New Cold War? A comparison of Russian and US foreign policy discourses in the time of deteriorating relations

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of PhD in Russian, Central and East European Studies

May 2022

Abstract

This thesis examines the role that the Cold War discourse themes play in informing and structuring the American and Russian newspaper narratives in the time period of 2014-2017. It uncovers whether the portrayal of the contemporary relationship between Russia and the US in newspaper discourse can be traced back to the historical roots of Cold War struggles.

Using Critical Discourse Analysis, the thesis seeks to identify the contexts interwoven in newspaper narratives examined in this study, and how their interactions with themes of the Cold War discourse work to create meanings for these newspapers' audiences. The study does a qualitative textual analysis of newspaper discourse within the frame of two case studies: the 2014 conflict in Ukraine and the 2016–2017-time frame that is associated with the U.S. presidential election pre-election period and the first year of Donald Trump's presidency.

This thesis fills a gap in the New Cold War discourse where no thematic comparative U.S.-Russia newspaper discourse study has been done thus far.

The findings indicate that particular elements of the Cold War discourse continue structuring the narratives that different Russian and American newspapers produce while reporting events occurring in the post-Cold War time, raising critical questions about the persistence of powerful historical discourses, and about the ability of media in Russia and in the US to rearticulate and regenerate discourses of global politics in the post-Cold War world.

Chapter 1: Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

I would like to genuinely thank my supervisors Dr Ammon Cheskin and Dr Ty Solomon for their support, understanding, and encouragement all throughout my PhD. Thanks for introducing me to the complexity of qualitative research and helping me find my voice in the process of writing.

Author's declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

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A note on translations

This research involves using written newspaper discourse in English and Russian. During my analysis, I have provided the English translation of the Russian newspaper discourse, including direct quotations. I have aimed to provide a translation that is as close to the original text as possible, within the limitation that phrases do not allow for a direct translation to English. The best effort is made to keep the text as close to the original as possible.

Introduction

The endpoint of the Cold War marked an upheaval in European geopolitical imagination (Agnew, 1998: 1). Once the political boundaries dividing Europe into two separate areas supposedly ceased to exist, there were hopes that Europe would leave the era of divisions in the past (Ojala and Kaasik-Krogerus, 2016: 139). However, the 2014 crisis in Ukraine marked an important point, destroying the vision of a unified Europe (Orenstein, 2015). As famously argued by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, "We clearly face the gravest threat to European security since the end of the Cold War. And this is not just about Ukraine. This crisis has serious implications for the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area as a whole" (cited in NATO Joint Press point, 2014).

For many, this conflict marked the return of Cold War binaries and antagonisms, with the return of clear boundaries between Russia and the West (Mearsheimer, 2014**)**. Being worried about a further conflict escalation, scholars drew parallels with the Cold War (e.g., Bovt, 2015; Legvold, 2014). These worries further escalated with Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent military conflict that started in 2022, with frequent mentions of the term New Cold War emerging. The developments motivated scholars and media experts to argue that the New Cold War is bound to be worse and far less stable than the Cold War (e.g., Smith, 2022; Novo, 2022; Ortega, 2022; Isachenkov, 2022; Bremmer, 2022; Klein, 2022, Gardner, 2022).

Notably, in addition to the military aspect, the New Cold War is associated with information war, including media publications. The disagreement between Russia and Ukraine, which arguably reached a critical point in 2014 before escalating further, is an illustration of wars being not only fought using military means but also using information and discourse. Similarly to the Cold War, countries and their allies continue to engage in informational warfare.

Thus, the notion of strategic narratives remains important, given that they explain events, obtain legitimacy, and acquire public support (Dimitriu, 2012). Information continues to be used to destabilise public support for the enemy and increase public support for the conflict itself. Furthermore, the contemporary events associated with the phenomenon of the New Cold War confirm Schleifer's (2012) thesis that global audiences can also be targeted by propaganda, with the conflicting parties employing it to gain support and affect international public opinion. Notably, these strategies have not ceased to exist in the US-Russia relationship,

particularly since the start of the conflict in Ukraine, and continue to be used both by the politicians and the media, with the old East-West binarity never vanishing completely (Creutziger and Reuber, 2019).

