicization. Well-known media representatives from Poland discussed, on the one hand, the question of the future of the media in Poland and the risks to their development – and, on the other hand, the extent to which an independent media council could provide a solution. All the discussants agreed that the journalistic community in Poland is strongly polarized and divided, and it might be extremely difficult to reverse the process. Bogusław Chrabota, Editor-in-Chief of *Rzeczpospolita* and Vice-President of the European Newspaper Publishers` Association, emphasized in particular that media freedom is also linked to the development of the media market. Manfred Protze, member of the German Press Council, made it clear that society and the media are critical observers of the government and, with their complaints' mechanism, an important element of democratic development. Urška Umek stressed that media accountability is highly connected to media sustainability: "Media, without the trust of readers, audience and users will be barely sustainable." Nowadays, this trust may easily be lost, as more and more journalists are replaced by content curators, observed Robert Feluś, former Editor-in-Chief of *Fakt*, a red top tabloid being currently the most popular daily newspaper in Poland.

For the first time, representatives of the Polish Local Press Publishers' Association (Polish: Stowarzyszenie Gazel Lokalnych, SGL) also took part in the dialog: Marta Ringart-Orłowska, member of the publishing board, explained how the polarizing media in Poland now report, and that there is nevertheless also an important exchange and dialog between the parties involved within the association. The SGL is a national-level publishing association for local newspapers that also provides training for journalists. She affirmed: "It is worthwhile to have a common dialogue in order to improve the freedom of media in Poland – independent self-regulation can be a very good option here." It seems to be of great importance as "local media are literally hanging on to money of the local authorities" – pointed out Marek Twaróg, Editor-in-Chief of Press.pl, who for many years has been working in regional dailies. Dr. Damian Flisak, Press Officer of Ringier Axel Springer Polska, highlighted that the Digital Services Act recently proposed by the EU Commission will also pose major challenges for Poland's media without an independently functioning media council. Marek Frąckowiak, President of the Polish Chamber of Press Publishers, summed up that

a lack of a media council is a common problem for all media houses in Poland, and one should consider including in the construction of a new independent body already existing mechanisms such as the Council of Media Ethics, the Media Ethics Charter, the Press Publishers Good Practice Code, and also the Code of Advertising, but above all journalists and editors. Ryszard Bańkowicz, the President of the Council of Media Ethics in Poland, offered the Council as a platform: "Independent self-regulation of the media is important and journalistic associations should be a cohesive part of it. The Council of Media Ethics can be reactivated and take on this role of an independent institution."

Photo 2: Participants of the round-table discussion "Enhancing Independent and Effective Media Self-Regulation in Poland" voting on the working group (clockwise): Dagmara Sidyk-Furman, Dr. Jacek Mikucki, Tomasz Miłkowski, Ryszard Bańkowicz, Paulina Pacuła, Dr. Isabella Kurkowski, Dr. Michał Kuś, Dr. hab. Adam Szynol, Prof. UW Dr. hab. Michał Głowacki, Beata Chmiel, Andrzej Krajewski, Marta Ringart-Orłowska, Marek Frąckowiak, Robert Feluś (Warsaw, January 28, 2022).

Photo by Alice Pesavento.

Prof. UW Dr. hab. Michał Głowacki, Dr. hab. Adam Szynol and Dr. Michał Kuś emphasized that media self-regulation is invaluable and that the discussion showed that there is a desire from all participants of the Warsaw Dialogue for a format of independent self-regulation in Poland. In a ballot initiated by Dr. Isabella Kurkowski, senior researcher and international media accountability expert at the Erich Brost Institute for International Journalism, all participants of the event voted unanimously in favor of establishing an independent self-regulation working group. Adrien Collin from the European Federation of Journalists, who presented the EU project "Media Councils in the digital

age" during the event, offered support for future activities to develop the media council in Poland as part of the project. Prof. Dr. Susanne Fengler summarized the discussion by emphasizing that research and teaching are indispensable components that can also provide support in a highly pragmatic way in the implementation of building self-regulatory institutions.

