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## **Media portrayal of Syrian and Ukrainian refugees**

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**Abstract:**

Newspapers and media have always played a critical role in society and have come to shape the way we reflect and perceive news and societal issues. Journalists are conveyer of a message and act as a moderator to shape and set the agenda for the public opinion and the public discourse. This research paper examines the media portrayal of refugees from Ukraine and Syria through pictures. These conflicts have received a great deal of attention in Swedish newspapers and have therefore become a highly relevant topic to research. Ethical journalism is a crucial part of the journalistic field and has been a recurring theme in this thesis. By examining the data collected through a visual rhetorical analysis this paper has obtained knowledge on how news values can determine what news are worthy of publishing and how they are portrayed. This paper has discovered critical differences in media portrayal dependent on news values. The findings of this paper shows how the media creates a shock value when portraying Syrian refugees in comparison to how they portray Ukrainian refugees. These findings can be attributed to the news value criterias of geographical proximity and cultural backgrounds.

*Keywords: media portrayal, ethical journalism, visual rhetorics, refugees, news value criterias, Syria, Ukraine, Aftonbladet, Dagens Nyheter*

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## **1. Introduction**

It is self-evident that the media play an important role in people's everyday life. It serves as people's primary window to the world beyond their personal experiences. Media has the chance to persuade the public opinion and change the way the public perceive news events. Since the majority of people rely on the news media for information, the media have a huge influence on people's perceptions of reality and how public discourse is conducted. Communication is defined as the dissemination of information from one point to another (Craig & Muller, 2007), in this case from journalists to the general public via the media. Communication therefore plays a pivotal role in how information is disclosed and the media is perceived. Communication is inevitable, it is present in everything, in the choice of words and the selection of pictures, journalists create a frame and decide on what the public take part in and what they create discussion around. In today's society the public are constantly exposed to news events, the media makes a selection based on news values, which determines what the public opinion finds valuable. News values are a set of criteria that determine whether events and news stories are to be published in news media. As a result, these criteria clarify what constitutes a newsworthy event. Historically war and crisis has continually played a major part in the media. In today's world with digitalisation and globalization a war and conflict is no longer contained to one country. As we have seen of late, war forces people to seek shelter and refuge. Media coverage in times of war has a strong focus on refugees and search for safety. As today's world is in a state of globalization, the principle of borders has become more and more blurred. The focal point has become to expose the people running from their war torn home. Media has the power to change and influence the public opinion regarding the people in need of a new home. Two of the most discussed current situations have been the conflict in Ukraine and the war in Syria. These events have come to shape not only the world but also the current media coverage. The fact that many Swedish regions have established that Ukrainian refugees can use public transportation for free if they provide a Ukrainian passport or ID is an example of factual disparities in the reception of Syrian and Ukrainian refugees who arrive in Sweden. Other refugees have not received the same care. However, complaints have been made by different actors in society that there has been an unequal treatment and reception of the situations (Sveriges Radio, 2022). It can also be seen, in comparison to Syrian refugees, that more Swedish people accept Ukrainian refugees into their homes. Right wing political figures in Sweden have reportedly been more lenient towards refugees from Ukraine than refugees that came from Syria during the migration crisis in 2015 (Ageman, 2022 & Holmgren, 2014).

## **1.1 Aims and objectives**

The aim of this thesis is to research the media's coverage and portrayal of refugees from Syria and Ukraine. This paper will further look into how the media can change and form public opinion in these particular cases. As these situations might appear similar the consensus and view of refugees is vastly contrasting. The aim is to research the potential contrast in media portrayal of the people seeking refuge. To reach the aim of this paper, it will focus on the Swedish media's representation, in Aftonbladet and Dagens Nyheter, of these situations and how their objective affects public opinion. To research this phenomenon the main focus will be on pictures published in newspaper articles and how the chosen pictures could impact public opinion. This subject discussed in this paper is pertinent in regards to strategic communication in the sense that the pictures published are strategically chosen to communicate a certain message and convey an opinion. The media works strategically to ensure that they portray the situation the way they prefer and to ensure their chosen outcome. To be able to reach this aim this paper will focus its research around one research question.

***RQ: How has Aftonbladet and Dagens Nyheter portrayed refugees from the war in Syria and the conflict in Ukraine through picture selection?***

## **1.2 Limitations**

We will limit the research to only choose pictures published in Swedish newspapers. This limitation is set to focus on the perception of the Swedish public opinion.

We will limit the research further by selecting two of Sweden's largest newspapers, Aftonbladet and Dagens Nyheter. This due to the reach these newspapers have, Aftonbladet reaches 4 million readers each day (Samuelsson, 2021) and Dagens Nyheter has 300.000 subscribers (Opitz, 2021) but it is estimated they reach an even bigger audience. This selection is so that the research will cover the most normative public opinion in Sweden instead of choosing a newspaper with a smaller range, due to the fact that would give a misleading perception of the problem. To further limit the research the chosen method of analysis is visual rhetorics. This led to solely looking at imagery and visuals from the chosen newspapers and disregarding all written articles in reference to the wars, though the background to the pictures will be discussed briefly by possibly looking at titles and captions. The pictures we have chosen for this analysis are selected from these two newspapers. To further narrow the research down, we have chosen a limited number of pictures to analyze using visual rhetorics (12 pictures). The images have been selected through a google image

search with a specific set of criteria to ensure that the pictures represent the media portrayal of the situations.

### **1.3 Critical reflection**

This research paper uses methods and theories which are easily affected by the researchers own opinions and frameworks. As researchers it is important to be aware of these challenges and be self-critical about the reflections made in the analysis. Some ethical issues may arise when undertaking a qualitative content analysis. Personal aptitudes of the author's background may be apparent in the material due to the undisturbed communicative content of the data (Mayring, 2014). The research that is conducted aims to be a neutral reflection and not be biased by the authors. This research paper discusses public opinion and their view of media portrayal. Therefore it is important to acknowledge that the authors of this paper are a part of the public opinion. Despite being a part of the public opinion and consuming different media outlets, the authors of this paper have made a conscious decision to be aware of their own frameworks and personal references to not interfere with the neutrality of this analysis.

In this research paper a visual content analysis of the two newspapers Aftonbladet and Dagens Nyheter will be conducted. These newspapers are two of the most prominent newspapers in Sweden and they were founded in the 18th century (NE, 2022). When conducting research involving these newspapers it is important to be aware of their historical background and their political affiliation. Dagens Nyheter labels themselves as independent liberal and Aftonbladet claims to be independent social democratic (NE, 2022). Despite them being considered neutral and without political influence, the historical political associations are an important aspect of the newspaper's background and a critical part of their values as a media outlet.

As this study focuses solely on photographs and how they can depict reality, the authors of this paper must consider that the pictures' context and factual base of the situation is not disclosed which could give a deeper understanding of the contextual relevance of the picture.

A critical discourse surrounding the authenticity of the pictures has surfaced (Dearden, 2015) which the authors of this paper need to take into account when analyzing the chosen pictures for this paper.

