Trabajo Fin de Grado

Media storytelling in the warlike field

Russian-Ukrainian ongoing conflict coverage

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1. Introduction

In simple words, the concept of media refers to the process and technologies used by which information is conveyed from a sender to a receiver for a certain purpose. This process can take place throughout different ways and through varied techniques. At the early stages of human history, probably the main forms of communication consisted in things just as simple as out loud spoken messages in public places, posters, handwritten letters…until the invention of printing in the 15th century by Johannes Gutenberg that symbolized a truly revolution in terms of mass information spreading and efficiency. That allowed the creation later on, of newspapers in the 17th century and after the arrival of the electricity era, from early 20th century forward and the invention of audiovisual media, the communication phenome experienced an important improvement that begin to make it a powerful influence instrument in society. This role boosted up intensely as technology and computing seemed to take the lead in the world which served very well media as an extremely useful opportunity to diversify its channels, strategies and formats to reach people as well as while the world got interconnected and globally linked with the set of the internet.

Therefore, as it can be easily figure out by this chain of events, media is a very important instrument that plays, due to the ease in communications and immediacy offered by internet in a borderless ambit and which, due to the globalization of the planet and many other dynamics that make us stay interconnected, have the capacity of immediately reach people through different channels regardless their location. This fact of immediate information access makes people very powerful intellectually and logistically speaking, since the easier the access to contents is, the wiser (potentially) and more conscious people will be.

However, media and especially traditional media (Television, radio, newspapers…), have already an intense year-rooted presence and existence in our societies as the mainstream channels people get informed from. This fact makes them, doubtlessly, crucial economic and political actors in democracies and even dictatorships and their power are related to the influence they can exert in governments, businessmen, judgers and obviously citizens. The degree of influence capacity and to whom the influence is exerted will depend on the size of the media itself, its reputation, whether it

is public or private, who sponsors it and the level of "cleanness" in terms of veracity and independence. "The power lays in the representation and expression of the corporate interests of large business conglomerates to which they belong. That is why, more than informing, they lobby for their own business, rather than actively exercising freedom of the press, defend freedom of enterprise" (Rincón, 2018).

But in the past few years this previously explained issue concerning traditional media has been seriously challenged by a new Technological Revolution which entails a progressive change to digital channels that also entail an even easier access to information and creation of contents through YouTube Channels, Twitch, Podcast, social networks…among others. Newspaper companies, realizing the uncertain future paper-made content has in the short-medium term, they have already begun a transition which seeks to progressively switch from paper format to digital platforms posted on the internet. Indeed, according to Jeff Jarvis, one of the greatest contemporary gurus in new media and Director of the Tow-Knight Center for Entrepreneurial Journalism at New York University: "The media that still live on paper must set a date for the end of printing. When that date arrives, they must have made sure that they are a 100% digital and 100% profitable company. If they haven't succeeded by then, it will be too late for them"

These natural flourishing alternatives respond also to the principles of liberty of expression, association and press that gather new social demands and expectations therefore, they increasingly represent a challenging element for traditional media to compete with. So, this also represents the "power fight" for control and survival that we see in many other ambits in history, politics and daily life; times change, new actors, technologies, referents show up and challenge the "statu quo" system, and as "rowing against the river course" is useless, adapting and coexisting if not possibly disappearing, is part of the nature law logics.

In an idyllic scenario, there would be a tendency to the seek of veracity and a clear separation between information and opinion. The private media, as it is a private company however it has an ethical responsibility (since it is in within their duties being as respectful with veracity as they can regardless its editorial line path) it is obvious, they have an editorial line, located in the political spectrum of left-right, which should not mean party allegiance. And on the other hand, the public ones, which, as they are financed by public funds should always be neutral and meet the requirement of public service and not be a

propaganda apparatus of the government party. (Marhuenda, Francisco, 2022). "The private ones do not have to be media-political battalions at the service of a party and the latter cannot be the executing arm of the governments in power". (Marhuenda, 2022)

In this piece of work, the author will try somehow to approach a series of different ideas: the role of media in this conflict (and, eventually naming others as a way to bring examples too) in terms of coverage, influence, purposes and other actions, what influences it and how it tries to create a certain perception in its audience. At the same time, the author will try to study and mention at some point of the work the concepts of information and disinformation and how they link to media interest and other actor's interests behind, all this spinning around the background of the current ongoing war of Ukraine. The role of media is essential in order to understand how a certain matter is perceived by people as well as also decide which matters are worth placing on the spotlight, so they are given more importance and which not. This idea refers to a highly known theory in the journalistic ambit called "agenda setting theory", which basically aspires to explain the influence that media exerts on the audience to focus its attention on a certain issue or a set of issues and generate a particular opinion. Besides, throughout this work we will get in touch with other relevant and highly linked to what it has been explained before which is the theory of manipulation of audiences (propaganda based in this case) and how all these matches together in its insertion in the Ukrainian war.

2. Motivations and reasons for research

Certainly, it would be suitable to highlight that the final selection and framing of the topic has not been an easy issue to carry out, however it was more or less on the table the idea of making a project which entailed both journalism and international relations and in which previously learned concepts and ideas could be used, the final decision of using the Russian-Ukrainian war and the media role approach, has been a relatively recent inspiration.

The author has always been someone interested in politics, debates, current affairs and how these are taken to society, and it is recently when he realized how important the mediator who conveys that information is and how, depending on its influences, political views or ideologies delivers that content. Perhaps the warlike scenario is the most obvious one since it is in this one where information often goes under an intense process of

distortion and manipulation: propaganda, made in order to create a very specific reaction. On the other hand, as it is known the current most media covered and followed conflict in the world is the Russian invasion of Ukraine which ended up in an eight-month war already that has taken thousands of lives and is shaking and shocking the world. As tensions begin to arise and deterrence power of nuclear weapons begin to appear on scene, we, certainly have a lot at stake in this. There are risks that go far beyond energy or economic issues but that entails the survival of the planet.

The author thought it would be interesting to combine the investigation of this Second Cold War conflict and can deep in knowledge from an academic point of view with the role of the media and what its performance consists of. Perhaps it has been lately when the author realized how important that role is, as it is one of the main state powers and, in democracies where freedom of speech and press exists it does have sometimes even more power when it comes to conditioning decision-making processes as it appears as a stronghold in the "check and balances" system.

Analyzing and understanding the behavior of the media will represent also an extremely useful tool when it comes to the author's daily life since it will allow him to interiorize these investigations and eventual conclusions and apply them, making him less vulnerable to "catchy headlines" or biased content. Furthermore, as mentioned before, warlike and political scenarios are both branches of expertise in the communication ambit for which the author has truly intellectual restlessness and certain knowledge background. Besides, getting to know more about disciples and concepts such as journalism, media, communication will bring further potential applicable knowledge in a hypothetical future professional ground. Additionally, the author also hopes that these pages could eventually be of some use to anyone interested in reading about this kind of topic, that due to its easy-to-follow register can reach a wide variety of people who luckily will meet interesting and knowledge worthy information.

