

'Clumsy' Protesters & Clever Elites

Media Bias in the Ukrainian Conflict

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Abstract

On May 2nd 2014 in Odessa a tragic incident occurred between pro-Ukrainian activists and pro-Russian activists which claimed around 40 lives. This was perceived by some officials as the beginning of a war, since it reflected the great instability and hostilities in Ukraine. Russian, Ukrainian and American officials were quick to comment the situation in favor their own side in order to gain support. A war of words began instead, reflected both in media and in comments made by officials. The goal of this war was to bend the truth in a way which made their own hands clean and the other one's dirty. Our study reveals the connection between political elite and media, and how the American media differs from the Russian media. The article uses framing theory along with Mearsheimer's theories about lying in international relations to conclude how and why the connections exist.

Keywords: Framing, Lying, Media, Russia, America, Securitization, Bias, Ukraine, Odessa

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1 Introduction

During the Ukrainian protests in 2013-2014 we found one incident which both sides of the conflict found appalling and tried to blame on the other side. This incident was called the May 2nd Trade Union house-incident in Odessa. The facts of the situation is that around 40 people burned alive inside it, after it being set on fire by either of the sides. This much both sides agree on to some extent. The situation in Odessa itself was very divided, with the pro-Kiev protestors on one side and the pro-Russian separatist protesters on the other. It can be argued that the conflict reflects larger geopolitical interests with EU, USA and Kiev against Russia or vice versa.

Hörnqvist claims that the power of societal elites creates knowledge, which in turn is used to maintain their power. This creates a monopoly on knowledge (Hörnqvist, 2012, pp. 100). In today's society people gain their knowledge about the happenings of the world from the mass media. Understanding the mass media therefore becomes understanding who has power and what power is projected onto the people. The best purpose of mass media, we argue, is when it allows the people to critically inspect the people in power, not when it is an instrument of precisely those people.

By analyzing the media coverage we can gain a glimpse into the motives and objectives of those who control it. If the people who control it also direct the foreign policy of a country, that means we might be able to deduce a correlating bias in the media. The question therefore becomes:

“Is there a connection between elite interests and media bias in the American and Russian news reporting regarding the May 2nd Trade Union House-incident?”

2 Theory

2.1 Framing Theory

In order to divulge how media poses the Odessa occurrence we will use framing theory. We have chosen to use the following conceptual definition of framing:

“[...] electing and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution.” (Entman, 2004, pp. 5)

Entman primarily focus on American media framing in his book ‘Projections of Power’, but we will use his work and apply it on both American and Russian media.

When an article is being produced, the situation which is presented will be defined and described in a certain way. Substantive framing is the explanation of circumstances that are presented in an article and identifies causes to why they are presented in that way. A certain moral standpoint or judgment is made when presenting this and these factors will eventually be the framing of a problem. An article doesn't necessarily only report the situations current state, but also the potential future, which implies endorsement of remedies or improvements for solving the aforementioned issue at hand. Substantive framing is presenting a perception of reality in different aspects, which consequently intensifies certain interpretations of that reality. Different articles can present the exact same facts, but framing and policy options shape how one interprets it. The mental image of an individual will vary depending on which article(s) they have read. Procedural framing is focused on the legitimacy of political actors by looking into “their technique, success, and representativeness” (Entman, 2004, pp. 5-7). An article can use a frame which adheres to cultural aspects, and gain what's called ‘cultural resonance’. The aim is to evoke thoughts and feelings which gather support or opposition to a side in a conflict (Entman, 2004, pp. 6).

In an ideal world, media provides enough information for the citizens to allow them to construct a wide and critical understanding. The process of information can be emulated through the ‘Cascade Model’ (Fig. 1), which implies that information is not only deriving from the administration and then eventually the public, but that all the different actors influence each other. It can be argued that some actors are more powerful in this regard than others, but there is still

influential framing in different ways, disregarding if it comes from a political elite or a citizen (Entman, 2004, pp. 17).