## **1.4 Disposition**

This essay will next present a background to the Syrian war and Ukraine to create a pre-understanding of the subject and explain frequently used terms in this paper. Then we present previous research done within this field and topics related to these issues, after that the theories that have guided the analysis will be introduced; news values and rhetoric. The next section discusses our methodology, which includes qualitative content analysis. The same chapter goes into the selection process and how we went about gathering and analyzing our data. Following this the paper presents and analyzes the empirical material. The study finishes with an account of our conclusions in a discussion and then suggestions for further research in the field.

## **2. Background**

*In the coming chapter, the background to the war in Syria and the conflict in Ukraine will be presented in order to create a pre-understanding of the subject.*

### **2.1 Syria**

The Syrian uprising, which started in 2011, began as a continuation of the Arab Spring, and the conflict commenced when demonstrations against the Syrian government were violently suppressed. From there, it became a civil war and subsequently a proxy war between regional and global forces, culminating in hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of Syrian refugees compelled to flee their country by land or sea in search of safety to neighboring countries in the Middle East and elsewhere (Dacrema & Talbot, 2019). Furthermore, trade disruptions and the expansion of terrorist organisations have had severe consequences for Syria and its surrounding countries, among the tragic influx of refugees.

The majority of Syrians evacuated their homes at first, but stayed in the region in the expectation that the conflict would subside and they might return home. After realizing there was little prospect for long-term solutions, Syrians and other migrants fled the region and went to the bordering nations (ICMPD, 2015).

When Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan stopped accepting Syrian asylum applicants in 2014, the arrival of migrants and refugees arriving in Europe reached unprecedented heights, resulting in a significant increase in the number of people fleeing to Europe (Zaragoza-Cristiani & Jonathan, 2015). This led, in 2015, to what is today commonly referred to as the refugee



crisis, when most Syrians fled their homes due to the war and sought refuge in the EU to find secure living conditions.

## 2.2 Ukraine

In February 2014, Russian military annexation of the peninsula of Crimea, located by the Black Sea. This mobilization of the Russian military came after protests and uprisings in Ukraine, which was caused by distrust and deadly conflicts between Ukrainian protesters and the Ukrainian government (Nygren & Hök, 2016). After this conflict, the government was overthrown and the country formed a stronger bond with the European Union. Since the annexation of Crimea, the conflict and efforts from Russia has been minimal, mainly being cyberwarfare and a few military incidents (Nygren & Hök, 2016) The information on the situation has been sparsely reported in global media, as the Russian government keeps information output strongly monitored. On February 24th 2022 Russia launched a full blown military invasion of Ukraine. Cities such as Kyiv has been bombed and millions of people have been forced to flee the country (Mpoke Bigg, 2022)

The reasoning behind the invasion can be dated back to the cold war, and is said to be an attempt by Putin to bring Russia back to its former glory and power. As the country has had recent talks of joining NATO, something that would forge an even stronger bond and create protection from the organization's member countries, among them the US (Mpoke Bigg, 2022). As of today, an estimated 5.7 million people have sought refuge in neighboring countries in Europe as of May 4th. (UNHCR, 2022)

## 2.3 Terminology

*This section will present and describe important and frequently used terms used in this research paper and how the authors of this paper interpret them.*

**Refugee:** A person who has been forced to leave their home country in search of safety. The reason behind this can be armed conflicts, political conflicts or religious aspects.

**Public Opinion:** The public opinion is a term which refers to the common opinion and attitudes of society.

**Dominant picture:** Refers to the selection of pictures chosen for the analysis in this research paper. These pictures are described as dominant pictures as they are commonly shown in Swedish newspapers.

**Media portrayal:** Refers to how a topic, issue or subject is portrayed through media.

### **3. Previous Research**

*In this section, we will discuss previous research done in agenda-setting and framing, ethical journalism and media portrayal of crises and refugees.*

#### **3.1 Agenda Setting & Framing**

There has been a lot of previous research done on Agenda Setting Theory and Framing. “Makt, medier och samhälle” (2014), a book by Jesper Strömbäck, examines the two theories related with media and journalism. In this book he makes a detailed description of how these theories affect the public opinion. The agenda setting theory discusses how the media influence public opinion on what topics and questions are vital in society. There is a correlation between people’s media intake and the issues that are covered by the media (Strömbäck, 2014). The media’s ranking of issues and what it publishes reflects the media’s power over the public’s agenda and influences what the public considers significant in society.

The Framing theory regards how media and journalists raise and convey certain topics in the media, and is related to the agenda setting theory. When it comes to media influences in political communication, the framing theory is perhaps the most important theory (Strömbäck, 2014). The theory examines how reality is presented in the media and how that has an impact on people’s perception of the same reality. In “Visual communication theory and research - a mass communication perspective” the authors compare the theory to a photograph. “*The idea of framing looks at the selection of what content is included in the photograph, why a photographer chose this content over other content and what effect the content has on views of the content*” (Fahmy et al., 2014, p. 2). Because reality is limitless and the media is limited, every news coverage is defined by the decision made by the media as a whole, by the editors and journalists (Strömbäck, 2014). They have to make a selection of what they believe is most important to show the public.

### **3.2 Ethical Journalism**

Journalists represent an important role in today's information society. Media has the power to convey a certain message and influence the public opinion. Ethics is a crucial part of the journalistic profession. Karen Sanders discusses the ethics in journalism in her book "Ethics & Journalism" (2003). Issues such as sexually explicit material, treatment and portrayal of suffering along with controversies such as questionable methods are all ethical controversies that plague the journalistic profession (Sanders, 2003). Journalists are responsible for reporting and selecting what news reaches the public, thus indirectly controlling the public opinion. Additionally journalists have the responsibility to make ethical decisions. Issues such as war situations can be perceived as disturbing or perplexing to the reader, the journalists make the decision on whether it is important for society to take part of the issues or if it can be perceived as exploiting and harmful (Smith, 2008). The journalist's role is to weigh the need for the public to understand a situation or an issue with whether their portrayal is undignified or unethical (Sanders, 2003). Journalists need to follow the Freedom of Expression act, furthermore they also follow a recommended code of conduct. This code of conduct includes suggestions such as transparency, truth, accountability and independence (Brighton & Foy, 2007). To preserve journalistic integrity these are recommendations not mandated regulations. Journalists must consider the fact that newspapers are one-way communication. This theory of one-way communication is when a message goes from a sender to a receiver and without the possibility for communication from the receiver to the sender (Lloyd & Toogood, 2015). Journalists provide the intended reader with a message through an article without giving the reader the possibility to respond to the article. Thus limiting the chances of two-way communication (Lloyd & Toogood, 2015).

### **3.3 Media Portrayal of crisis and refugees**

Many studies have been made on the subject of media and journalism. Hultén, Lugn and Thurén's book "Journalister, invandrare och flyktingar" (1988) being one of them. The book compares the Swedish media reporting on immigrants and refugees from the Middle East versus Eastern Europe as well as comments from political actors regarding the situations. This field of research has also become more prominent as the media's role in society has become more dominant simultaneously as migration and the principle of borders are slowly becoming obsolete. The previous research on the subject of media portrayal and refugees mostly focuses on a quantitative approach where the focal point is to compare frequency of

mentions of two situations. Hultén et al., (1988) mentions the comparison highlights the journalistic foundation of creating a sense of similarity between the stories they report on and the intended reader. Additionally it discusses the probability of creating discrepancies and indirectly creating a “us versus them” impression.