Finally, from the author's point of view, this topic will allow him to mix previously learned lessons from both degree's remarkable subjects such as: Communication theory, History of International Relations, Media in a Global environment, Compared political systems of Political communication and public affairs. These ones, among others, may represent the key subjects from which the thesis will be fed of concepts, mechanisms and

ideas as they are obviously related to the topic itself will represent a meaningful help and source to base on.

3. State of art

This chapter seeks to collect the main authors, literature and resources consulted throughout the whole thesis making process. The author will mention some of the literature that has been already written so far concerning the topic the author is working on. These the kind of materials and sources found concerning media coverage in warlike field served at some point as matter of consult and research, however all those contents belong to other different historical events worked as inspirational references. Besides, some of these elements have to do with what has been theorized specially in the Theoretical framework chapter.

Indeed, there is plenty of solid bibliography and helpful materials about the contents of the Thesis as well as a relatively easy access to them. The author based himself on what had already been consulted in previous works and found out that almost all literature about similar topic as "the influence of media in conflicts", "How media shape audiences' perception", "The power of media in times of war" is focused on 20th century events and within this wide timeframe there are consistent contributions in which the authors include case study in regards to Hispanic-American war in Cuba, Syrian war, World War Two, Vietnam war, War against international terrorism and especially about the Iraq invasion of 2003.

4. Theoretical Framework

The topic worked on in this thesis as a whole has some elements, on the one hand a chronological frame which encompasses mentions from a general point of view to the appearance of the first mass media but also to the flourishing of alternative means in the context of the 21st century globalization (we will not be dealing with these ones deeply since the thesis will be focusing on studying the role of the traditional ones, however from time-to-time mentions will be made). On the other hand, we have the case study which is temporally limited to these previous months of war, and which entails an analysis about the influence, presence. To a more particular point of view which has to do with its role in the Russian Ukrainian war. However, there are important ideas when it comes to the

journalism and communication areas that need to be explained so the reader has a more consistent background, that is why in this chapter the author will attempt to introduce and delve into some theoretical and academic concept issues to frame the topic. The concepts consist of different kinds of communication, strategic communication, propaganda, the development of traditional social media throughout time and its involvement in previous conflicts (two examples given) and the appealing to ethos, logos and pathos when it comes to persuading processes.

As is has been theorized, according to Roberto Rodríguez, Strategic Communication teacher at Universidad Pontificia Comillas, there are three types of communication: first, according to the sender it could be public (institutions, parties…) or private (companies, firms, ONGs…); secondly, according to the kind of audience it could be interpersonal (one to one) or addressed collectively (mass, public opinion); thirdly, according to the purpose or goal it could be mainly informative (seeking neutrality) or intentional (attempting to influence and trigger a response).

The intentional factor entails the purpose of creating a certain reaction and shaping a determined perception and, in order to achieve a goal. Therefore, this very last point hooks to a highly valuable concept which is the strategy linked to the communication Field. The word strategy etymologically speaking come from the Greek word "strategoos", this term comprehends not only the individual in charge but a whole philosophy concerning the art and science in the military operations field. But as time went by, it extrapolated towards other areas of expertise among which not just communication is found, and therefore its definition widened to describe everything that is useful in the consecution of a certain goal as well as all that can be considered relevant and with the intention of be applied in a medium-long term.

According to Roberto Rodríguez, Communication teacher at Universidad Pontificia Comillas, from World War II forward, this extrapolation touched firstly the economic and financial field, making it and essential tool for companies and firms specially from the 50s. After, during the 70s it integrated as a core element in political campaigns specially in the United States at the beginning. While it is true the main goal was to defeat competence, guarantee the survival of the organization and achieve success.

Finally, during the 90s the term strategic communication showed up as a tool for influence and mass domination, a unidirectional logic of "a few communicating to a lot"

in which we clearly can figure the great amount of power this brings to the traditional media. However, internet changes everything and mostly during the 21st century and specially throughout this very last decade, due to the appearance of worldwide internet platforms and social networks this previously mentioned "a few communicating to a lot" dynamic steps partially away to the arising of a potential "all communicating to all" that brakes everything and challenges the monopoly of information. Therefore, this new unavoidable coexistence situation entails a struggle for survival and supremacy that needs even more for both sides the use of strategy in communicating to achieve its purposes in an increasingly complex environment.

The technological Revolution which now has evolved into a much more specifically transformation referred as digital Revolution, has played and is playing an important role when it comes to strategic communication development. These never-ending changes aspire to an increasing immediacy in the communication process in a globalized area in which in "tenths of a second" from a portable computer (smartphone) anyone, anytime can send insane amounts of information to the other side of the planet, that means, therefore, people become media themselves overcrowding and even making it less reliable at some point the information input to audiences. Obviously, the more media there is, the more competence there will be, which entails the development of communication procedures to show values, transparency, trustworthiness…the role of ethics and responsible behavior is essential in order to create reputation.

Another important issue to mention which has been slightly hinted before, is the change in audiences from passive audiences to active audiences as well as audiences that can create information channels on their own. In the ambit of traditional media, this swift from passive audiences to active audiences, has a remarkable relevance since audiences turn into participative ones in a more bidirectional model and have the capacity to demand participation, cleanness, transparency and innovation.

The main traditional media we will be dealing with are Newspapers, Radio and Television. According to Roberto Rodríguez, Newspapers appear as a tool linked to intellectual elites and created for political control, however, later, as alphabetization began to become widespread mainly in the 19th century, it turned absolutely generalized. During the 20th century, radio and television made appearance. Radio becomes during the 1930s the first mass media of extraordinary reach and with an outstanding capacity to

report events, entertain audiences and catch people's attention, therefore its power of influence and dependence of people towards it becomes evident. A little bit later, during the 1940's and 1950's to the already achieved audio output, the visual element is added creating a much more complete and more effective gadget: the television. Television achieves even more power than radio, although it consists of a bigger physical structure, its mediatic potential turns out to be stronger than press and radio to the point that, during the second half of the 20th century consolidates as the main media "par excellence".

In order to be more precise and contextualize the influence of media in what concerns us in relation to the topic, it will be suitable to highlight some remarkable and well-known events in the warlike ambit. These ones will contribute introducing the concept of propaganda in wars, a clear counter to veracity and clean and transparent information, and which has a lot to do with the exert of influence due to political interests. "Propaganda is the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols" (Lasswell, 1927 p. 627), "Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (Jowett and O'Donell, 1986, p. 7), "Propaganda is a form of psychological warfare that involves the spreading of information and ideas to advance a cause or discredit an opposing cause" (Nordquist, 2019). Although propaganda was born in the 17th century linked to the religious cause, it ends up becoming an important tool for politics and therefore for war, as Carl von Clausewitz's famous quote says: "War is nothing but the continuation of politics by other means". But it was not until World War One when it became massive and however its current connotation has a pejorative meaning, back in those times it was even considered at some point a progressist concept (Curros, 2004). The main means used were several, going from spoken speeches to written contents but also to images, posters and actions. Thus, according to Daugherty warlike propaganda is defined as "the planned use of propaganda and other actions aimed at generating opinions, emotions, attitudes and behavior in foreign groups, enemies, neutrals and friends, in such a way that they support the fulfillment of goals and objectives."