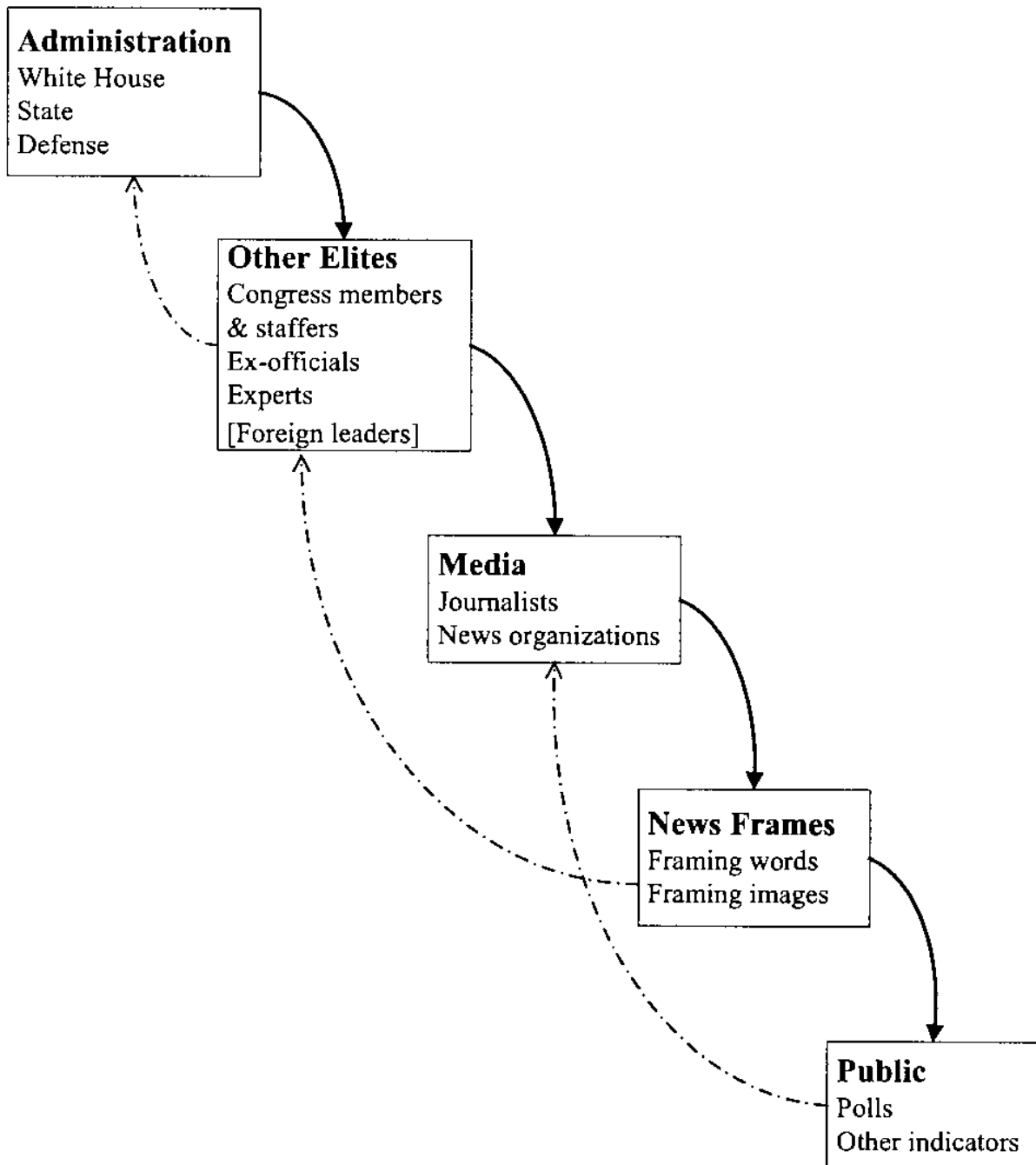


Fig. 1

The exchange of information in the hierarchy is not always clear, but the framing of an issue can be imagined to begin at the administration, which is forwarded to political elites, such as members of congress. From there, the information is received by media which frames the information at hand to the public in certain ways. Different actors in the hierarchy have different interest of what to do or how to frame the information. Therefore, the administration might have influenced the final framing which media produce or which a congressman may utter (Entman,

2004, pp. 9-10). With the Cold War at an end, an absence of problems was a fact for policymakers in the US. It became hard to demonize an enemy in order to increase domestic support and suspend any disbelief of government. For instance, it would be hard to create and motivate a frame that linked instability in Somalia to some kind of direct threat to the United States. During the US involvement in Kosovo, media tended to produce material which did not work in favor of the administration. Rather, the government was highly criticized for its mistakes and lack of results, while not getting any credit for any achievement (Entman, 2004, pp. 97-99). This change of influence in the hierarchy that constitutes Cascade Model means that the hierarchy flattened. Public opinion does not derive entirely from media, but the influence of the administration has been decreased, changing the very balance in the Cascade Model (Entman, 2004, pp. 120).

2.2 Deceptive Tactics

In John Mearsheimer's book 'Why Leaders Lie' he lays out different ways in which leaders deceptively mislead others from the truth and why this is. There are three kinds of 'deceptive tactics' used by actors to mislead people and prevent a truthful and comprehensive assessment. Lying is when someone denies truthful facts or makes up own facts which they know not to be true. Spinning concerns the act of putting more or less emphasis on elected details in one's favor. There is not always clear distinction between lying and spinning, but spinning does not mean making up or denying facts. Lawyers, politicians and media do this for a living to strengthen their position. Concealment is the third and last deceptive tactic. This is also not always clearly different from the other two, but in principle it means that one withholds information that will damage one's position. All three tactics are the opposite of truth telling and are used strategically to strengthen a position (Mearsheimer, 2011, pp. 15-17, 20).

To connect this deceptive behavior to our empirical data we will further present different ways in which lies are used. Far from all lies which are told are used for selfish or malign intent. Some are used to promote the national interest or for the public's good (Mearsheimer, 2011, pp. 21-23). Fear mongering is a perfect example of a kind of lie which seeks to gain public support because it serves the national interest. Without fear mongering, the public might not adequately comprehend the threat. Further we have strategic cover-ups whose purpose is to maintain public confidence in the actions of the state, which without can lead to defeat. Nationalist mythmaking concerns the act of creating a stronger sense of unity and potentially besmirch another nation. This ultimately enhances the support for a war if used to construct a powerful sense of 'us vs. them'. Liberal lies occur when a state have committed actions which negate the liberal norms which are generally accepted on the international arena and imbued in

international law. Idealistic rhetoric is then used to excuse the actions in order to maintain a liberal, and therefore justified, position.