Yantseva (2020) researched the media discourse regarding the 2015 migration crisis and whether this discourse has changed since then in her article “Migration discourse in Sweden : Frames and sentiments in mainstream and social media”. The article examines the media discourse on refugees and immigrants. The author showcases how positive media discussions regarding refugees in 2012 and the subtle changes of negative connotation in 2015 during the migration crisis. In summary the article examines the “open arms policy” in Sweden and how the discourse turned negative as a result of a migration crisis and concerns that it would disrupt Swedish culture.

#### **4. Theoretical framework**

*In this chapter we will present our theoretical framework that has guided this analysis.*

##### **4.1 News values**

When publishing and reporting on situations journalists tend to follow a number of criteria known as “news value criteria”. These criteria, as the name suggests, discuss what determines news and what is valuable to report on and publish (Brighton & Foy, 2007). These criterias were first discussed in 1965 Galtung and Ruge and include criterias such as relevance, timeliness, unexpectedness and elite people and elite nations, these were seen as the basic news values. Furthermore Galtung and Ruge complimented the list with criteria such as clarity, frequency and meaningfulness (Brighton & Foy, 2007). In a digitalized age these values play an important role in the discourse surrounding what to publish in order to get the message across in a society where there is constant access to news through social media and easy internet access through smartphones. These criterias act as guidance in what to publish as well as an indication in what the public wants to read. Sanders (2003) discussed these criterias by giving the example of cultural background and geographical location. When taking part in news, readers are more inclined to read about situations or issues that are affecting people with similar cultural backgrounds with whom they can identify with. Furthermore, readers are more inclined to take interest in situations that are closer to them geographically (Brighton & Foy, 2007). This can be correlated to the feeling of similarity or

the sense of sympathy. Other criteria include the possible shock-value a news story or picture can create. This is a chance for journalists to capture the attention of the reader in a digitalized age where there is constant outflow of news (Lloyd & Toogood, 2015).

## **4.2 Rhetoric**

Rhetorics is an inevitable part of communication (Rydstedt, 1995). Communication is an imminent part of everyday life, it is integrated in all aspects of interaction. Communication is not limited only to speech, it is included in how we present ourselves, through gestures and visuals, as well as through text (Craig & Muller, 2007). Communication and rhetoric is the mediation of messages, how these messages are perceived and interpreted lies with the receiver (Rydstedt, 1995).

### **4.2.1 Ethos**

Aristotle's rhetorical theory includes three means of persuasion in rhetorics, one of them being Ethos (Rydstedt, 1995). Ethos seeks to persuade by using authority and creating credibility with receivers (Rydstedt, 1995). By using ethos as a means of persuasion the mediator creates a sense of relationship, by inserting themselves as knowledgeable and building character. Ethos therefore creates trust and portrays themselves as credible and captures the attention of the audience through a sense of ascendancy (Rydstedt, 1995).

### **4.2.2 Pathos**

The second means of persuasion in rhetoric is Pathos. It appeals to the emotion of the intended audience (Rydstedt, 1995). When appealing to an audience by the use of emotions, the intent is to create a common ground or a sense of similarity. Pathos is used to persuade by creating emotions like hope, despair or engagement and so forth, and depending on the objective the mediator can elicit different emotions from the audience (Mral et al., 2016).

### **4.2.3 Logos**

The third means of rhetorical persuasion is Logos. Persuasion through facts and reason is the content of this means. When using logos the sender instructs and informs the audience to build trust using logical arguments such as numbers, quotes, statistics or other factually based information (Rydstedt, 1995). It is used to complement and strengthen the arguments by using a logical reasoning behind their means of persuasion (Rydstedt, 1995).

## **5. Methodology**

The approach conducted in this paper is qualitative. By using a qualitative approach the researchers are able to collect descriptive and comprehensive data and information (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2020). For this research, a qualitative method is appropriate as it generates highly comprehensive information (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2020).

Further this paper will take on an abductive approach. This method signifies an approach in which the researchers observe an fragmentary topic and this leads to the most likely prediction (Davidson & Patel, 2011). This chapter will present the method and approach used in this analysis and showcase the groundwork of this paper. The images selected for this analysis will be presented in the subsection “Data Collection” where the description of the selection will be presented and the tool used for the selection, Google Image Search, will be further described.

### **5.1 Qualitative Content Analysis**

When text and visual content are employed to conduct a communicative analysis, a qualitative content analysis is being used. The data is organized into categories to identify the subject matter, and the researcher should focus on defining concrete objectives in this type of analysis (Schreier, 2014). Standardized guidelines conduct how the analysis is carried out and as a result the data’s communicative approach is kept in its original state (Mayring, 2014). The method keeps the core data acquired whilst being built on other qualitative methods (Drisko & Maschi, 2016).

### **5.2 Visual Rhetorical Analysis**

There has been a notion since the beginning of rhetoric that visuals are remembered more than words. Visual rhetorical analysis is the use of visuals to affect and persuade an audience. It can be compared to the traditional rhetorical method, as it is the art of persuasion, but it is applied to pictures and visuals rather than words (Mral, et al., 2016). Images and visuals immediately elicit emotions, which are complex and varied and they convey a great deal of information and rhetorical messages. One image has the ability to describe a complex situation instantly (Mral, et al., 2016). Traditionally when discussing visual rhetoric it is applied to body language and gestures, the two means of expression often connected with the traditional method of rhetorics, speech. Visual rhetorics can be found not only in commercials and election posters, but are also visible in architecture, city planning and other public

displays (Mral, et al., 2016). When discussing a visual rhetorical analysis is the use of latent and manifest rhetorics. Manifest rhetorics is the traditional view on rhetorics, it is the obvious and direct means of rhetorics. The effect of this is immediate. Latent rhetoric is the concealed and indirect means of persuasion. The effect of latent rhetoric spans over time and will be repeated as it is not necessarily perceived as a means of persuasion (Mral, et al., 2016)

The visual rhetorical analysis will follow a prewritten guide to ensure the analysis of the pictures is conducted the same way, the guide is as follows;

**First step:** the nature of the picture. This will create a better understanding of the image of what message is portrayed and what interpretations can be made. This step also examines the presence of ethos, pathos and logos.

**Second step:** the function of the picture, this step looks into the purpose of the picture. The background and purpose of the sender is examined. Furthermore this step examines the purpose of the media itself.. This step aims to understand and resolve the possible rhetorical conflict.

**Third step:** the evaluation of the picture. This step aims to combine the previous steps and examine ethical complications or dilemmas. This step included discussion concerning ethics and issues and topics not covered by the previous steps.

Furthermore this step will evaluate the function and purpose of the picture.