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THE 72ND ANNUAL ICA CONFERENCE "ONE WORLD, ONE NETWORK?" PARIS, MAY 26-30, 2022

Media and communication scholars from around the globe participated in the hybrid 72nd Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA). The Polish Communication Association organized a panel "One Region, Different Contexts: Media and Journalism in Central and Eastern Europe." The goal of the panel was to examine current relations between political systems and media systems in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. Despite sharing some historical, political and cultural heritage, countries in the CEE region have been developing their own public spheres where the media constantly alters under political, economic, social, and cultural pressures. Therefore, papers in this session traced and evidenced factors affecting media markets and journalistic role performance across political contexts.

In the session sponsored by the Polish Communication Association there were five presentations. The first, entitled "Comparing the longue durée in the Balkan and Baltic media systems development" was offered by Zrinjka Peruško from the University of Zagreb (Croatia). In her contribution, Peruško showed those conditions, which contributed to media freedom and media market development in the six countries of southeast Europe—the six countries that used to be part of Yugoslavia. Using the fsQCA and the historical institutionalist approach, the paper investigated how the same theoretical and methodological framework can be applied to the three Baltic countries – Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, and whether different longue durée conditions produce other configurations and receipts leading to various outcomes of media system transformations.

In the second, Marju Himma-Kadakas from the University of Tartu, (Estonia) shared findings of a study on "Unperceived self-censorship among Estonian journalists conditioned by public attacks on journalism". The year 2020 was exceptionally challenging for Estonian journalists, because besides the COVID-19 pandemic, the right-populist government repeatedly attacked journalism. Marju Himma-Kadakas, Signe Ivask from Masaryk University, and Sol Agin from Karlstad University (Sweden) conducted a discourse analysis of media texts that discuss attacks on Estonian journalism. The findings of this qualitative research showed that accusations towards journalists were frequently related to discourses regarding journalists' interventionist or watchdog roles. Juxtaposing these results with quantitative data, it became evident that when aspects of interventionist and watchdog roles were criticized in the media texts, the performance

of these roles decreased in the news. However, journalists' self-assessment does not show the perception of this change. Scholars argued that self-censorship conditioned the discrepancy between the performance and perception of roles, created collectively but unknowingly within the newsroom. The external pressures, such as public politically motivated attacks on journalism, may promote the unperceived collective self-censorship.

Participants of the panel sponsored by the Polish Communication Association at the ICA Conference from left to right: Zrinjka Peruško (University of Zagreb), Aleksandra Krstić (University of Belgrade), Agnieszka Stępińska (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan), Marju Himma-Kadakas (University of Tartu), and Gabriella Szabó (Centre for Social Sciences, Budapest).

Next, Aleksandra Krstić from the University of Belgrade (Serbia) presented a paper entitled " 'Let us entertain you': infotainment as the leading journalistic role in Serbia's polarized media context". The papers co-authors were Ana Milojević, Nikola Jović and Kristina Milić. Their study, conducted under the framework of international project *Journalistic Role Performance*, examined the dominance of infotainment as the leading journalistic role Serbia: a country with a high societal and political polarization, rising competitive authoritarianism and the rapid decline of press freedom. Building on quantitative content analysis of media texts across news outlets (print, radio, TV and online) and a survey with journalists, the paper discussed the power of infotainment role of journalism in Serbia. Infotainment, seems not only to be used as a storytelling technique aimed at relaxing the audience, but also as a powerful device used

to divert attention from important societal and political topics. The paper also revealed high media polarization between elite and popular news outlets regarding the infotainment role, which is most often read through categories of highly emotional language, frequent personalization and exaggerated sensationalism.