2.3 Securitization

The traditional military-political assessment of what security is the recognition of existential threats to the state. Along with time, security has become not only focused on the state, but also other actors. But either way, when recognizing existential threats, a policy process takes place to deal with the issue. This may be with military force, but might also be with other measures, depending on what kind of threat one is faced with. Waever et al (1998, pp. 21) argues that security is subjective, socially constructed and about “survival”. When something is deemed an existential threat to a group or actor, what they call “securitization” takes place. It is the process of legitimation regarding the suspension of the normal rules and going outside normal procedure in order to deal with the perceived threat. The existence of a real existential threat is redundant, because the act of simply saying it is one is possibly sufficient (ibid, pp. 23-24). Waever et al. also talk about the political security agenda, or how security is interpreted in a purely political sector. They argue that “political security is the organizational stability of social order(s)” (ibid, pp. 141) and that “political threats are thus made to (1) the internal legitimacy of the political unit, which relates primarily to ideologies and other constitutive ideas and issues defining the state” as well as the external legitimacy (ibid, pp. 144). If the threat to societal order means a threat to the existence of the elites, we deduce that their response is a securitization of the actors which threaten the internal and external legitimacy of that system. This means that our analysis will focus on the opposition to the governing elites and their ideas, as well as the ideas upholding that system.

2.4 Summary

We argue framing theory illustrates how the incident is posed in both Russian and American media and we will use theories on substantive and procedural framing as a tool in order to illustrate and explain the processes of their bias. John Mearsheimer’s theories on ‘deceptive tactics’ help explain the motives of the elite and their methods. Lastly, the ‘cascade model’ describes how frames move through different actors, giving us a clear image of the causal linkages between elite interest and the frames propagated in news organizations. Our material will include media owner relations with the political elite in each country to reveal how framing is spread through different actors to the public.

The interwoven nexus of framing, Mearsheimer's ideas and political securitization now becomes clearer. Theories on securitization deduce a logic to how and why elites feel threatened and perform securitizing moves. These securitizing moves are expressed in directed framing efforts, supporting the elites in control of the media at hand. Finally, Mearsheimer's ideas complement Entman's to what they say to successfully frame the issues in order to achieve the desired outcome, but they also help explain the original motivations. We believe this illustrates a full process image of elite influence on media bias.

Each article chose to report same event in different ways. If an article reports about the events with a clear bias and presumably with an agenda, it may be connected to elite interest. For instance as aforementioned, after the Cold War the United states policy makers lacked an enemy which they could demonize and increase domestic support for their policies with fear mongering. It is therefore logical that the United States or Russian media would use the Ukrainian crisis to pursue a certain policy. Of course, there are multiple factors which determine what and how something is reported in media, such as freedom of the press to report independently. By combining framing theory with our empirical analysis about media relationship with the political elite in each country, we will draw our conclusion regarding whether there is a connection, if that differs between the two countries (USA and Russia), and why that is.

3 Method

To analyze this we've chosen to do an explanatory comparative analysis, where we analyze two media climates (six newspapers in total). We will use framing theory to determine how the incident is posed on both sides. We will use three news organizations from each country, and we will use theories on substantive and procedural framing as a tool in order to illustrate their bias. Then John Mearsheimer's theories on 'deceptive tactics' help explain the motives of the elite and their methods. Lastly, the 'cascade model' describes how frames move through different actors, giving us a clear image of the causal linkages between elite interest and where the frames propagated in news organizations originates from. Our material will include media owner relations with the political elite in each country to reveal how frames are spread through different actors to the public. We therefore hypothesize that it is possible to trace the frames back to the elites who created them by connecting the interests expressed in frames and the methods the frames are constructed by, to the elites' ownership of the news organizations. That means our independent variable becomes 'elite ownership of media organizations' and the dependent variable becomes 'media bias'.

The criteria used to analyze the articles can be summarized in the following questions:

- Who owns the organization?
- What are the self-proclaimed objectives of the organization?
- Do we see signs of any 'deceptive tactics'?
- Do we see signs of substantive and/or procedural framing?
- Are there connections to cultural schemas, on which the frames gain resonance?

3.1 Validity and Reliability

There is a weakness in our methodology since we don't have concrete proof of a real relationship between media and political elite, but our purpose is to divulge any connection and tendency. There are certain weaknesses regarding the symbiosis of validity and reliability. As we try to reveal an agenda with mentioned method, the reliability of our judgment of changing agenda can be discussed, since we will mainly concentrate on indicators of interests in media. In some texts it might be close to directly observable which agenda is pursued, in others it might be convoluted and we can make an incorrect or questionable

judgment. But in case we are uncertain of opinion we will most likely highlight this in our analysis so that no wrong conclusions are made.