(Mral et al., 2016)

*Appendix 1*

## **5.5 Data Collection**

For this research paper 12 images have been selected. The selection contains 6 images from Dagens Nyheter, three of these picture Syrian refugees and three picture Ukrainian refugees. The other 6 images have been selected from Aftonbladet, three of these picture Syrian refugees and three picture Ukrainian refugees. The selection process of these images has firstly been based on the newspapers chosen. Aftonbladet and Dagens Nyheter are two of Sweden's largest newspapers and therefore they can be seen as a representation of the public opinion of Sweden. When selecting the pictures a google image search was conducted. Keywords were "Specific newspaper + refugees + country" the images selected were the first images that showed up as a result of this search process. Before conducting this search the

previous search history of the computer used was cleared to create a neutral search result. This process of selection was chosen to narrow down the image results in addition it showed us the most appropriate images for our research.

### **5.5.1 Google as a Search Engine**

Google is the most common internet search engine in the world (Statista, 2022). Google uses algorithms to ensure their users reach a result that is the most suited with their search.

According to Google's own website they use a ranking system to sift through billions of websites and images to find the most relevant and useful results for their users (Google, 2022). They claim that the results that are given are “custom-made” by criteria such as location, relevancy, analysis of words and the previous search history of the user.

An article published in The Guardian gives insight into how current news events and trends have a great effect on what the search results will be (Haynes, 2018). Haynes (2018) discusses how during the American presidential election of 2018 protesters used the song *American Idiot* to protest Donald Trump. When searching the word “idiot”, an image of Trump was the top search result. Google provides an option of clearing your browser history, which resets your search history. This means that the algorithm is not as tailored to the user's individual preferences. Instead factors such as location become more prominent in the search results (Google, 2022). When collecting the images for the analysis using this method, the same pictures were shown before and after clearing out cookies and search history. This indicates that the images collected are the most dominant and most relevant for the search method and the reason they will be analyzed in this paper.

## **6. Analysis**

Presented below is the Visual Rhetorical analysis of the pictures chosen from Aftonbladet and Dagens Nyheter. Firstly the pictures will be analyzed separately, to then be analyzed collectively to see if there are any possible similarities and differences.

### **6.1 Visual Rhetorical Analysis**

When analyzing the pictures the analysis follows the guide aforementioned, and will include the captions of the pictures to get a limited background and a factual base. (*See appendix 1 for the visual rhetorical guide.*)



## 6.1.1 Ukraine Pictures published in Dagens Nyheter

Picture 1:



*Caption: About 600,000 people have fled Ukraine to Romania in the past month. People come to the border town of Isaccea by ferries from southern Ukraine. (Translated from Swedish to English)*

### *Appendix 2*

This picture was featured in Dagens Nyheter, 2022-03-26, and depicts Ukrainian people crossing the border into Romania in search of safety. What can be seen in the picture is people walking calmly, they are all well dressed and clean, mostly young people and women shown and the few men shown seem to be elderly. They all seem distraught. In the picture you can see people wearing red clothes which can be interpreted as a uniform, suggesting they are there to guide the people and aid them. It can be indicated that these people are part of a border control or border police present to oversee the migration. It can also be seen that the people pictured have brought personal belongings with them.

Ethos can be seen present in the media in which the picture is published, in this case Dagens Nyheter. The newspaper is a credible source thus creating validity and reliability. The newspaper also creates trust through transparency regarding where and when the picture is taken. In the picture pathos is evident through the people's facial expressions and body language. The picture communicates a melancholy and somber feeling to the observer. The presence of logos is evident through the caption of the picture, which provides the observer with basic facts and numbers regarding the picture. In this case it clarifies facts such as number of refugees, location of the picture and when the picture was featured.

When examining the picture certain characteristics can be noticed. These can be accredited to factually based explanations. Women and younger adults/kids are more present in this image due to the fact that men between the ages 18-60 are encouraged to stay in Ukraine and join the Ukrainian military in defending their country (Tondo, 2022). The search for safety is close by. The neighboring countries are not in active conflicts. They don't have to travel far to reach safety which could be a reason they can bring personal belongings (luggage). Neighboring countries have opened their borders for Ukrainian refugees and made the process of applying for refuge easier (Guenfoud, 2022).

**Picture 2:**



*Caption: A man goes with grocery bags in Butja on Saturday. (Translated from Swedish to English)*

*Appendix 3*

This picture was featured in Dagens Nyheter, 2022-04-03, and depicts a man walking from a store in Butja with grocery bags in his hands. He is walking through a seemingly demolished street/area. The man is the focal point of the picture, in the far back two more people can be seen. Next to him are two dogs walking what seems to be without a leash. There is debris in the form of trees, a metal frame and undefiable concrete pieces. The road or ground that the man is walking on appears damaged. What appears to be trash, is covering the ground. In the back a market is seen, the store windows appear shattered. The man appears goal oriented and walking at a fast pace.

Ethos can be seen present in the media in which the picture is published, in this case Dagens Nyheter. The newspaper is a credible source thus creating validity and reliability. The newspaper also creates trust through transparency regarding where and when the picture is taken. Pathos is evident in the picture when seeing a man walking on a street completely destroyed as a consequence of war. This creates sympathy with the observer. As one can imagine how it might have looked before. Furthermore as the man seems to hurriedly walk to his destination it creates a sense of compassion to the man. As the area seems abandoned a sense of eeriness can be evoked with the observer.

The presence of logos is evident through the caption of the picture, which provides the observer with basic facts regarding the picture. The caption clarifies that the picture is taken in a town called Butja on a Saturday and that the man is holding grocery bags, which gives the observer a background to the picture.

When examining the picture certain characteristics can be noticed. These can be accredited to factually based explanations. Butja has been frequently mentioned in the media as one of the cities most affected by the Russian invasion (Juhlin, 2022). The city has been subjected to multiple attacks and is still under attack which could be the reason for the man's fast pace. The streets of Butja appear to not be a safe place.

**Picture 3:**



*Caption: Ukrainian refugees cross the border into Poland on Thursday. Sweden must, despite the large refugee reception in 2015, open the borders for the war refugees, the submitting writer believes. (Translated from Swedish to English)*

#### *Appendix 4*

This picture was featured in Dagens Nyheter, 2022-02-24, and depicts 9 people crossing the border into Poland. In the foreground of the picture one can see two adults and three children. The two adults are carrying their luggage. One of the children seems to be skipping while holding the hand of a man. The people seem focused but do not appear concerned or scared. The woman appears focused on the younger boy in front of her. They are all dressed in clean clothes. The street on which they are walking seems quiet and calm. Apart from the luggage several of them are carrying backpacks or handbags. One person in the background appears to be on their phone. Two people seem to be heading in the other direction. There is no formal authority seen in the picture but the people appear to be goal oriented and focused and seem to know where they are heading.

Ethos can be seen present in the media in which the picture is published, in this case Dagens Nyheter. The newspaper is a credible source thus creating validity and reliability. The newspaper also creates trust through transparency regarding where and when the picture is taken. Pathos is only evident in the reflection of the adults and the woman reaching for the younger boy. The apparent relationship between the two can evoke feelings of similarity and compassion. Furthermore the young girl holding the adult man's hand can evoke the same feeling of empathy. The girl skipping suggests that she is younger in age creating a sense of

protectiveness over a child being put in a war situation. The observer could also get a feeling of relief as they all seem healthy and calm. The presence of logos is evident through the caption of the picture, which provides the observer with basic facts and numbers regarding the picture. In this case the caption clarifies that the picture is taken by the Polish border as well as the observer is made aware of when the picture is taken.