Then, Gabriella Szabó from the Centre for Social Sciences, Budapest presented research that establishes a link between emotion regulation theory and communication studies to dig deeper into the role of news media in the emotional public sphere. Gabriella Szabó (with Balázs Kiss) offered a framework for identifying phases of media's strategies to tune in audience's emotions. They analyzed articles collected from the website of the two most-read online news media portals in the first wave of the pandemic. The study revealed that the political color of the news media portals matters the most in explaining the differences between the applied emotion management strategies.

Finally, Agnieszka Stępińska from the Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland), presented her study on how journalists perceive the dynamics of relations between media and politics. In particular, the study addressed how increasing political polarization affects professional journalists across media outlets and their performance. The data came from a series of in-depth interviews with Polish journalists working for five types of media (quality print press, print tabloid, radio, television, and online platforms) and journalists' associations representing various political orientations. The qualitative approach employed enabled the study to recognize the main challenges and threats journalists have been noticing and experiencing during the last decade.

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THE MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY KAROL JAKUBOWICZ AWARD 2022: NOMINEES

Four publications that focus on democracy and media are nominated for this year's edition of the international Media and Democracy Karol Jakubowicz Award.

On April 5, 2022, the Selection Committee reviewed proposals submitted for the 5th edition of the Media and Democracy Karol Jakubowicz Award – a mark of acknowledgment and support of significant publications in media systems, media policies, media ethics, and public service media. Scholarly contributions from 2021 and 2022 were recommended by members of the Leadership Team of the International Association of Public Service Media Researchers (IAPMR), Editors and Associate Editors of "Central European Journal of Communication" (CEJC), alongside previous Award winners and the Committee. Through evaluation of three highly interwoven criteria: 1) methodological correctness, 2) contribution to media knowledge and 3) impact on democratic society, the following books and authors have been nominated to the Award:

» **Nico Carpentier (2021). *Iconoclastic Controversies: A Photographic Inquiry into Antagonistic Nationalism*. Bristol, UK: Intellect.**
For an original examination of visual communication, which results in valuable research on the contribution of art to the national identity, cultural path-dependencies and contemporary understanding of democracy.

» **Urszula Doliwa (2022).** *The Pirate Waves. Polish Private Radio Broadcasting in the Period of Transformation 1989-1995.* **Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Warszawa, Wien: Peter Lang.**
For a media policy-driven attempt to identify the early stages of democratic media market development, followed by a comparative perspective on radio transformations in Central and Eastern Europe.

» **Katarzyna Konarska (2021).** *Media publiczne a demokracja: teoria i praktyka. Media publiczne Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* [**The Theory and Practice of Public Service Media and Democracy: Public Service Media in Central and Eastern Europe**]. **Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.**
For a mature study of public service media and its links with democracy, a reference point for future public service media reforms and scholarly studies in Central and Eastern Europe.

» **Agnieszka Węglińska (2021).** *Public Television in Poland. Political Pressure and Public Service Media in a Post-communist Country.* **Abingdon and New York, US: Routledge.**
For a valued combination of systemic and organisational perspectives to add to the state-of-the-art of Poland's public service media, as well as for qualitative methods to highlight organisational and cultural barriers to adaptation and change of public service media.

Moreover, the Selection Committee acknowledged *The Public Service Media and Public Service Internet Manifesto* by Christian Fuchs, Klaus Unterberger and researchers from the InnoPSM (Research Network on Innovation in Public Service Media Policies). The Committee noted the goals of InnoPSM do meet the idea of the Award but need further dissemination. The Manifesto could also serve as a reference point to extend future Media and Democracy Karol Jakubowicz Award beyond the scholarly publications, which is a subject for future editions. You can sign the manifesto at https://bit.ly/signPSManifesto.

The Media and Democracy Karol Jakubowicz Award was established in 2018 by Małgorzata Semil-Jakubowicz and the Polish Communication Association. More information about the Award can be found on the PCA's website: https://www.ptks.pl/en/awards/the-media-and-democracy-karol-jakubowicz-award.

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