3.2 Material

We will use news reports to divulge how Russian and American media choose to pose certain situations and their attitudes towards the rest of the world to investigate potential biases depending on the political position. By using a wide range of media published at different time periods we will strive to achieve a comprehensive depiction of this. Using of a large amount of second account sources we will shed light on the broader context, which will provide insights to the reasoning behind actions along with interest and motives. While exploring and comparing news reports, we will both acquire an illustration of the general events that takes place and the underlying reasoning behind it, and perhaps uncover contradictions (Möller, 2011, pp. 76, 79-80). By presenting different articles from media we will make an assessment of whether there are clear biases, or if some media actually strive to keep a neutral tone in their reports.

We've chosen to restrict our analysis to the seven days following the event on May 2nd. This is because allowing more material would make an analysis of this report impossible, given the restriction imposed on us, but also because allowing a longer time period might not actually give us any more usable material.

Large news agencies such as Reuters strive to maintain a certain level of objectivity and avoid losing their neutral tone in their reports while news organization such as CNN always claim to adhere this status of neutrality as well, but is seemingly more biased in both the selection of what to report and in how it is written. National news for instance tend to be state-owned, so by nature they will likely report in favor of their own policies. This of course depends on whether freedom of press exists in the country and whether local news sources are independent or not. We will strive to keep this in mind as we evaluate the different sources which write about the same issues, and when we try to connect the content of the articles with an underlying agenda which might reflect how the parties perceive each other as security risks. Another barrier which we will not be able to exceed is language, but translation is possible (Öberg et Sollenberg, 2011, pp. 48-50).

4 Analysis

4.1 Russian News

4.1.1 The Moscow Times

The Moscow Times is a newspaper owned by Finnish media corporation Sanoma. The new editor-in-chief as of April 2014, Nabi Abdullaev, used to work for RIA Novosti, a state-owned news organization shut down on the April 1st and reorganized into Rossiya Sogodnya (Tétrault-Farber, 2013). This move by Putin evoked criticism of an ever tighter grip on the Russian media sector by the Kremlin, by both RIA Novosti themselves as well as The Moscow Times (ibid.). This strengthens our preliminary classification of The Moscow Times as a neutral/critical newspaper. Although the connection to state media might seem disconcerting, Abdullaev himself praises the honesty and professionalism of The Moscow Times, indicating some devotion to the neutrality of the newspaper (The Moscow Times, 2014a).

Ukrainian Football Celebrations Ended in Odessa Deaths, 2014-05-04

The Moscow Times writes that the Odessa incident was indeed tragic, citing a death toll of around 40 people (The Moscow Times, 2014b). In the article they quote a football supporter who was at the scene at the time as saying “Everything that happened was like in a horror movie” and the witness especially pointing out the ferocity of the pro-Russian football supporters. Just hours earlier the mood had been friendly between the both sides, both chanting anti-Putin and anti-Yanukovich sentiments. They were then both attacked at the same time by masked armed men. The pro-Russians’ tent city was razed and the pro-Russians chased into the Trade Union house. Continuing, the article describes the unclear origins of the fire which torched it. No single verifiable cause exists, they argue, but theories of fires starting inside the building on the third floor are brought up as well as the possibility of the people outside being the reason for the fire. The theory of pro-Russian provocateurs being behind the original attack is also brought up, describing the hypothetical cause of trying to disrupt a Ukrainian Western pivot, and keep Ukraine under Moscow’s influence. The late arrival of the fire department coupled with distrust in the Ukrainian law enforcement has

created calls for Russian support for the Russian-speakers in Odessa, the article concludes.

Analysis

A strong moral judgment is passed on those who committed the acts. However, no single actor is given the blame and theories supporting both sides are brought up equally. Signs of substantive framing are therefore weak. The legitimacy of the Ukrainian government is also called into question by bringing up the late responses of Ukrainian emergency services, with calls for Russian support being requested we have to deduce this represent a Russian claim to legitimacy in this regard.

We therefore decide to classify this newspaper as neutral/critical in its reporting. The owners of Moscow Times, Sanoma, are a pretty low-key group. We've found no links or criticism regarding connections to legislative or executive political elites. Being a privately-owned entity, the corporation is able to push their own agenda. They themselves claim to be neutral, and our analysis of their reporting supports that claim. However, they still propagate frames from the elites according to the cascade model, albeit equally.

4.1.2 Izvestia

Izvestia is a Russian newspaper, previously one of the biggest papers in the Soviet Union. It was for a long time the official newspaper of the Soviet government. After the fall of the Soviet Union it became a regular newspaper. It was owned by a holding company owned by Vladimir Potanin, a man with close ties to the Russian government. In 2005 Gazprom Media bought a controlling stake in the company and in 2008 Izvestia was sold to New Media Group. Recently, Kabaeva, a prominent Russian athlete and big United Russia profile was appointed chairman of NMG (Khrennikov, 2014). The majority share-holder of NMG is Yury Kovalchuk, an affluent man with close ties to Putin, according to Western news bureau Reuters (Reuters, 2008). However critical one might be of the Western nature of Reuters, their strict adherence to journalistic objectivity lends them credibility (Öberg et Sollenberg, 2011, pp. 49). So even though Kabaeva was only recently appointed chairman the ties to Putin and the Kremlin have existed for a while, most importantly during the time period surrounding the Trade Union House-incident.