When examining the picture certain characteristics can be noticed. These can be accredited to factually based explanations. Poland has opened its borders for Ukrainian refugees and has since aided the largest number of Ukrainian refugees (UNHCR, 2022). This picture shows both men and women, families and children. The reason the man, who appears to be within the age range of 18-60, is able to cross the border despite the ban of leaving the country, could be due to exceptions in Ukrainian legislation. There are exceptions which will exempt a man within this age range from enlisting. Among these reasons are if the man is financially supporting three or more children that are minors, if he is the sole guardian for a minor or has children with special needs (Tondo, 2022).

### 6.1.2 Ukraine Pictures published in Aftonbladet

#### Picture 4:



Caption: *"I'm glad I'm alive," said Olena, 52, whose bloody face spread across the world when Putin attacked. (Translated from Swedish to English)*

*Appendix 5*

This picture was featured in Aftonbladet 2022-02-26 and depicts an injured woman. The woman has a bandage wrapped around her head. Her face and hands are covered in blood. The woman is standing in front of a building that appears to have been partially damaged. The ground in the background is covered in what seems to be debris from the damaged building and its surroundings. The woman seems upset and distraught. She is holding a piece of tissue in her hand covered in blood seemingly used to clean herself up. The clothes she is wearing appear to be covered in blood. The clothes are still intact and do not appear to be damaged.

Ethos can be seen present in the media in which the picture is published, in this case Aftonbladet. The newspaper is a credible source thus creating validity and reliability. The newspaper also creates trust through transparency regarding where and when the picture is taken. Ethos can also be evident in the caption as the woman is quoted, which further validates the source as it gives a first hand insight to the situation (Mral et al., 2016). Pathos can be seen as the caption provides the observer with the name and age of the woman. This humanizes the woman, as the observer is aware of the woman's name, it can create a sense of familiarity and it gives the war a face and a name. The fact that the woman is covered in blood evokes a feeling of worry and concern with the observer as it is obvious she has been injured. The observer can be aware of the danger the woman is in. The presence of logos is evident through the caption of the picture, which provides the observer with basic facts such as the name and age of the woman. It also gives us insight into who attacked, in this case Putin.

When examining the picture certain characteristics can be noticed. The woman seems to have gotten basic medical attention as her head appears bandaged. Which indicates that some level of aid and assistance is present in the area. The attack seems to have happened recently as the woman is still covered in blood.

**Picture 5:**



*Caption: Ukrainian refugees in Poland. (Translated from Swedish to English)*

*Appendix 6*

This picture was featured in Aftonbladet 2022-02-25 and depicts Ukrainian refugees in Poland. The picture shows nine people by the Ukrainian and Polish border. In the picture three dogs can be seen. The people seen appear calm and collected. The people all seem well dressed and wearing clean clothes. Several of the people are carrying bags or backpacks. One of the dogs appears to be in a portable dog cage. The people shown are mostly women or children. The people are not crowded and seem to walk composedly.

Ethos can be seen present in the media in which the picture is published, in this case Aftonbladet. The newspaper is a credible source thus creating validity and reliability. The newspaper also creates trust through transparency regarding where and when the picture is taken. Pathos evident in the picture could be a feeling of resemblance as they are dressed in a similar way. The clothes suggest that the weather is similar to the climate in Sweden. As the people appear calm the observer can feel some comfort knowing that they appear safe. The presence of logos is evident through the caption of the picture, which provides the observer with basic facts such as the location. It is also evident in the picture that it is taken in proximity to the Ukrainian border by the sign shown in the background.

When examining the picture certain characteristics can be noticed. The Ukrainian refugees do not have to travel far for safety which could be a reason they can bring personal belongings

and their pets. The fact that they have the ability to bring their personal belongings and pets indicates that crossing the border is safe and with a certain level of structure.

**Picture 6:**



*Caption: The queues have been long outside the Migration Agencies premises. Archive image. (Translated from Swedish to English)*

*Appendix 7*

This picture was featured in Aftonbladet 2022-02-25 and depicts Ukrainian refugees outside the Swedish Migration agency. In this picture one can see a gathering of people that appear to be standing in line. In the forefront you can see people appear to be handing out coffee. People seem to be calm and collected and standing in an organized queue. The picture shows both men, women and children of different ages.

Ethos can be seen present in the media in which the picture is published, in this case Aftonbladet. The newspaper is a credible source thus creating validity and reliability. The newspaper also creates trust through transparency regarding where and when the picture is taken. Pathos in the picture could be feelings of pride that the refugees turn to Sweden in search of safety and create feelings of hope for the refugees. The presence of logos is evident through the caption of the picture, which provides the observer with basic facts such as the location and indicating that there are many people waiting in the long queue. It is also evident in the picture that it is taken in Sweden by the “Migrationsverket” sign. The caption also stated that it is an archived image which can indicate the picture is not directly connected to the article and taken at a different occasion.



When examining the picture certain characteristics can be noticed. Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Sweden, where they have been welcomed. Volunteers are handing out what seems to be free coffee and items outside Migrationsverket, indicating that they want to help with what they can offer.

### 6.1.3 Syria Pictures published in Dagens Nyheter

**Picture 7:**



*Caption: Syrian refugees cross the border into Turkey. (Translated from Swedish to English)*  
*Appendix 8*

This picture was featured in Dagens Nyheter, 2015-07-09, and depicts Syrian people crossing the border into another country in quest of safety. In this picture people can be seen tearing through a barbed wire fence and going through it. Two men can also be seen climbing over it and jumping down to the other side. The expressions of the people in this picture seem upset, stressed and desperate to reach the other side of the fence. There are predominantly males seen in the picture. They seem to be pushing each other and there is no form of organized line or authority figure overseeing the process. The people in this picture seem to be well dressed but lack any form of personal belongings such as bags. One person can be seen carrying a backpack and another person holding a bag in their hand. It could be indicated that they are fleeing in a haste as they are desperately pushing and shoving each other to reach to the other side.

Ethos can be seen present in the media in which the picture is published, in this case Dagens Nyheter. The newspaper is a credible source thus creating validity and reliability. The newspaper also creates trust through transparency regarding where and when the picture is taken. Pathos is evident in the picture as it shows people in distress and putting themselves in dangerous situations. This could evoke a feeling of empathy as it shows the lengths people are willing to take to get to safety. It also showcases the situation these people were in could be very dangerous as they are at risk of injuring themselves. It can create a sense of distance between the observer and the people pictured as it is unlike a situation many people in Sweden have experienced. Logos can be evident in the caption as it discloses that the people in the picture are refugees as well as stating that they are crossing the border into Turkey.

When examining the picture certain characteristics can be noticed. Borders surrounding Syria have closed down and making it harder for refugees to seek safety (Abdallah & Fahmy, 2021). The people pictured are trying to enter a country or crossing a border where they are not welcome which is why they seem desperate and taking dangerous risks. Why is it only men featured in the picture? Younger men are more adapted to survive the dangerous trip. Those women and children that attempt to escape the war are often killed or injured on the way due to the high risk it involves (Yasmine & Moughalian, 2016).