According to Roberto Rodríguez, the 20th century is the most splendorous time frame for political-warlike propaganda, apart from the fact of being the most lethal century when it comes to number of conflicts, people involved, deaths and capacity of destruction, we need to add the evidence of the successful set of military expansionist totalitarian regimes.

It is then, by the end of World War II due to the excessive use made, when it certainly begins being associated negatively and triggers the arising of counters (later during last third of 20th century) such as public relations or political marketing. Warlike Propaganda is often fed by half-true of directly false information, since one of the main goals of this persuasive kind of communication is preventing citizens from knowing the truth. However sometimes it is not necessary to resort to lie but to use a highly selected language as well as euphemisms. This technique comprehends that anything can be used to discredit the enemy, and make the population feel that only the enemy commits injustices, then as we can deduct, propaganda has a great responsibility in conflicts, since it is not only military supremacy that wins a war but achieving the victory in the battle of perception.

As we mention before, in order to see how important, the role of media at the beginning, development and end of conflicts can be, it would be interesting to mention at least a couple of events where its conditioning was truly intense. Besides, these two, not by chance have gone down in history as especially controversial. At the end of 19th century conflicts begin to be covered by media, by those times they would mainly act as mere information servants who would report the advances and achievements of their own armies and encouraging their compatriots to join the country forces to combat. It is then, right at the Vietnam War (1955-1975) when everything changes, media for the first time ever stops behaving as a propagandistic instrument to the service of national interests to become an element of criticism to the actions carried out by the soldiers in the front. Media for the first time acted morally and independently and denounced United States military forces' behavior in the conflict creating a breach between the government interest and civil society.

The Vietnam war was the first televised war ever and, especially after 1968, during the Battle of Tet forward, people could see easily the reports and images taken which unchained famous controversies of such as the well-known images of "the South Vietnamese officer executing female prisoner "(1968) or "Children flee napalm bombing in Trang Bang village" (1972). Public opinion got horrified by the ruthless attacks on civilians and destruction, press made the country aware of the war and showed to the most they could everything that happened, even easing the appearance of collective social movements of rejection. However, news coverage of the war had always attempted to reinforce support by positively reporting the war. War propaganda always seemed to

justify President Lyndon B. Johnson's agenda; however, the Tet Offensive marked a turning point in news coverage and the media's descent into showing the negative aspects of the war (Ramjattan, 2020)

On the other hand, the author picked the Iraq War of 2003 which took place within the New Cold War scenario in the context of the international war against terrorism led by the United States and started after the attacks of September 11, 2001. It turned out to be a highly controversial event whose foundation proved to be false, however the media, mainly the press, supported Bush and even contributed to the publication of misinformation in order to fuel the need to wage war. The media either failed to question Bush's decisions or actively promoted misinformation, greatly influencing public opinion on Iraq and Saddam Hussein (Francis, Zac, 2021). Even a highly prestigious and worldwide known newspaper company such as New York Times added itself to the cause and stood right to the consecution of this political decision. New York Times coverage of the president's speeches featured almost no debate over the framing of the Iraq conflict as part of the war on terror (Gershkoff and Kushner, 2005)

The United States tried to take the necessary measures to create a favorable public opinion, for this, the conflict had to be sold as a necessary, lawful and clean act. In order to do so, unlike Vietnam, the state learned to control the media beforehand, knowing its importance in guaranteeing a favorable scenario and carrying out its objectives. In fact, it was in this context that CNN emerged as the main ally of the government, which became in a faithful instrument of propaganda. However, they first had to sign a 50-point contract in which they especially promised not to recount the horrors of war. CNN was then able to broadcast images of the daily life of US soldiers. The viewer can participate in his epic but ignores all the real combat (Thierry Meyssan, 2005).

As we can see, these examples contrast as clearly represent two different ways to respond towards war, in the first one there is a clear intention to induct opinion to withdraw and in the second induct opinion to approve the Iraq invasion to begin.

Finally, it would be convenient to mention and define four meaningful terms often wrongly named indistinctly due to its relation. These ones although share shallow semantic similarities, they have different connotations which will be helpful differing as they will be frequently used concepts especially when talking about media and its purposes. These terms are influence, persuade, convince and manipulate.

To influence would represent the most general one of these four, according to the Cambridge Dictionary: influence is the power or capacity to have an effect on people or things. So, according to this definition, influence is present in the following three but with certain details.

Convincing and persuading would be the most similar ones, in fact, they are often used interchangeably they have differences in terms of outcome. To convince entails to cause someone to believe firmly in something that is truth, it appeals often to reasoning arguments. On the other hand, to persuade is to cause someone to do something through reasoning or argument but also through the use of emotions, within persuasion we have three kinds of mechanisms according to Aristotle's theory concerning persuasion: Ethos (appeals to the speaker's authority to say what they say, making them a trustworthy reference), Logos (appeals to reason and logic) and Pathos (appeals to emotions). According to English Grammar, in essence, the main difference between convince and persuade is that convince deals with a person's mind while persuade focuses on the resulting action. In other words, convince focuses more on the receiver, and how they enhanced their mental process to change their mind reaching a certain conclusion themself, and persuasion focuses more on the speaker and how they manage to modify a certain vision, so the receiver acts the way the speaker wants.

Manipulation and persuasion are often confused with each other since both entail a certain ability the speaker must bear in order to successfully have their interlocutor's mind modified. However, in the case of manipulation it has a clear negative connotation, since it implies disloyal or unfair goals through skillfully dialectic manners to achieve it. Manipulation implies bending, changing the truth or directly lie in order to eventually get the interlocutor to do something that responds to the speaker's benefit and that goes against their intention.

Finally, another relevant theoretical concept, which had been mentioned before in the introduction part, would be the agenda setting theory. The agenda setting theory is a concept which, although it existed practically before, it was first officially academically theorized in 1972 by McCombs and Shaw. They carried out a study during the 1968 United States presidential election in which they found strong correlations between the spotlighted prominent news media and the leading public affairs. "The agenda setting

theory states that the mainstream media sets the agenda of public discourse. It does this not so much by telling people what to think but rather *what* to *think* about" (Drew, 2022). Basically, media have the capability to, according to their ideology, interests or other affairs, place right in the spotlight certain events they consider important and give them intense coverage, so the audience has the feeling these are the worth-knowing-about topics. It is a clear way to exert influence by preestablishing a news hierarchy, so people become less self-critical and therefore easier-to-condition.

5. Goal, research questions and hypothesis

In this part of the thesis, the author will attempt to clear out the purposes pretended to be reached when the selected research topic was picked. In order to do so, the author thought it would be suitable to structure by splitting the chapter in different sections as indicated by the titles: on the one hand, the main goal will be described shallowly, followed by the secondary or more specific ones and, on the other hand the author will leave reflected some issues that have worked as research questions and hypothesis which have been showing up and were figured out as the thesis developed. Some have been relevant matters to be sorted out.

5.1. General goal

The essential goal of this bachelor's degree thesis is to bring an idea about the development of the Russian-Ukrainian war both relating the succession of events that took it to the current stage and bringing an approach on explaining how traditional media behaves when it comes to reporting according to its intentions, interests and bias.