Ukrainian authorities will be responsible for the tragedy in Odessa ECHR, 2014-05-05

The article begins by reporting that representatives of Russia's Civic Chamber are blaming the Kiev government for crimes against their own people in the European Court of Human Rights (addendum 1). Regarding the events in Odessa, 46 people are said to have been killed. The victims inside the house are called "anti-Maidan-activists" and the ones who started the fire are said to be "Right Sector"-members. The article continues on with representatives of Russia's Civic Chamber saying that the Kiev government is trying to justify crimes against their own people by placing the blame on "Russian provocateurs", as well as activists claiming that the Ukrainian government's unwillingness to stop crimes against dissenters means they are "enticing ethnic hatred". The activists call for a ECHR investigation into the actions of the Ukrainian authorities.

Maxim Grigoriev, director of Democracy Fund (a Russian non-profit organization) and representative of the Civic Chamber is quoted saying his organization is preparing such a report. He blames Western media reporting on the Odessa incident for using un-verified information, comparing it to how Western media handled the Georgia/South-Ossetia conflict. He also says the fight is against neo-Nazi groups which the West must know about (implying they don't).

The article mentions an American political scientist, Daniel McAdams, who works for the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity. He had analyzed American news coverage of the Odessa incident and his conclusion was that the LA Times had made it look like the "fire started in the building, after separatists opened sniper fire on a peaceful football fans" (ibid), the Daily News had ignored that the people outside threw firebombs into the building, and that the New York Times had tried to leave out details that would make the Kiev government look bad. The article ends with claims that the Kiev government is breaking the Geneva Convention, because they are using unmarked militants against civilians.

Analysis

In this article the blame is heavily placed on the Ukrainian 'Right Sector' but also the Ukrainian government for either being complacent or supportive of it, thereby trying to "entice ethnic hatred". This can be connected to overall focus on the far-right groups involved in the pro-Ukrainian struggle. We would like to claim this is a part of trying to achieve 'cultural resonance'. The threat of Nazism is one the Russian people can agree on and remember the atrocities done to the Russian people during World War 2.

The situation is framed as one about human rights, and brings up many proponents to the idea of reporting the Ukrainian government to the ECHR but no critical voices. Those who support the separatist movement are simply called activists and those attacking are said to be Ukrainian radicals. Assuming the separatist sentiment is one which the Russian government favors; leniency in the reporting of separatist responsibility and the demonization of the people expressing a pro-Ukrainian sentiment suggests a pro-Russian bias being expressed. Attempts to delegitimize Western reporting of the event is also present (though quoted), suggesting procedural framing attempts against those who report differently than Izvestia's position.

Further, the criticism of the Western reporting is somewhat sound. However, the criticism brought forward suffered the same methodological problem we try to avoid in this paper, namely to interpret the non-mentioning of information as on purpose. There is simply no way to prove it.

Because of the problem identified, the threat image created, the solutions proposed and the one sided attacks on legitimacy we classify Izvestia as biased pro-Russia. There is also a correlation of elite ownership (or relations between the owners and the top Russian elite) and the bias we deduced, confirming our theory.

4.1.3 RT

RT is an autonomous non-profit organization driven by federal funds and was formed in 2005 as the Russia Today brand under TV Novosti (which belonged to the news agency RIA Novosti). Its purpose was to improve the image of Russia in the world, which at the time was felt to be overly negative (Evans, 2005). The organization was created under TV Novosti with the help of then RIA Novosti. Sputnik News (formerly known as RIA Novosti) claim that there is no ties, directly or indirectly, between the two organizations, citing Russian media experts (Sputnik, 2013). The station changed name from Russia Today to RT in 2009. Since its founding the editor-in-chief of Russia Today (RT) has been Margarita Simonyan. In 2013 Simonyan also became the editor-in-chief of state-owned news agency Rossiya Segodnya (BBC, 2013-12-31) The name means Russia Today, but is not to be confused with the organization now called RT. Rossiya Segodnya incorporates the former RIA Novosti news agency which, as previously mentioned, played a big part in the creation of the organization now called RT.

RT's self-described aim is to provide an alternative perspective on worldwide news and "acquaints an international audience with the Russian viewpoint" (RT.com, n.d.). It has because of its origin and goals been called a propaganda outlet (Ioffe, 2010-9-28).

Odessa tragedy survivor: 'Many people strangled after escaping the fire', 2014-05-07

In this article a surviving witness from the pro-Russian demonstrators is interviewed. She says everyone inside the building were innocent people, that they were strangled to death and then finished off with bats. Those stuck in the building are called pro-autonomy activists and those attacking the building are called radicals and pro-government supporters. The witness says it was the radicals that started throwing the Molotov cocktails. The article mentions that in a video a man is shown wearing a bulletproof vest and a handgun. He is identified as sotnik Mykola, sotnik being a title Maidan leaders in Kiev call themselves. The witness then says that the radicals went through the flames into the building to strangle people using their hands and then finish them off with the bats. The Ukrainian Vice President is quoted saying that some of the victims in the building were foreign nationals, but the witness claims that all the people killed that day were from Odessa. The witness comments on Western media reports saying some of the dead were foreign mercenaries, denying the validity of those claims. All they got from Russia, the witness says, is moral support. The blame is placed on the Ukrainian government, which she says "[...] clearly seek to divide Ukraine".