**Picture 8:**



*Caption: A man plays with a child at the train tracks outside the village of Horgos in Serbia. The group is on its way to the Hungarian border. (Translated from Swedish to English)*

*Appendix 9*

This picture was featured in Dagens Nyheter, 2015-09-04, and depicts Syrians walking on a train track. The focal point of the picture is a man playing with and lifting a child up in the air. There are what seems like two groups of people. Among the group in the foreground four of them are sitting on the side of the track and appear to be smoking. They are all watching the man playing with the child. The group in the background are walking along the track. They all seem to be dressed in lighter clothes, such as t-shirts and shorts, suggesting a warmer climate. Some of the people shown are wearing sneakers and a few of them are wearing what appears to be sandals. A few of the people are carrying bags or plastic bags. The tracks are covered with trash. They appear to be lively and they are smiling. The people shown are all men of different ages.

Ethos can be seen present in the media in which the picture is published, in this case Dagens Nyheter. The newspaper is a credible source thus creating validity and reliability. The newspaper also creates trust through transparency regarding where and when the picture is taken. Pathos can be seen in the picture as the men seem delighted the feeling of hope can be evoked. The man playing with the child could also evoke a feeling of compassion and discomfort as a child of that age is forced to flee unaware of what is going on. Logos can be evident in the caption as it states where the people in the picture are located (Horgos in Serbia) as well as stating that they are on their way to the Hungarian border.

When examining the picture certain characteristics can be noticed. The trash on the train track suggests that this could be a commonly walked path for the people seeking refuge in Hungary. As the men are sitting down it can be assumed they are resting from a long journey. When looking at the background of the picture there is no city or town in sight, implying the men have a long way to go before reaching their destination. The fact that only men are pictured suggests that the journey might be too dangerous for women and children.

**Picture 9:**



Caption: *Omran Daqneesh.*

*Appendix 10*

This picture was featured in Dagens Nyheter, 2016-08-19, and depicts a young injured boy in what appears to be an ambulance. On the right side of the boy there is a first aid kit. He is covered in dust and blood. The boy has blood covering one side of his face as well as blood on his clothes and all over his body. The boy is looking straight into the camera. The boy looks anguished and miserable. In the top left corner of the picture the letters “AMC” appear with a text underneath in what appears to be arabic.

Ethos can be seen present in the media in which the picture is published, in this case Dagens Nyheter. The newspaper is a credible source thus creating validity and reliability. The newspaper also creates trust through transparency regarding where and when the picture is taken. The text in the left corner suggests that the picture is not taken by a Swedish journalist. There is a great deal of pathos evident in the picture. The young boy appears heartbroken and seems very young which makes an observer's question why such a young boy is affected by the war. It creates a feeling of despair and a great deal of sympathy for the young boy to have to experience a situation like this at a young age. As it is apparent that the boy is hurt, a feeling of helplessness is evoked. The boy seems to be given medical attention which can entice a sliver of hope for his well being. The caption provides the logos of this picture by stating the name of the boy.

When examining the picture certain characteristics can be noticed. The young boy can be assumed to have been in an area that has been under attack since he is covered in blood and dust.

#### 6.1.4 Syria Pictures published in Aftonbladet

**Picture 10:**



*Caption: Three-year-old Alan Kurdis' body was washed up on a beach in Bodrum, Turkey in September 2015. The image of the boy spread around the world. (Translated from Swedish to English).*

#### *Appendix 11*

This picture was featured in Aftonbladet, 2016-09-02, and depicts the body of a young boy on a beach right by the edge of the water. The boy is laying face down lifeless. In the picture a man can be seen with his back to the camera. The man is wearing a vest suggesting that he is part of a rescuing group or that he is some sort of authority figure.

Ethos can be seen present in the media in which the picture is published, in this case Aftonbladet. The newspaper is a credible source thus creating validity and reliability. The newspaper also creates trust through transparency regarding where and when the picture is taken. The pathos is evident in this picture as the lifeless body of a young boy evokes a feeling of heartbreak and tragedy. As it is apparent that the boy is deceased, a feeling of helplessness is evoked. Logos is evident in the caption as it states the name, age and location of the boy as well as the date of the picture.

When examining the picture certain characteristics can be noticed. It can be indicated since the picture is taken on what appears to be on a beach that the young boy was on one of the boats that smuggles people across the Mediterranean sea.

**Picture 11:**



Caption: *Suzan, 21, recounts a terrifying journey from Turkey: "The smuggler left us in the middle of the sea," she says, shaking from the cold. Together with Mustafa and the children Elinia, 4, and Levant, 8 months, they have fled from Kobane in Syria. (Translated from Swedish to English)*

*Appendix 12*

This picture was featured in Aftonbladet, 2015-09-14, and depicts two adults with two young children. They are standing close to each other, suggesting they might be a family. The woman is holding one child and the man the other child that appears to be a toddler. It is dark outside indicating that it is late evening or night. More people are visible in the background. Everyone seems to be carrying a backpack or a bag. People are well dressed, but in clothes that indicate a warmer climate. The two grown people in the forefront of the picture seem tired and worn out.

Ethos can be seen present in the media in which the picture is published, in this case Aftonbladet. The newspaper is a credible source thus creating validity and reliability. The newspaper also creates trust through transparency regarding where and when the picture is

taken. Ethos can also be evident in the caption as the woman in the pictures is quoted, which further validates the source as it gives a first hand insight to the situation (Mral, et al., 2016). Pathos is evident in the picture, seeing them being exhausted, gives out an emotion of sympathy. The quote from the woman in the caption also gives out pathos when you realize they were left in the middle of the sea, and that they are shivering from the cold. This gives out emotions of concern as they were left in the middle of the sea. With knowing they are very cold it can give out an emotion of understanding, as the majority of people have experienced being cold. Logos can be evident in the caption as it states where they traveled from (Turkey and Kobane in Syria). Logos is also noticeable in the caption as it states the names and ages of the people shown.

When examining the picture certain characteristics can be noticed. Evident in this picture is that they are traveling as a family. Both parents are present as well as their younger children. This suggests that they had the economy to pay for the whole family to seek refuge. Commonly men travel as the journey is high risk and expensive. The men often travel first to secure safety and to send money back to their families (Gidda, 2016). Despite the imminent danger of taking this journey, often considered too dangerous for women and children, the conclusion can be drawn that it was more dangerous to stay.

**Picture 12:**



Caption: *Thousands of desperate refugees have invested everything to get on one of the boats across the Mediterranean. (Translated from Swedish to English)*

*Appendix 13*

This picture was featured in Aftonbladet, 2015-09-29, and depicts a large group of people in a confined space on a boat. The picture is taken too far away to determine the genders and ages of the people on the boat, but the majority appear to be male. People do not appear to be wearing any type of safety gears, such as life vests. When looking at the picture many people can be seen looking upwards facing the camera. They are on the water and the boat is moving but it cannot be determined if they are close to land or not. They appear to be sitting close together and not have much space to move.