5.2. Secondary goals

Once the general goal's main track lines are defined, there are certainly other secondary elements which have occupied a derivative but relevant place at the same time in the research process. Some of them were issues the author already bore in mind before the beginning of the thesis and these have been useful in order to conduct its course, although some others ended coming up as the author delved deeper into the topic and as

a result of the information collection exercise more knowledge and thoughtful capacity was acquired.

These recently hinted ideas would be for instance, learning about the existing bounds between the political and mediatic power and how their interrelation works, the dimension the war is achieving and its eventual consequences in a large scale, developing awareness about the grounds behind the origins of the conflict and why it ends up unfolding, the differences in the use of language and communication formulas depending on the sender, learning about geostrategic interests…among many other things. Additionally, as part of the author's goals too, it was the matter of reflecting and drawing self-made conclusions about what it was dealt with, as well as being able to carry out smart and brainy analysis that allows to set mind structures for future comparisons with other phenomena.

5.3. Research questions and hypothesis

In this section the author's intentions are to briefly leave written some of the questions, reflections or ideas that arose regarding this piece of work.

There are both questions that the author already bore in mind before carrying out the investigation and other that arose as the author got into the topic. All of them were properly answered when the work was finished. The first one would be how is it possible than an apparently much weaker country is resisting the attacks of the second most powerful army in the world and even taking the lead at this very moment. It really reminded on theVietnam war when a much weaker country defeats the bigger one, with the differenece that Ukraine and Russia literaly border and that Ukraine is far better armed, trained and financed. Another question that rounded the author's mind was how far Russia is willing to go in order to sell a sensation of victory. The answer to this one can be easily found in the theory of manipulation of audiences, propaganda and battle of perception: now-a-days wars are not won (or not exclusively) in the battlefield through the use of military means by through the cognitive war, evoking pathos and reaching the hearts. Propaganda and reality distortion, as we will see after, is a strategy in which media is essential to sell the audiences the idea that nothing (or little) has been lost and that something has been taken out of it.

Another meaningful research question was whether it is much different the way Ukrainian and Russian media cover and report the war. The answer to this surprised the author a little since, as he was very influenced by the western media perspective. The truth is that both, each one with their storytelling and style, are very contaminated by sensationalist messages, information concealment and propaganda. However, the author found out that a very predictable and similar reporting line to all media in the western coverage is followed. Also, it was a matter of curiosity to the author to figure out how was the way both sides in the conflict dealt with the casualties of war reporting process; the author saw that, as part of the war communication strategy, the real information concerning this issue remains uncertain.

6. Methodology

It is highly important to, once the author has managed to delimitate the work field, to carry out a wide search of information sources and documentation of the chosen topic for the brainstorming process. The idea of this chapter is to show the different resources used in order to answer the main goal, secondary goals and research questions All these materials of diverse origin and format will be useful to efficiently and rigorously approach the author's topic.

As mentioned above, in this chapter, the author's main goal will be explaining the kind of resources used for the elaboration of this work as well as explaining in a schematical and general way the main structure the work is going follow specially in the Analysis and Discussion chapter. Usually, resources can be split in primary sources and secondary sources.

The primary sources are those that belong to both literary and audiovisual material made at the historical moment in which the work is developed. In this case, almost every information concerning the conflict is going to be recent, since it is an ongoing event. For this, CNN news, El País News, Fox News, El Mundo, BBC news will bring updated materials to elaborate work. Also references such as Coronel Pedro Baños, Noam Chomsky or Youtube Channels like Cosas militares or VisualPolitik, among others…and opinions in interview format of political leaders will be helpful.

Secondary sources are those that belong to research and narration material not necessarily belonging to the period on which we are working. These types of sources are provided with supportive information and contents, such as theoretical and academic material to bring consistence to the work, podcasts, speeches, information concerning media functioning and many other sources that helps bringing coherence, knowledge and mechanisms of theorical background. These ones have not been the most consulted and used ones since we are dealing with an ongoing event and therefore almost everything will be extracted from contemporary-made means.

When it comes to the structure of the work, we will focus this part of the methodology chapter on explaining how the author is going to carry out the analysis of the topic. Additionally, it would be convenient to mention that the author has usually resorted to the comparative method which entails "a contrast among the main researched reality elements with the other already known similar realities" (translated from Spanish) (Calduch, 1988). This one has been put into practice throughout the development of the thesis by mentioning for instance some other conflicts of media behavior in order to contextualize and bring eventual similitudes and differences.

When it comes to the structure and conduction method, the author will bring some theoretical historically accurate background in order to contextualize the case, then we will split the mediatic analysis section (bringing evidences based on publications from February to November) in two parts: one of them concerning the Ukrainian affinity side and the other one the Russian, explaining the communication and message delivery differences and understanding, taking into account strategic, social and political elements, how these differ but match in many things at the same time. It will be important to explain how the world of communications has changed and rapidly changes making yesterday's information no longer valid, therefore it is decisive to count with the most reliable collecting information resources in order to make the most suitable communication strategy for our interests. The case the author is going to work on will also be provided by visual materials such as pictures of the war scenario to illustrate concepts, ideas of what is being told. Adding images will be useful in order to catch the attention of the reader and make it more easy-to-follow as well as to bring evidence. Images always contribute reaching audiences sensitivity and they are a highly effective way to create opinion, from this of view we will also try to analyze how these images are being used in order to trigger a certain reaction in the target audiences.

7. Analysis

This piece of work is going to analyze the case study of this war from a series of perspectives. On the one hand from the historical-background point of view, in which the author will explain the origins of the conflict from the 2014 Donbass war right to the current events in the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian crisis that led to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Besides, the author will bring through a mediatic context chapter, reflections about the evolution of media and communications during this early 21st century and how these changes, which have certainly also influenced our lifestyle and our societies, have represented an outstanding transformation when it comes to speed, delivery and means. This war matches with a far more intense technological revolution than in equally 21st century conflicts such as The Afghanistan war (2001-2021) or the still ongoing Syrian war (2011-) among other things due to the massification of the internet and the omnipresent role of social networks and reporting platforms; as well as with a further feeling of worldwide danger for Europeans specially, as it is taking place in the eastern area of the continent. Additionally, the obvious risk in this case of a potential use of nuclear weapons that threatens the global stability, and the energy supply crisis that shocks European economies are some of the issues that need to be considered. In relation to this idea, the author will explain the conflict diffusion in media and how it is reported, the mainly used media to reach audiences and how perception is evolving and its reporting differences depending on whether it is told from Russian or Ukrainians affinity.

7.1. Historical context: origins and conflict development

Before getting into explaining the current Russian invasion of Ukraine, it would be suitable to briefly explore the immediate background in order to set a clearer context of what we will be dealing with.

As mentioned before, in this chapter author is going to focus on the background from 2013 forward, since if we wanted to, the research of historical and political elements that influence these Russian-Ukrainian relationships could take us even back to the middle ages right to the own building-up process of Russia when the Slavic peoples of the Kievan Rus' shaped a wide microstate from which they would, in the following centuries, be moving eastwards to "colonize" the oriental part of nowadays' Russian surface.