As a consequence, media coverage continues to be crucial to legitimise or challenge the political actions of governments. Media discuss and interpret key issues and the consequences of events, contributing to their social construction (Lichtenstein and Esau, 2016: 193). How media deliver the story could pre-emptively have an effect on how we see the event. Furthermore, the media might attempt to determine our views on a subject with labels, omissions, and frames of the news by adding a particular tone, exposure and other effects (Jin, 2020: 86).

Additionally, being close to the enactment of foreign policy, the news media tend to spread elite narratives, turning them into widely accepted narratives for national audiences (McFarlane and Hay, 2003). Consequently, the news media is closely engaged in the creation of dominant geopolitical narratives, legitimising the states' foreign policies and naturalising certain points of view (Ojala and Pantti, 2004). This is of particular importance in relation to contemporary Russian politics, with the Russian government heavily investing in media resources, including those that can convey its point of view to other countries. Russia's ability to project narratives to foreign audiences is therefore considered a matter of national security, as is the ability to control the circulation of narratives at home (Hutchings and Szostek, 2015). While the US enjoys more media freedom, the media divisions are encompassing and profound, with media sources accused of being "birthing centres for polarising rhetoric" (Sullivan, 2019).

Thus, it does not come as a surprise that much scholarly attention has been paid to how conflict and war are represented in news journalism (e.g., Hoskins, 2004; Thussu and Freedman, 2003; Tumber and Webster, 2006). An important conclusion in scholarship is that media are able to turn the conflict into a demonstration of soft power (Hoskins and O'Loughlin, 2015), increasing the salience of certain issues, (re)creating national identities, and defining the boundaries between Us and Them (Mamadouh and Dijkink, 2006).

The Cold War was no exception, with the media playing a big part in spreading the propaganda of both antagonistic sides. The main theme for journalism in the time of the Cold War was the bipolar world of East and West and Communism and capitalism as it provided framing for

interpretation - a way to understand the world and report international affairs that had predictable patterns and discourse (McLaughlin, 2020: 16). Bourdieu's (1972: 192) idea of "master patterns" is of importance here, defined as "an infinite number of individual patterns directly applicable to specific situations". While such master patterns help with continuity of thought, they may also create thoughts and opinions, helping us to interpret reality in particular ways. This is of high importance in this thesis, given its focus on the Cold War themes and the role of media as potential political instruments.

Although history may not simply repeat itself, this does not mean that historical analogies are not useful. In fact, history often helps social scientists to understand complex phenomena and look for answers from history (Li, 2021). As argued by Straughn et al. (2019), politico-cultural constructions of the past affect present-day concerns. When one is facing uncertainty and confusion in relation to a crisis, they will look at past experiences to make sense of current events (Brändström et al., 2004: 191). Thus, historical analogies affect particular parts of collective memories by shaping current events as similar to or reminiscent of some period in the past. Using the lens of memory politics, the use of historical analogies can be viewed as a tactical move that builds upon existing collective memories to justify particular aims. Historical analogies frequently appear when societies deal with new challenges. In times of external conflict, leaders may employ comparisons of time frames, events, or persons that remind of some past period of unity to "mobilise, legitimise, orient, clarify, inspire, and console" (Schwartz, cited in Straughn et al., 2019: 93).

Thus, one should consider the role of media during the Cold War. The media created Cold War imagery using such "master patterns" or interpretative structures (McLaughlin, 2020: 16-17). It is argued that in the case of the US and Russia history and current political discourse are closely linked. Therefore, it is believed that the current relationship cannot be fully understood without examining history (Medhurst and Brands, 2000: 3). Indeed, Zelizer (2018: 24) argues that today's journalism "builds upon the Cold War enmity with a remarkable degree of consonance".