Ethos can be seen present in the media in which the picture is published, in this case Aftonbladet. The newspaper is a credible source thus creating validity and reliability. The newspaper also creates trust through transparency regarding where the picture is taken. In this picture pathos can be detected in the depiction of how crowded the boat is. It can create a sense of compassion seeing what the people are willing to do to get to safety. It can also create a sense of worry seeing a large number of people on a small boat without life vests or safety gear, knowing the dangers of the migration across the sea. Logos can be evident in the caption as the caption provides the observer with facts such as location of the picture as the Mediterranean sea. The caption also states that thousands of refugees migrate by boat, which indicate logos.

When examining the picture certain characteristics can be noticed. The fact that they are traveling by what appears to be a smaller boat and the lack of safety regulations may indicate that they are entering the country illegally. It is stated from the caption that they have left everything behind to get on the boat in search of safety.

### **6.1.5 Collective analysis of the pictures**

When examining the selected pictures country by country there are multiple common denominators. Despite the pictures showing and portraying contrasting situations and different people, there are multiple similarities. The portrayal and the interpretation of these pictures can be credited to several theories and ideas concerning media portrayal and how the media communicates a certain message, which can be a conscious decision or unintentionally from the journalist. Adding an image to an article creates a deeper understanding of the situation discussed in the article (Fahmy et al., 2014). The traditional saying “a picture is worth a thousand words”. When comparing media portrayal of the war in Syria with the



conflict in Ukraine, the quote becomes prevalent and highly applicable. A journalist possesses the ability to control and convey the public opinion (Strömbäck, 2014). They act as moderators deciding what news events the public should focus on. The journalists create a discourse that the public opinion is receptive to, whether they agree or disagree with the statements made (Strömbäck, 2014). When deciding what pictures to publish they also decide on what reality they want to show. A picture is a single moment captured and rarely provides the observer with the complete picture of the situation (Fahmy, et al., 2014). When publishing news an important criteria is simplicity, especially in a digitalized age where readers have constant access to news and the internet (Lloyd & Toogood, 2015). Pictures create a simple and effective way of capturing the observer's attention as well as it immediately gives the observer an insight of the topic (Lloyd & Toogood, 2015).

When examining all pictures published in the chosen Swedish newspapers showing the conflict in Ukraine, the media has chosen certain pictures when depicting the situation and the people affected by it. Most pictures published by the two newspapers correlate with each other, they both publish similar pictures with similar messages. The people are portrayed in a humane way, with similarities to situations in Sweden. When looking at the pictures one can find many parallels with Swedish society. The architecture, appearances of the people pictured as well as the way they are dressed. Knowing that they are from Ukraine, which is situated in close proximity to Sweden, one can feel a sense of similarity in closeness. It could simplify the observer's ability to feel a connection with the people pictured as it is easier to put oneself in that situation. This phenomenon of feeling more compassion towards people with similar cultural backgrounds or appearances as oneself, is a common term within the field of journalism and is a news value criteria (Brighton & Foy, 2007). Another news value criteria which creates familiarity is the geographical proximity of the depicted situation (Brighton & Foy, 2007). The geographical proximity could give a sense of reality to the situation as the observer is more touched by an event that can come to affect their way of life.

When examining all pictures published in the chosen Swedish newspapers showing the war in Syria, the media has chosen certain pictures when depicting the situation and the people affected by it. Most pictures published by the two newspapers correlate with each other, they both publish similar pictures with similar messages. Many of the pictures published by the newspaper depict people in a dehumanized way. When examining these pictures it can be evident that the journalist considers themselves as observers and outsiders to the war and

situationen they capture. Commonly with the pictures of the refugees in Syria are that they all portray human beings in crisis and in urgent need of help. The picture of the deceased boy on the beach (*See appendix 11*) is an obvious example of the dehumanization of Syrian refugees. This raises the question of ethics and the responsibility of the journalist. This dilemma that is raised is whether the portrayal of the Syrian refugees is a representation of reality or if it is ethically wrong of a journalist to exploit people in need. The journalist chooses how to communicate an issue and what strategy to use when publishing an article with a picture (Brighton & Foy, 2007). An interpretation of the aim and objective of the pictures selected by the journalists is the need and will to create and enlighten the public of a situation. When drawing attention to the misery of war, there is a fine line between showing reality and creating awareness of a situation and portraying human beings in an undignified way. When viewing the pictures of Syrian refugees there is a sense of distance between the people pictured and the observer. The situations portrayed are unlike situations that have occurred in Sweden further alienating the Swedish people from the Syrian refugees. What further causes divergence is the geographical distance between Sweden and Syria. The distance can create a sense of we versus them (Hultén et al., 1988). The war in Syria will not directly affect Swedes everyday life in terms of the attacks. The indirect consequences of the war are the refugees seeking safety in Sweden.

When examining the analyzed pictures from Ukraine and Syria published in Dagens Nyheter and Aftonbladet some similarities are evident. The pictures are portraying the effects and consequences of war and national crisis. Several people pictured have been forced to leave their homes in search of safety. What can also be evident is that several of the people seeking refuge are fleeing with their families despite the risks, and people are seeking comfort in migrating with their families.

Despite examining pictures from two war situations there are numerous differences in how the media has portrayed the two situations and the refugees. When comparing the pictures chosen for the articles discussing the conflict in Ukraine the recurring theme is the calmness and orderly fashion in which the refugees migrate and cross borders. The effect of this portrayal is the lack of desperation despite the common knowledge that these people are in need and fleeing from a dangerous situation. The constant theme recurring in the pictures for the articles discussing the conflict in Syria is helplessness and dehumanization. The Syrian refugees are shown in an undignified way. The possible aim for the journalist of this portrayal

could be to show the reality millions of Syrian refugees are facing. The pictures shown are depicting a part of reality, but it is crucial to consider that the picture does not portray the entirety of the situation. The portrayal of the Syrian refugees shows people in pure desperation, there is a lack of orderliness and structure. Something that is more evident when portraying the Ukrainian refugees. When analyzing the pictures, it appears that journalists are quick to capture pictures of Syrian refugees in situations that could generate a higher shock value. When examining the picture of the injured Ukrainian woman Olena (*See appendix 5*), it is clear that she has received medical attention before the picture was taken, suggesting a more respectful approach. The task of the journalist is to communicate a situation to the public in an ethical and truthful way as they hold a responsibility to what is published and how they affect the public discourse (Sanders, 2003). The question can be raised whether it is ethical journalism or exploitation of people in need for the benefit of the newspaper.

The function and purpose of the pictures of Syrian refugees could be connected to the theory of news value criterias. From a Swedish perspective the war in Syria can appear distant due to the geographical separation as well as the inability to connect to the people due to cultural backgrounds. When choosing pictures and drawing attention to the war in Syria, journalists could resort to creating a shock value by choosing pictures that show the atrocities that are occurring. The selection of pictures which is dominated by children in terrible situations and refugees fleeing under dehumanized circumstances is an effective way of creating a discourse with the public opinion. When considering Ukraine and the news values criterias in regards to the Swedish readers, the need for shock value is not as critical. The sympathy and support to the Ukrainian refugees from the Swedish people is more prominent than that to Syrian refugees due to the geographical proximity and the possible effects of war in Ukraine on Sweden. Furthermore there is the aspect of legality. Many countries in Europe have facilitated the process of temporary residence permits (Guenfoud, 2022). The position of the Syrian refugees is vastly different as many are forced to seek refuge in other countries illegally (DaSilva, 2021). Which discards the ability to gain support and safety from an official institution such as a government.