The article then mentions videos that have been released on the Internet where people outside the building scream misogynist and dehumanizing expletives. The acting prosecutor General Oleg Makhnitsky is quoted saying the flames might be caused by either sides. Ukraine is said to invite independent experts to investigate, most of them from the U.S. The article is concluded by a quote by Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov calling the events in Odessa 'typical fascism' and that Russia will pursue the truth.

Analysis

The article focuses strongly on the horrifying nature of the event. A witness that survived tells her story, but despite the tragedy she is still an activist with an agenda. She claims that everyone inside was innocent people, thereby contradicting the earlier RT reports on Molotov cocktails being used mutually. She goes on saying people were finished off with bats, something which might sound too horrifying to be true, but is actually caught on tape. She further claims that all people are from the city, contradicting and therefore delegitimizing the words of the Ukrainian prime minister. The Ukrainian frames blaming foreigners for interfering are therefore both reported by RT, and reputed by a witness with higher credibility. By also identifying the 'sotnik' as a participant in the hostilities blame is placed on the Maidan movement. This would fit her agenda, but once again there is video evidence to support her claim, showing sotnik Mykola firing a pistol at the house. She then blames Ukraine for trying to divide the country,

implying the acts were planned or allowed by the Ukrainian government. The quote by Russian FM Lavrov calling ‘fascism’ can also be seen as a way to provide cultural resonance (with WW2 as a referent object) for the frames constructed, and his reassurance that Russia will stand for the truth is a way of creating a ‘us vs. them’-mentality, or even as sort of nationalist mythmaking depicting Russia as the champion of truth and the Ukrainian government as corrupt.

We therefore see clear signs of procedural and substantive framing. The problem is identified, the moral judgment is made and the solution is proposed. There is a first-hand witness who backs up many of the things the article argues, but one must realize that they share the same agenda. Since the network was openly created to better the image of Russia and the articles mainly argue against the Ukrainian government and show the ‘Russian way’ as a solution we deem RT to definitely be pro-Russian. There are also clear ties to the Russian state even though another media organization connected to the Russian state says there are none. This seems to confirm our theory that the framing is consistent with the interests of the owners, namely people near or in the Russian government. A delegitimization of the Ukrainian government also serves a foreign policy purpose for the Russian government.

4.2 American News

4.2.1 New York Times

Founded September 18, 1851, the New York Times is a newspaper owned by The New York Times Company which is still very active). It is controlled by the Sulzberger family and operates primarily in the US, but is also active internationally (mondotimes.com A, n.d.). The paper writes extensively about domestic and international issues and strives to maintain a neutral standpoint by including different viewpoints and representatives of opposite sides.

Ukraine Presses Pro-Russia Militants after Fighting Spreads to a Port City, 2014-05-04

New York Times reports that the incidents occurring even in the region of Odessa reflects how uncontrolled the situation has become (Smale & Kramer, 2014). Ukraine has increased their advances militarily while Russia further promised to intervene in the case which “Russian-leaning residents were in danger”. The community of Odessa consists of Russian speakers who appeal to Moscow. Pro-Russian and Pro-Ukrainian groups clashed in street battles which resulted in 46 deaths, mostly consisting of Pro-Russians who had fled to a trade union building

which was set on fire. The article also refers to the Pro-Ukrainian newspaper 'Ukrainska Pravda', which claims that the Pro-Ukrainians did nothing in order to rescue those inside. Instead they sang the national anthem of Ukraine and yelled out mottos about Putin. The foreign ministers of both Russia and Ukraine chose to blame representatives of the other side for the occurrences. The foreign minister of Ukraine blamed Russian special services while the counterpart blamed a Ukrainian nationalist group.

The local police chief was fired due to being unable to do their duties correctly. John Kerry expressed clearly that the use of violence by any militant group, regardless of side, is condemnable, while the European Union wanted to investigate the deaths. Moscow illustrated clear rejection of the upcoming election of president and vote on constitutional reforms. In case Russia would do anything to impede the elections, Germany and the US threatened with new sanctions against them. Dmitry S. Peskov, a spokesman of Kremlin, remarked that Russia no longer could support armed self-defense by Russian-leaning citizens in a life threatening situation. He further claims that the authorities in Kiev are partners in crime and responsible for the criminal actions committed. Because of the US and EU support of Ukraine's military procedures, they too are partly responsible for the actions against pro-Russian activists according to Peskov.

It was made clear on state television in Russia that war crimes were occurring and that action had to be taken to protect those being exposed. This did not motivate Kremlin, who, according to analysts, were not set to intervene militarily. Dmitri V. Trenin speculated that Putin realized the cost of war and therefore decided not to act, but will wait and perhaps influence Ukraine in other ways. After this event, interests of a diplomatic solution were implied both from the US and from Russia, but the US claimed that Russia had not used its power properly to stop further conflict by clearing "Pro-Russian militants from public buildings in several towns in the east."

Both John Kerry and Sergey V. Lavrov discussed how to find a way to de-escalate the conflict, but both still points fingers at each other for actively preventing such development, or remarking that there was an absence of taken action.