It should be recognised that while the term "New Cold War", referring to the strained nature of the US-Russia relations, especially since Vladimir Putin's coming to power, has become widely used in world politics today, some doubt and debate its existence (Harasymiw, 2010).

Thus, my focus on the New Cold War as a broader theme was partly caused by its being a subject of debate among political analysts and even politicians (Straughn et al., 2019: 94).

Indeed, there is some disagreement on whether the term is fit to describe the more recent clashes between Russia and the West (including the US as the key player). There are several arguments supporting this idea, one of them being the idea that Russia is a declining power (Marcus, 2018; Moynes, 2022; Spohr, 2022) that is unable to sustain an extended period of opposition to the West (Bebernes, 2022), while the West has already won the power competition (Ludlow, 2017).

Another commonly named reason is the notion that the conflicting ideologies have changed- while the Cold War involved the conflict between democracy and Communism, the current clash is arguably between democracy and authoritarianism (Bebernes, 2022). Furthermore, it is argued that the world is no longer "bi-centric" but rather "polycentric" (Gardner, 2022). Finally, the world is viewed as a far more globalised space, with both the West and Russia being dependent on each other to some extent (Norris, 2014). Moreover, some authors argue that the New Cold War is not a relevant concept as the Cold War was a continuous conflict that had never ended. For example, Phipps (2015: 2) posits that the Cold War has been going on since 1947, despite at times taking various shapes.

Nonetheless, the phenomenon of the New Cold War, regardless of the name of the concept, will undoubtedly affect not only the two superpowers - Russia and the US - but also the whole international community. My thesis adopts a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, using two fundamental CDA concepts, namely, *ideology* and *power*, to investigate how the selected Russian and American newspapers depict each other through the lens of these concepts. Through CDA, my research delves into the underlying ideological constructs and power dynamics inherent in the discourse employed by six newspapers from both nations – *The Washington Times*, *The New York Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Argumenti Nedely*, *Izvestiya*, and *Novoya Gazeta*. By analysing the language, tone, and framing of the articles, my study seeks to elucidate the portrayals of Russia by American newspapers and vice versa, aiming to shed light on the ideological underpinnings that influence the representation of each other. By employing CDA, my research aims to discern whether themes reminiscent of the Cold War era are employed in shaping the image of the other country in the respective American and Russian newspapers. Additionally, the study aims to identify whether novel

themes have emerged in the articles examined during the specific time frame of 2014-2017 and if their use persists over the four-year period. Finally, I analyse the divergences and convergences that arise in the discourse of American and Russian newspapers while depicting the Other. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the (mis)perceptions appearing in the newspapers that may shape the understanding of their readership. In addition, it sheds light on how each nation constructs its image of the other, influencing public opinion, diplomatic interactions, and policy decisions. Moreover, identifying new emerging themes in the discourse during the specific time period between 2014 and 2017 can reveal evolving dynamics in the relationship. The investigation of new themes that may have emerged during the specified time period aims to understand how evolving geopolitical contexts and international relations dynamics may have influenced the representation of Russia and the US in the newspaper discourse. Recognising that identities can only "materialise" as an effect of practice; it is necessary to pay attention to those performing said practices.

To date, there has been a notable absence of comprehensive studies that investigate the manifestation of Cold War themes in recent newspaper discourse through a comparative lens, juxtaposing the perspectives presented in both American and Russian newspapers. The examination of commonalities and differences in the portrayal of each other in these media outlets remains an understudied area in academic research, particularly in the context of the evolving US-Russia relationship. As illustrated in the theoretical section, the studies on the New Cold War period are mainly approached from the realist perspective, mostly trying to find reasons behind the conflict in Ukraine. While the excellent study by Straughn et al. (2019) explores the prevalence of the term "New Cold War" in several newspapers over various time periods, it does not explore or contextualise the usage of the term in the newspapers, rather focusing on existing literature to try to explain the variation in frequency that was identified.