When examining the pictures of the two conflicts there is clear evidence of pathos in all of them. One of the aims of the pictures is, from a journalistic standpoint, to generate emotions and an understanding of the situations.

## **7. Discussion**

This paper has researched the media portrayal of Syrian and Ukrainian refugees through pictures in the Swedish newspapers Dagens Nyheter and Aftonbladet. The research has been made through a visual rhetorical analysis of the dominant pictures from these news sources. The data collection was conducted through a google image search to ensure the neutrality of the research paper. This research paper has discussed and facilitated different theories and methods to conduct the research and explain the analyzed phenomenon.

To establish a factual background of the discussed situations a brief background was given to present and explain the conflicts. The background gives a limitation to the research paper as it describes the factual base on which the paper is based off of. Further limitations are the limited selection of pictures chosen for the analysis. The selection and method was chosen to ensure a qualitative approach was conducted.

This paper aims to research the media portrayal as well as how it could be perceived by the public opinion. The use of a visual rhetorical analysis aims to neutralize the existing opinions and frame of references of the authors of the paper. To ensure that every picture selected for this paper is examined in an equal manner, a visual rhetorical analysis guide was created and adhered to when conducting the analysis. This to assure that previous conceptions of the situations does not interfere with the analysis.

There are both similarities and differences in the media portrayal of pictures in the Swedish newspapers of the two conflicts. Both situations have been given a great deal of news coverage due to the nature of the situations being conflicts. Additionally the conflicts have caused people of these countries to seek refuge in other countries. All of the pictures analyzed express considerable amounts of ethos, pathos and logos. The pictures have the ethos of coming from credible newspapers, and the logos mainly from the captions provided for each picture. All pictures have pathos as they elicit some sort of emotion.

When further examining the pictures it became evident that the media portrayal of the situations are vastly different. The pictures of the Ukrainian refugees are respectful and show humanity towards the people depicted. When comparing these to the pictures of the Syrian refugees, it became noticeable that the pictures portray people in desperation and there is a

clear lack of empathy when capturing people in dangerous situations. The ethical journalism comes into question when pictures of injured children or people in need are portrayed in such a manner. The assignment of journalists is to portray reality, a task which becomes difficult when publishing pictures. Research shows that pictures only depict a part of reality and when taken out of context can be given a completely different meaning than intended.

This concept can be connected to the principle of news value criteria. These criterias determine what is valuable news. The published pictures can be attributed to these criterias. From the analysis it became noticeable that the criteria of geographical proximity is meaningful. This is clear when seeing how the pictures of Syrian refugees contain an element of shock value. As Syria is geographically distant from Sweden the journalists need to raise attention regarding the conflict through dehumanized pictures.

This research paper has discussed the question *“How has Aftonbladet and Dagens Nyheter portrayed refugees from the war in Syria and the conflict in Ukraine through picture selection?”* This paper has shown how news value criteria frame the pictures journalists publish. The picture selection communicates a message to the audience, thus setting the agenda on the discourse of the public opinion and showing a version of reality. Previous research has shown how the media has the power to sway the public opinion and change an existing discourse.

This paper examined pictures published in two of Sweden's most significant newspapers. It has shown that journalists have an ethical responsibility in communicating and portraying important issues. As the newspapers examined in this paper do not offer a chance for feedback from the readers, the ethical responsibility is even greater as they need to be truthful and portray the issues in a dignified way.

In conclusion this paper has shown the clear differences between how refugees from Syria and refugees from Ukraine have been portrayed by Swedish newspapers through pictures. Refugees from Ukraine have been portrayed as calm and collected and are shown in a very dignified way. Despite being victims of a conflict and being forced to seek refuge, the portrayal communicates the message of people seeking refuge legally, with the aid from other countries. The portrayal of Syrian refugees is vastly different, they are shown in a dehumanizing and undignified way. Syrian refugees are not given the same possibilities to

seek refuge legally and are forced to take life threatening alternatives with a possible outcome being death.

The media portrayal can be attributed to news values. These criterias determine what news and issues the journalists publish. In connection to Swedish newspapers the value of geographical proximity, cultural similarities and shock value are what shapes the pictures selected.

### **8. Future research**

For future research within this field, a more quantitative approach could be made. When examining the effect the selected pictures have on the public opinion data could be collected from social media or other outlets which provides two-way communication. By examining and collecting data on comments from the public, one can create a deeper understanding on the effect the chosen pictures have on the readers. Furthermore it could provide the researcher with how media portrayal affects and shapes the public opinion. This would further the research beyond speculations on how media affects the public opinion.

In addition, future research could include interviews with journalists and other practitioners within the field of journalism. This could provide a deeper understanding in picture selection and their opinion on the ethics of journalism.

Finally future research could include an examination of pictures as well as the articles published with the pictures. This could give the researcher a deeper understanding of why the picture is relevant and further information on the picture.

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## Appendices

### *Appendix 1: Rhetorical Analysis Guide*

**First step:** the nature of the picture. This will create a better understanding of the image of what message is portrayed and what interpretations can be made. This step also examines the presence of ethos, pathos and logos.

**Second step:** the function of the picture, this step looks into the purpose of the picture. The background and purpose of the sender is examined. Furthermore this step examines the purpose of the media itself.. This step aims to understand and resolve the possible rhetorical conflict.

**Third step:** the evaluation of the picture. This step aims to combine the previous steps and examine ethical complications or dilemmas. This step included discussion concerning ethics and issues and topics not covered by the previous steps. Furthermore this step will evaluate the function and purpose of the picture. (Mral et al., 2016)

### *Appendix 2*



<https://www.dn.se/varlden/sa-fungerar-mottagandet-av-flyktingar-fran-ukraina-i-olika-lander/>

### Appendix 3



<https://www.dn.se/varlden/anna-aberg-darfor-publicerar-vi-bilderna-fran-butja/>

### Appendix 4



<https://www.dn.se/insandare/sverige-maste-ta-emot-flyktingar-fran-ukraina/>

*Appendix 5*



<https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/5GOxQ1/kriget-i-ukraina-bilden-pa-blodiga-olena-kuril-o-sprids-over-varlden>

*Appendix 6:*



<https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/x8pavl/migrationsverket-forbereder-for-flyktningvag-fran-ukraina>

*Appendix 7:*



<https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/478oEq/flyktingar-fran-ukraina-kan-soka-asyl-digitalt>

*Appendix 8:*



<https://www.dn.se/nyheter/varlden/ny-rapport-flyktingar-fran-syrien-nu-over-4-miljoner/>

*Appendix 9:*



<https://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/bilderna-som-skakar-en-hel-varld/>

*Appendix 10:*



<https://www.dn.se/nyheter/varlden/femarige-omran-ger-kriget-i-syrien-ett-ansikte/>



*Appendix 11:*



<https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/oRebba/alans-pappa-bilden-forandrade-ingenting>

*Appendix 12:*



<https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/m6VWwv/vi-lamnades-mitt-pa-havet>

*Appendix 13:*



<https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/ddr0rA/en-halv-miljon-over-medelhavet-i-ar>