Analysis

The article itself is unbiased and chose to present the viewpoint of both sides. It chose to describe the situation as unstable and dangerous, but do not take any side on who is right/wrong. Some accusing comments are brought up in this article, but it also brings up the disapproval of the officials which condemn the actions committed, regardless of who committed it. The Russian media and officials frame the actions in a way which implies that the entire West and Ukraine are responsible for what happened, which can be interpreted as a kind of spinning in order to demonize the opposing side. They also do not acknowledge any pro-Russian activist activity which was wrong, which can be in order to maintain a

position of being innocent in the matter .The West does not admit any responsibility either, and both these actions can be interpreted as concealment to strengthen one's legitimacy. Liberal lies are used when pointing to the others crimes against liberal international norms and not recognizing their own possible guilt. It is not possible for us to know the objective truth of who did what and which spinning is most truthful, but the officials tend to be biased in the matter, and deceptive tactics is a fact.

The background information about the newspaper describes it as neutral, which it is. It reports both sides and is open for interpretation, so no clear elite influence can be recognized. The framing therefore highly lies in the hand of the elites in the regard that they are cited in the media. For instance, officials on both sides say that they are open for de-escalating the conflict, but then claims that the other is unwilling to compromise. The media did not report that one side is willing and the other is not, but rather reports what seem to be disputes with words between the sides about who is guilty. Support for one's action seems to be the focus for the officials, both internationally and domestically, which can be used to promote a certain policy. This could mean securitization and therefore legitimizing military action or political legitimacy.

4.2.2 Fox News

Fox News is widely regarded as a conservative and republican news channel. Although they primarily focus on TV coverage, they also have a website with articles and footage. They report about national as well as international issues and are mainly available in the US. The channel is a subsidiary to News Corporation since Rupert Murdoch acquired it 1985 which operates globally (Mondotimes.com B, n.d.).

Ukraine government says pro-Russian rebels sparked deadly Odessa fire, 2014-05-02

The article states that pro-Russian protesters died after taking cover in 'a hulking Odessa building' which was 'likely sparked by rebels on the roof who accidentally dropped Molotov cocktails, according to a preliminary investigation by the government' (foxnews.com, 2014). The tension close to the border to Russia has increased and worried comments regarding escalation into an uncontrollable situation and civil war has been expressed by France. Further, the article suggests that the new government is pressing militarily in the east in order to hinder the Pro-Russian insurgency. The events that took place in Odessa resulted in 42 deaths, some which died by the fire which started from the top

floors of the Trade Union building. The people inside were Pro-Russian protesters who had decided to shelter themselves from Pro-Kiev militants.

The article cites Ukraine's deputy interior minister: "The fire began from the roof. There were extremists there, we found casings and firearms," Mr. Chebotar said. "But something unexpected happened; their Molotov cocktails fell, and ignited the higher floors of the building."

Except for those who died inside the building or jumping out of it, four people died during the riots. Pro-Russian activists and Russian media claimed straightforward that this was deliberately committed by Ukrainian nationalists, and compare the events with Nazi war crimes against civilians, claiming that it was plotted by Kiev.

"We are dealing with real genocide, a genocide of Russian and Ukrainian people in today's 21st century," the speaker of the lower house of Russia's parliament, Sergei Naryshkin, said of the fire, which he blamed on "riotous radicals," the Interfax news agency reported."

The article also mentions that the fire first occurred after Pro-Russian protesters had attacked pro-Ukrainian protesters, and that both sides had thrown Molotov cocktails. Video footage shows two sides of pro-Ukrainian protesters, one part which helped people out of the building, and another who attacked people.

Analysis

This article does not report a one-sided version of the events that took place. Rather, it states that the sides are disagreeing on the responsibility of what happened, while labeling the other as fully responsible. For instance, an investigation made by the government in Ukraine concludes that the fire in the Trade Union-house was an accident by rebels who unintentionally dropped Molotov cocktails on the roof. This spinning of what happened is unapproved by the opposition. Pro-Russian activists believe that the fire was deliberately started by Ukrainian nationalists, and Russian media takes this a step further and says that it was plotted by Kiev. Russian media also compare this act by pro-Ukrainians with the Nazi's crimes against humanity during World War II. This is a clear case of liberal lies, which means that they are spinning the events so that the opposition has violated liberal international norms, while the pro-Ukrainians reject this statement. Both are spinning the truth in order to be in line with liberal international norms. The Ukrainian side is also using a strategic cover-up, while the Russian side is fear mongering, both for increased support domestically and internationally for themselves and decreased for the opposition. The officials are in this article the ones framing the events, describing for people what is happening with rhetorical language, not Fox News.

4.2.3 NBC News

NBC is owned by the largest cable television system operator in the United States, Comcast Corporation. Currently Steve Burke is the CEO and Deborah Turness is the president of the broadcast network (Mondotimes C, n.d.). The lobbying budget of Comcast is the seventh largest in the United States (Opensecrets, n.d.). In fact, they have employed several former US Congressmen as lobbyists. Comcast has developed a diversity promoting network, including a Hispanic-focused English-language channel (New York Times, 2014-02-20). At the top list of Barack Obama's fund-raisers, David and Rhonda Cohen are found to have raised over 2.2 million dollars. David Cohen is the executive vice president of Comcast (New York Times, 2014-09-13).