Basically, this short historical mention, among other things, would explain the common ancestor Russia and Ukraine share as well as their deep bounds in terms of ethnicity-based brotherhood, language and culture.

From year 2013, some relevant events begin to take place. First of all, the "Revolution of Maidan" occurred, this was a series of protests, demonstrations and riots carried out by pro-European and Ukrainian nationalists that eventually brought down the pro-Russian Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovic. According to the Russian journalist Svetlana Agaltsova, this organized act that eventually symbolized a turning point in the Ukrainian political drift was mostly considered a coup d'état: "the famous 2014 Maidan revolution that was practically the coup d'état that took down the legitimate president Yanukovych and brought the openly pro-Western and anti-Russian government to power" (Agaltsova, 2022). This event seemed to happen right after the government had suspended "in extremis" the sign of Association Treaty and Free Trade Agreement with the European Union (Novosti, Ría, 2013).

On the other hand, there existed as a reaction to Viktor Yanukovic's government collapse, pro-Russian protests in the eastern and southern part of the country (traditionally inhabited by Russian communities due to their close range to the border) in combination with the crisis of Crimea that resulted in the official annexation of the Peninsula to Russian. As the geo-strategist Colonel Baños explains, the Ukrainian nationalist sentiment expressed in the protests, arose in other historical episodes as for example World War II when Nazi Germany went around in their attempt to invade the Soviet Union joining the German troops against the Russians. He also points out that it is possible that the Nazi symbols shown by paramilitary Ukrainian groups like Battalion Azov and many other convicted criminals in 2013 have to do with a through back to the past attempt to remind the fight against the Russians.

These ones found their natural counter with the pro-Russian stronghold specially in Donbass and Crimea regions and skillfully goaded by Putin taking advantage of the previously described scenario. These tensions found their peak when the Ukrainian government enacted a law that banned the possibility to officially used any other language different to Ukrainian. Because of all these events, Crimean local administrations organized a referendum in which they consulted people whether they wanted to remain

part of Ukraine or integrate in the Russian Federation, according to ABC international journal: "96.77% of Crimean voters support accession to Russia" (ABC, 2014).

Putin found in this context a suitable scenario to trigger a military intervention in the Crimea Peninsula to bring support to its pro-Russian rebels and ensure it was properly annexed to the country.

Putin framed the ensuing tumult of Euromaidan, which forced Yanukovych from power, as a Western-backed "fascist coup" that endangered the ethnic Russian majority in Crimea. (Western leaders dismissed this as baseless propaganda reminiscent of the Soviet era.) In response, Putin ordered a covert invasion of Crimea that he later justified as a rescue operation. "There is a limit to everything. And with Ukraine, our western partners have crossed the line," Putin said a March 2014 address formalizing the annexation (Masters, 2022).

However, according to information published by BBC news, Putin admitted one year after, that the annexation plan of Crimea had thoughtfully devised and ordered to be done weeks before the controversial referendum of integration to Russian that gave him questionable "legitimacy" to enter his military in Crimea. (BBC News, 2022).

In April the 6th 2014, due to the confrontation between the government of Ukraine lead by Aleksandr Turchinov (as interim president until he was replaced by Poroshenko) and the pro-Russian separatists of Lugansk and Donetsk, the war of Donbass began, which finds itself now involved in the own ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war. Little after, these two rebel regions proclaimed their independence, founding the Popular Republic of Lugansk and the Popular Republic of Donetsk, this decision was submitted to referendum achieving around 90% of affirmative vote in favor of the independence, none of this event were recognized by the central government nor the international community.

The authorities declared sovereignty and expressed their desire to become part of Russia, as well as the desire to unite the two self-proclaimed republics into a Novorossia (New Russia). The Ukrainian authorities, the US and the European Union considered this referendum illegitimate (Agaltsova, 2022). However, they did not

officially integrate in Russia until the September 2022 integration referendums during the invasion.

In 2021 the Russian-Ukrainian crisis takes place; Russia began mobilizing troops to the border which provoked a shock in the international community and the fear of an eventual invasion of Ukraine. In the context of this increasing escalation of tension and conflict, and the intolerable possibility of an eventual Ukrainian entrance in NATO, Russia's' arguments to justify its movements spined around the idea of guaranteeing its self-security from non-stop further western allies' military presence right at its borders.

The February 24th, 2022, Putin announces the beginning of a "special military operation" (euphemism used as part of his propaganda strategy) in Ukraine, little after, Russian troops cross the border setting the beginning of the invasion. The main points of advance would comprehend north (entering from Belarus' border), east and south on their way to reach the most relevant cities and tactical objectives. This aggression counted with most European and American rejection and the announcement of sanctions of diverse kind against Russia. The Ukrainian resistance in their motherland was fierce which brought under serious difficulties the advance of the Russian army, cities like Kiev, Jarkiv, and Jerson are the first major cities to be scenarios of intense combats. (CNN, 2022).

Indeed, that extraordinary resistance prevented Russia from successfully take control of the capital, retreating in April 2022. As the front in the north seemed to have stuck, Russia then initiated another offensive, in this case focusing on the eastern part of the country, their advance was solid and fast as they managed initially to take some towns and villages as for instance the important city of Severodonestsk. Russia had to face also by this time, an increasingly intense set of sanctions from the international community as well as a general rejection and condemn began to take place, which was interpreted as part of a Russophobia in order to prejudice Russia. "Russian President Vladimir Putin accused the West of promoting Russophobia and compared it to Nazism" (Alvarenga, 2022). On the other hand, Ukraine started to receive important financing from the United States and the European Union, as well as strategical information, from the western intelligence services training, technology and weapons.

According to Colonel Baños, the fact that the Ukrainian army is not only successfully resisting but also achieveing important progress, is because of the great multi-disciplinary support Ukraine is receiving when it comes to soldiers' massive training, intelligence means, spy planes, drones and other technology gadgets, all these have allowed them to decrease their potential losses and being able to eliminate core Russian targets.

Russian offensives begin to get stalled and by the end of summer, Ukraine started to take the lead in the battlefield and launched a series of counteroffensives both in the south and east of the country. Throughout this attacks Ukraine managed to break the front, even sneaking into the western part of the Donbass region capturing some villages, boosting Ukrainian moral and decreasing Russia's. This fact put Putin under great pressure as at this time, around six months of war already passed by, and what apparently, he thought it would be a "blitzkrieg" operation of take over and government replacement was certainly turning into a "non-exit alley".

The third phase of the war which lasts up to current times, includes mainly a massive troops mobilization decisions taken by the Kremlin in order to face the Ukrainian counteroffensives.

On September 21st, Moscow decreed the first mobilization, though partial, since World War II, which marked an implicit admission that Putin is failing to achieve his military objectives with the available military force. Though there has not been an official word on the exact numbers, media reports claimed that the numbers being mobilized are around 300,000 while other estimated, mostly based on the scale of the draft campaign in Russia reaching up to smaller towns and villages, placed the figure as high as 01 million. (Khan, 2022).