Russia Blames West for Odessa Carnage, Ukraine Wars 'It's a War', 2014-05-03

This article begins with the remark that Putin blames Kiev and the West for the events in Odessa, and that Ukraine officials assess the situation as a war. The situation has claimed 42 lives and 125 injured in the chaos that turned "ended in gunfights and a horrifying fire". The groups were pro- and anti-Russians. Most lives were claimed inside the trade union building which was set on fire (Jamieson & Stromova, 2014).

"Kiev and its Western sponsors are practically provoking the bloodshed and bear direct responsibility for it," spokesman for Russian President Vladimir Putin told reporters, according to RIA Novosti."

"Those who recognize this junta as legal power becomes an accomplice of this crime," Interfax quoted Peskov as saying."

In the end paragraph of the article, a statement from Putin is quoted:

"Putin expressed 'deep condolences to the relatives of the killed and burnt alive in Odessa and wished fast recovery to those who were injured as a result of punitive actions of Kiev authorities'".

Analysis

From a substantive framing perspective, this article is arguably neutral considering it brings up opinion of both sides of the conflict. It is made clear in the article what both sides of the conflict believe. There is no clear sign of bias. But the content of the quotes which the articles poses contains apparent fear mongering, especially when Ukraine officials calls the situation a war, the intention being to rally support from external and internal actors or to legitimize some kind of military action. The spokesman representing Vladimir Putin claims

that the actions or 'crimes' that were committed should be blamed on Kiev and the West, and that anyone who support the government are part of the crime. There is a clear need for these officials to point fingers and spin the truth in order to gain support. No one is acknowledging their own mistakes or contribution to the conflict, just the opposing side's. Considering that the spokesman define the deaths inside the Trade Union House as 'crimes' which Kiev and the West are responsible for, he is spinning the interpretation of the events in a way which claims illiberal value, which means that he is using liberal lies to describe the opposition as evil.

Considering what officials on both sides mention, it is clear that there is some kind of securitization policy involved to gather support. But the article brings up the story and claims of both sides, which implies that there is no clear policy behind the article. It maintain a neutral tone overall and doesn't claim any preferred future in pro-Russian's or pro-Ukrainian's favor. But the cascade model suggests that the officials are the ones who frame the way they want the media to present the reality, so there certainly is spinning in the article, just not from those producing the articles.

Although it is clear that the owners of NBC have relations to the US officials, that does not seem to influence the content of this article. Freedom of press in the US and a neutral policy probably contribute to this, but the officials who expressed their opinion in the paper will either way frame the world in a certain way which others might listen to. As long as their message is spread, there might be those who listen to it. But when media report both sides and don't ignore opposition, at least they can be deemed neutral.

5 Conclusion

This paper started by detailing the democratic issues with elite ownership of media and, because of the geopolitical interests reflected in the event, pondered the possibility of deciphering the foreign policy by analyzing the media articles. The results of our analysis were quite clear, but for overview we arranged them into a table (fig. 2).

	<u>Pro-West</u>	Neutral	<u>Pro-Russia</u>
<u>Russian Media</u>			
<u>Moscow Times</u>		x	
<u>Izvestia</u>			x
<u>RT</u>			x
<u>American Media</u>			
<u>NY Times</u>		x	
<u>NBC</u>		x	
<u>Fox News</u>		x	

Fig. 2

The officials which are mentioned in the articles show clear signs of telling what happened in a way which is favorable to their national interest. Western media reports both these sides and strives to remain neutral in their style of reporting. Framing is therefore easily recognizable in quotes of officials and it is also easier to spot an obvious interest to tell a truth which is convenient to one's interest. There are two weaknesses with this conclusion. First, we haven't checked every single American media and their reporting of the incident, so to conclude that all American media is neutral in the matter would not be correct. Secondly, we haven't analyzed other incidents which have been reported from this period of time. This is only one incident amongst many. However, the neutrality we perceive in the reporting does not have to be sign of lack of national interest. In fact, a neutral standpoint could serve to lessen the impact of an event which is perceived to be in one's disfavor. Even though the U.S. is supportive of the new Ukrainian government and the revolutions which led to it, some of the acts which happened in support of the policy are too gruesome to show support for. It would fit Mearsheimer's definition of 'strategic cover-ups'. This is something we cannot

deny, but also cannot prove. As previously mentioned, the act of believing all information left out is done with malicious intent or purpose might lead to methodological situation wherein we simply attribute opinions never uttered to different actors, on the basis of theory. To draw further conclusions on the subject and increase the validity, one would have to analyze a larger sum articles from more than six newspapers.

The results were a bit clearer on the Russian side. Only one of the three newspapers actually reported in the same neutral sense that the American ones did, and it isn't really Russian-owned. One interpretation of this study is to draw a conclusion similar to Entman regarding the cascade model. In American media, the cascade has flattened relatively with time, but the same cannot be said to have happened in Russia. In order to challenge hegemonic frames, a strong media opposition is required. Entman prescribes that for an opposition to be successful there must be both critical elites and critical media, which feed off each other (Entman, 2004, pp. 146). Russia is lacking in that sense.

To conclude, our theoretical framework helped illustrate correlations between elite interests and media bias. We deem our method is effective in what it set out to do, but it needs a larger material selection.

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