This massive mobilization entailed a series of protests and demonstrations in more than 36 cities in which, around 1200 people were arrested (numbers retrieved from El País journal, 2022). However, against what we may think, according to Colonel Baños, generally speaking "only around 10-15% of people in Russia would be against the war". This phenomenon took the author to the reflection about the" "Rally around the flag theory", which explains that, in times of crisis in a certain country, that brings uncertainty and insecurity, most people tend to gather and unite around their leaders.

On September 30th, Putin officially announced the integration of the controlled Donbass regions of Donetsk and Lugansk as well as two previously captured southeastern regions called Kherson and Zaporizhia. "In late September 2022, Russia set about annexing four further regions of Ukraine: Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson. Like in Crimea, Russia organized illegal and sham annexation 'referendums' in the four regions" (Knott, 2022). By doing this, Russia attempts to prove that from now forward, any attack on these now-integrated regions would be considered as an attack on Russian soil, and therefore, any response necessary would be "justified".

Russia currently has retired to the eastern side of the Dnipro River leaving the recently taken by Ukrainian troops city of Jerson, awaiting an eventual Ukrainian attack. "When the Russian Defense Minister appeared on state media to report that he had ordered a withdrawal from the west bank of the Dnipro River, including the eastern bank city of Kherson, the story was immediately hailed by the Russian media. Western communication as a great victory for the Ukrainian army" (Woods, 2022).

7.2. Mediatic chapter

The mediatic coverage of the Ukrainian war is nor very different to any other previous or ongoing conflict in terms of information delivery. Many traditional media companies got themselves involved and the operating pattern reproduced is obviously not the same depending on the side. Before getting into matter and describing how the war is depicted, the author thinks it is important to keep in mind that none of them should be trusted since both are engaged in psychological and perceptive techniques.

7.2.1 Russian coverage

The Russian coverage is characterized by a deep confusion between information and propaganda. We cannot forget that Russia is not a democracy in which freedom of speech and "check and balances" systems of diverse type to power are guaranteed, therefore, as we are dealing with an authoritarian regime, the government makes sure the media align with government's decisions and controls the information flow.

First, statal media were forced to report the official version of the government, as we can see for instance in the way they refer to the invasion, euphemistically saying "special military operation". "The Russian media has little or no choice but to parrot the official

line" (Bishara, 2022). Additionally, the independent media were adverted, threatened and finally legally obliged to respect the official version.

Headline from the stated-controlled news agency Tass
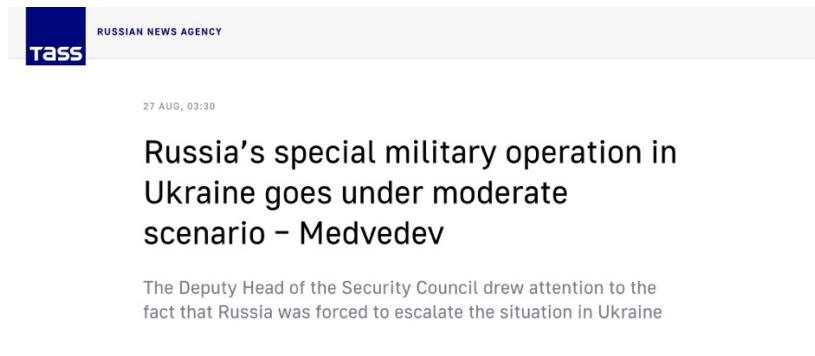
One of the most widely heard elements since the beginning of the conflict is the concept "denazification", as it has been explained before, it refers to the intolerance nationalist Ukrainians have been practicing against Russian communities especially in eastern Ukraine. In Russian storytelling it attempts to deceive the citizens, so they really feel an intervention is needed. "In the months since President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia called the invasion of Ukraine a "denazification" mission, the lie that the government and culture of Ukraine are filled with dangerous "Nazis" has become a central theme of Kremlin propaganda about the war" (Smart, 2022).

The undeniable historical fact that Ukraine and Russia share common roots in many aspects to the point that Ukraine is considered the origin of the Slavic Russians and that therefore, a union in the same political reality as had been happening before 1992 when the Soviet Union collapsed, was used by the Kremlin to deliver a romantic message of natural union and ethnical brotherhood. According to an article published in Ría Novosti, the main state news agency of the country: "Russia restoring its historical fullness, gathering the Russian world, the Russian people together—in its entirety of Great Russians, Belarusians and Little Russians [a pre-Soviet term for Ukrainians]". The celebratory article was written in advance, probably because Russians powers were certain to win the war very quickly (Montouri, 2022). This article seeks persuade audiences evoking Pathos in an attempt to depict the invasion as a reasonable and natural process by which Russia would restore its greatness and integrate into the same political reality its legitimate territories.

Another article called 'Russia is responsible for Ukraine's by Petr Akopov published in Ria Novosti talks about the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 as a 'tragedy' and that Russia is currently building steps in the reunification of the former Soviet Union state (Paul, 2022).

Ria Novosti has been one of the most non-information suppliers in the Russian Federation so far, they came up with stories and narratives to make Russia appear as the attacked one, for instance they even said before the invasion that NATO plans were arm Ukraine to threat Russia.

Dimitri Kiselev, a Russian reporter who also controls Ria Novosti, broadly known to support Putin's action, contributed to spreading false stories about the conflict from the beginning. For example, before the invasion started, he claimed that NATO and the United States were arming Ukraine and getting ready to invade Russia (Montouri, 2022).

The agenda setting strategy of Russian media is clear, the priority is to avoid talking about the consequences severe sanctions are representing nor the dreadful status of Russian economy but to try to create a narrative bubble around the idea of inevitable outcome and the isolation situation Russia finds itself in. Russia 1 TV Broadcast:

However, according to the Wall Street Journal, the Kremlin's narrative is not getting to everyone in Russia as they are starting to realize the limitations the war is causing. (WSJ, 2022)

Obviously, propaganda and information deceive also affected incoming soldiers to the front. According to one of the last Russia's independent newspapers called Novaya Gazeta, "many members of the army thought they were taking part in a drill, which they later understood was the invasion of Ukraine. Their families believed the same too", this shows the degree of unawareness population has concerning the reality of the situation.

Indeed, the experiences these soldiers went through and will still be going through will determine an inner counterpart which riskily could overrun Putin's official discourse.

In the battlefield itself it is essential to keep the moral as high as possible, this exercise often goes through obviously hiding losses and casualties and exaggerating the enemy numbers, as well as harm the enemy image. State-controlled news media such as Russian today, published an article in which it hinted Ukrainian soldier were running away the battle: "Ukraine forces serving in the Donbas region of Ukraine are leaving their post due to lack of aid or support from the government of Ukraine" (Lavrenin, 2022)

The casualties reporting in times of war is always a delicate issue. Russia-24, another relevant stated-controlled TV channel, stated that during the first stages of war the Kremlin' position that there are no threats to civilians and that only military installations and facilities had been targeted. "Ukrainian civilians and cities are treated with real care" (Russia 1). However, according to The Wall Street Journal, only in the first week of war, "Ukrainian officials said that invasion's death toll had reached 2000". (WSJ, 2022). In fact, attacks on civilians has been a relatively usual practice that has ruthlessly continued to exist in known cities such as Irpin, Kiev, Makarov or Jerson leaving thousands of deaths and committing terrible war crimes and human rights violations.

Another element that has characterized the conflict coverage in both sides is the lack of transparency when bringing evidence of the number of casualties. There are few official reports, and its information strongly contrasts with the one brought by the enemy which makes it probably one of the most propaganda intoxicated one. One side tends to report hardly believable casualties' numbers caused to the other side and very few caused to itself.

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the Russian Defense Ministry has reported casualties of its soldiers only twice: On March 2, 498 servicemen were reported dead, 1,597 wounded. On March 25, 1,351 soldiers were reported dead, 3,825 wounded. Western intelligence had estimated in mid-March that 7,000 Russian soldiers had been killed, while Ukraine has recently cited a figure of more than 17,000 dead" (Akage, 2022).

Real verification, for the time being results almost impossible, since, as we can imagine, the fact that people and soldiers are aware about truthful numbers entails the risk of demoralization and even the arise of pleasures to give in the conflict.

7.2.2 Ukrainian coverage

This section will result of the combination of both coverages coming from Ukrainian media and western one.

In Ukraine we find similar measurements to the ones explained before in the Russian section regarding government information control and regulation. In fact, the Ukrainian Supreme parliament legally enacted laws to prevent nongovernment's vision information to be published.

The Verkhovna Rada passed 14 new laws to counteract Russian aggression, texts that were subsequently sanctioned by President Volodímir Oleksándrovich Zelenski. Among them there are two specific ones that have been added to its Penal Code. Article 435-1 refers to the responsibility for threats and insults to the military and their families and the production and dissemination of relevant information material. The 436-2 clearly prohibits the media from justifying or legitimizing the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine or the occupation of part of its territory, which began in 2014, and that these acts are classified as "civil war" or "conflict". internal". The people who have participated in these actions can neither be praised nor defined as "civilian militiamen", "insurgents" or, the strangest of them all, "educated armed men". The penalties for those who fail to comply can be up to 8 years in prison. (Corral, 2022).

However, in the western case there is freedom of discourse and news emissions, there is a widespread narration line tendency followed by most media based on solidarity and unconditional support towards Ukraine. The main storytelling spins around the idea the dichotomy of "good and bad", depicting Zelenski as a national hero, leader of the Ukrainian resistance against the oppressor and, on the other hand depicting Putin as a wild, merciless individual. "What is central in today's Western media space is the construction of Ukrainians as suffering others with a plethora of pictures of destroyed buildings, dead bodies and fleeing refugees" (Ege, 2022).

In fact, another important element of analysis is the way different images of the presidents are sold, Volodimir Zelenski. Volodimir Zelenski is shown as a committed

boots-on-the-ground leader, that stays in the front with his soldiers dressed on military uniform as they do. "Zelenski gives daily updates on social media dressed in green army t-shirts, that has helped to boost his popularity among Ukrainians to nearly 90%" (Al Jazeera, 2022). Western media and Ukrainian attempt to portray Ukrainian soldiers as brave fighters for freedom in whose hands the fate of the world is decided. As the potential consequences of the progressive escalation are extremely risky due to the nuclear capacity of Russia, in the Ukrainian side coverage appeals to Pathos by sending message of hope are often made. "The Ghost and Tiger stories both portray Ukrainians as freedom fighters, as people willing to do dangerous things in the name of their country's defense, while sending a clear message to Russians that they cannot possibly win in the face of such heroism" (Dana, 2022). So, as part of the Ukrainian and western made propaganda, we could say that the most highlighted message is to exaggerate the Ukrainian actions showing them as heroism. Headline from Ukrainska Pravda:

Heroism that cost a life: a 70-year-old woman from Kyiv region "aimed" the artillery of the Ukrainian Armed Forces at the occupiers

TUESDAY, 3 MAY 2022, 15:56

Propaganda is also based on enemy disgraces and letdowns, thus, when something negative occurs to the enemy is wisely used to discredit them no matter whether it was carried out by friendlies or not. An example of this would be the Crimean Kerch Bridge explotion whose authorship remains unknown but was quickly used by Ukraine. "The recent explosion on Russia's Kerch Bridge, linking Russia with occupied Crimea, triggered a tidal wave of videos, jokes and memes as Ukraine's internet army celebrated wildly" (Adams, 2022)

Ukrainian media publications and broadcasts is full of hope and resistance messages often made up by manipulated information concerning the enemy status in military terms, for instance, in a Ukrainian newspaper called Ukrainska Pravda, messages about how important he necesseity of war effots is now that winter is coming and the enmy is running out of means. "President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is convinced that Ukraine will win the war with Russia if it survives the winter, because the aggressor is running out of weapons" (Mazurenko, 2022). Obviously, Russia may be going through a hard time due to the recent

lead taken by Ukraine in the war, but that does not mean that Russia is running out of weapons since, among other things, we are dealing with the second most powerful army in the world. But on the other hand, according to Colonel Baños it may be Ukraine who eventually may see its weaponry and financial flow reduced or even cut depending on the interests of its western partners. The United States, its main means supplier, is receiving pressure from the Republican party to stop involving economically in this situation.

Another important element linked to the storytelling would be the language used to describe we success in war. Ukrainian media talks about "liberation" which entail a deeper and moving meaning rather than saying "victory" or any other more neutral term. Recently, according to headline published by Ukrainska Pravda, President Zelensky declared: "War to end only after all of Ukraine is liberated" (UkPravda, 2022). As well as showing a tough position when it comes to an eventual peace agreement. "President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said that Ukraine must reclaim all of its occupied territories, and only then will it be possible to talk about the end of the war". We need to consider that Ukraine currently, thanks to its recent counteroffensive and the capture of Jerson city, enjoys hight military and political morale and that triggers this kind of sensationalist declarations. President Zelensky knows that it is going to be impossible to regain every single territory lost and that he will need to give in order to get the war finished no matter how unfair it may be.

As mentioned before, western media has reacted emotionally siding with Ukraine since the very beginning and showing empathy. Media companies like CBS News, The Telegraph or Al Jazeera have even stood in favor of the refugees' inflow to Europe setting a grievance in comparison to previous conflicts like Syria. "The comments openly favored the white race, Christian religion, and economic status of the Ukrainian refugees, in contrast to people of Middle Eastern or North African descent" (Salacanin, 2022).

On the other hand, this conflict shows the contraditions the European Union governments and political parties went through when taking course of action in their involvement in the conflict. Since, at the beginning they were not in favor of sending weapons to Ukraine because it would ease Russian slaughter on armed civilians, and it was not considered morally acceptable whereas now their perspective has switched to total involvement at all levels. This change of position can respond to several reason but

among these, it is obvious that an increase of income in weaponry selling, production and development is entailed.

The role of the US and the EU in exacerbating the conflict is almost completely absent from the mainstream media agenda. While militarization was not on the EU agenda previously, several European countries are now investing even more heavily in their militaries. This shift has occurred without public outcry, partly because of the media hype and scaremongering. (Ege, 2022).

7.3 Highlighted images

These thoughtfully selected images' goal is to illustrate some relevant moments which have been told in the previous sections (some specifically, some are included in wider ideas).

The Bucha executions.

Image published in El Confidential. Date: 4/4/2022.

The image shows two civilian bodies in the streets of Bucha laying on the ground with their hands tied together behind the back. Also, there is a soldier standing near the bodies watching over.

The picture was taken right after one of the most shocking war episodes so far, war crimes commented on civilians as a part of Russia's strategy to demoralize people and intimidate. This image has gone around the world and has produce worldwide rejection

to the degree of ruthless attack in which, according to El Confidencial, tens of civilians died, many of them with their hands tied (as it can be appreaciated in the picture) and with clear and visible signs of torture. Obviously, this event was used by the Ukrainian government to accuse Russia of genocide. According to President Zelenski: "The removal of an entire nation and its people. We are citizens of Ukraine. We have more than 100 nationalities. This is about the destruction and extermination of all these nationalities." (Barro, 2022).

The Mariupol shelling.

Image published by Aljazeera. Evgeniy Maloletka. 9/3/2022.

The image shows a wrecked car totally burnt still on its flames and smoke coming out when the picture was taken. It is located within the hospital of Mariupol's perimeter, and as we can see in the picture the hospital building has been absolutely teared down by the shelling.

The Russian airstrike on the city reduced the city to ashes and dead land leaving hundreds of victims. The picture shows how the attack teared down the children's hospital of Mariupol leaving 17 people wounded. It happened at the early stages of war and the Ukrainian authorities warned that the invasion was about to take a "more brutal and indiscriminate turn" (Aljazeera, 2022). Due to the violence of the explosions, the shrapnel destroyed not just the structures but also it lifted off the ground many materials were more than a mile away.

It did not take long before many authorities share declarations on what happened. Volodymyr Nikulin, a police official that came to the rescue of injured stated: "It is a war crime without any justification". Also, Volodymyr Zelensky said: there were "people, children under the wreckage" as well as international leader such as former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson declared: "There are few things more depraved than targeting the vulnerable and defenseless".

President Zelenski visits Jarkov.

Image published on El País. EFE. 29/5/2022

The image depicts president Zelenski surrounded by Ukrainian local soldiers within the yard of a facility. As we have seen him in many other occasions, Zelenski is on his military uniform, even wearing a bulletproof vest. He seems to be receiving instructions or explanation from a local authority who witnessed what happened.

Lugansk and Donetsk are located in the Donbass region where huge Russian presence is present, therefore by the time the picture was taken the Russians had aunched an offensive over the westerm part of Donbass reaching the city of Jarkov which finally resisted the Russian assault.

It was the first time President Zelenski travelled to the eastern part of the country after 95 days of war. Zelenski carefully visited different locations within the city and relevant points. Jarkov is not any city, is the second most important city of the country and one of the most wanted targets of the Russians by that time. It did have an outstanding

value, morally and strategically speaking that the local army resisted a two-month siege finally preserving the city and holding the position.

The Spanish journal published declarations of Zelenski if which the Ukrainian president acknowledges the importance of this achievement and the truly complex situation lived in this part of the country. "Indescribably difficult" situation in Donetsk and Luhansk, current scene of the most intense fighting (De Vega, 2022).

The annexation of the occupied territories

Image published on La Voz de Galicia. Sputnik/Reuters. 30/9/2022

The image shows Vladimir Putin along with Denis Pushilin, Leonid Pasechnik, Vladimir Saldo and Yevgueni Balitski lifting their hands or the fist up with gestures of joy in the Great Palace of The Kremlin.

. These four men are the four political leaders of the Ukrainian rebel regions occupied by Russian troops which recently integrated in the Russian Federation.

The sign of the treaty that officially recognizes these regions as part of the Russian Federation has hidden risky consequences since, from this moment forward, any attack on these provinces will be considered attack on Russia itself and response actions may take another dimension. In the signing ceremony, Putin pronounced a 38-minute discurse in which defended the right of these region' citizens to have their will respected and become part of Russia and that Russia will defend this new territory by all means. Obviously, this act has been considered null and illegal by the international community.

According to La Voz de Galicia journal: "between 87% and 99% of citizens supported the annexation of Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporizhia and Kherson to Russia, according to pro-Russian authorities. Russia annexes around 15% of Ukraine's territory or about 100,000 square kilometres".

8. Conclusions

The conclusions are variate and respond to different reflections, ideas and impressions the author developed once the thesis was finished.

The feeling the author has, is that the truth is a very relative concept that mostly depends on who says it. The truth is what someone is being told, since nodoby is anytime anywhere to prove out whether it is true or not. Therefore, we need to "trust" intermediaries that say their own truth depending on many factors. Any message can be easily manipulated and distorted wisely so the sender triggers a certain reaction in the receiver and that can articulate from simple response, both coming from the ordinary citizen to the president of a whole nation.

Far from what can be thought, the Russian-Ukrainian war coverage is not different at all to any other in the past. The same patterns, mistakes and bias can be watched, all is a mixture between information and sensationalism which makes the critical reader struggle and strive to get something apparently truthful out of it. It is the act of thresh the narrative and storytelling used in order to take the valuable ideas. This takes the author to another reflection which is to be skeptical, not just in this field but in general, any source of information must be contrasted and questioned because all serve their own interests.

The author realized that in this conflict media plays also a very irresponsible role by explaining the conflict from a "good ones bad ones vision". In the case of the directly involved ones and taking into account that none of them are democratic regimes (or at least according to how we conceive it) it is comprehensible that the storytelling can potentially be marked by that rhetoric. However, it is not that justified in the case of western media which have reduced it to a simple, binary logic.

From the author's point of view a conflict coverage demands more accuracy when it comes to information delivery and less loads of prejudices. Media should be aware of the political and historical context of every phenomenon and explaining both sides of the

story although that is not profitable mediatically speaking. By saying this, the author is trying to say that explaining and justifying are not the same concepts although often interestedly get confused.

From a political perspective the author thinks this event has no way back in the relations between Russia and Ukraine, the degree of violence and barbarism and the most than likely use of any method necessary by both Russia and Ukraine to win the war is going to make it difficult any sort of agreement or negotiation at least in the short-term. From a macropolitical perspective this event framed in the New Cold war era, which is a tridimensional confrontation consisting of China, Russia and the United States, shows once more that the New World Order lead by the United States since 1991 no longer exists and it is not the "owner and protector" of the world anymore. There are other actors that challenge its domain in the military, technological and economic fields.

Finally, it is interesting to reflect about the idea of the disinformation. Misinformation is not just linked to the warlike field it is something that unfortunately surrounds us in many issues of our daily life. For instance, topics like, COVID, Fake news in politics…it is about misleading information that spreads intentionally in an attempt to manipulate people's beliefs and emotions. It should not confuse with misinformation which differs to the previous one in the fact that the sender has no intentions in deceiving the receiver.

"The first casualty, when war comes, is struth"

Hiram Johnson (1866-1945)

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