In addition to the comparative aspect, to observe the impact of geopolitical developments on newspaper discourse, two time frames have been chosen: the conflict in Ukraine in 2014 and Donald Trump's election campaign and the early presidency in 2016 and 2017. Both time frames represent significant developments in the relationship between the United States and Russia. The time frames were also chosen based on the argument that, while performing discourse analysis, attention must be drawn to the creation, disruption and transformation of signifying structures, to discover "how, under what conditions, and for what reasons discourses are constructed, contested and change" (Howarth, 2000:131). A case study approach is suitable

to fulfil these objectives, providing an "ideal vehicle" (Howarth and Torfing, 2005: 330) by locating articulatory practices and placing theory in context.

The thesis adopts poststructuralism as the ontological approach while using the Critical Discourse analysis (CDA) approach for data analysis. Using the poststructuralist concept of *empty signifiers*, I posit that concepts only gain meaning through discourse, thus being produced and reproduced by it. Thus, the two selected salient themes - *power* and *ideology* – are filled with meaning by analysing the newspaper discourse from both countries. By using these techniques, the thesis concerns itself with exploring how the narratives of the selected Russian and American newspapers articulate the identity of the Self and the Other, consequently revealing the political positions presented to their audiences. Using the poststructuralist understanding of meaning and representation being indeterminate and contextual, and the "real" world being "constructed" (Dixon and Jones, 2009: 397), my thesis aims to explore how newspaper "power" works to produce "the truths", including the contexts they appear in.

Six newspapers have been selected for this purpose, including three American newspapers – *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, and three Russian newspapers- *Izvestiya*, *Argumenty Nedeli*, and *Novaya Gazeta*. The newspapers for both countries were deliberately selected in a way that would provide differences in their argued ideological leanings and bias, thus providing a more balanced outlook.

Thus, the main questions of the thesis can therefore be summarised as the following:

Can we describe the recent newspaper American and Russian newspaper rhetoric using Cold War themes? If so, how?

Straughn et al. (2019: 96) argue that if we wish to look at the past influences on current crises, we must explore which past and what history is involved in explaining them. Following this premise, my research question will identify whether and how the Cold War themes manifest themselves in the selected contemporary Russian and American newspaper discourse. Given an increasingly prevalent New Cold War narrative used to describe the conflict among politicians, think tanks, governmental organisations, and international organisations, it is crucial to explore whether newspaper narratives support those ideas, as, given the arguments

provided in the theoretical section, they play a crucial role in identity creation, including country identities. Therefore, newspaper discourse is investigated, with its usage interpreted and contextualised using Critical Discourse Analysis.

The following sub-questions are developed to provide a more specific focus for analysis:

What are the differences and similarities between the Russian and the American newspaper discourse in terms of the ways they describe each other?

The sub-question is aligned with the textual and discursive dimensions of descriptive and interpretive analyses, intending to identify similarities and dissimilarities between the newspaper discourse of the Russian and American sides. This fills a gap in the literature identified in the theoretical section, offering a comparative insight into the New Cold War newspaper rhetoric using themes from the Cold War. As determined, a rich comparative perspective on this topic is lacking in the existing scholarship. In spite of this, the contemporary US-Russia relationship can be characterised by mutual accusations of propaganda, particularly after the Ukraine crisis and the 2016 US presidential election (Chernobov and Briant, 2020). This study would help to determine if newspaper discourse of both sides is using similar tactics when discussing the Other, in particular in terms of using themes reminiscent of the Cold War.

Finally, the last sub-question is the following:

What are the similarities and differences between the discourse of the two chosen time frames?

This question follows the previous research question. Thus, my contribution focuses on not only identifying whether such differences exist but also looking at the nature of these similarities. As known, the relationship between the two countries has been hostile since the 2014 Ukrainian revolution, which was followed by the annexation of Crimea (Polityuk and Zinets, 2020), shocking observers all over the world (Yekelchyk, 2014) and fuelling the argument that 2014 marked the start of the New Cold War (e.g., Tisdall, 2014; Bilocerkowycz, 2022, among many other authors). The conflict was fuelled by Russia seeing Ukraine, a country that has deep cultural, economic, and political bonds with Russia, becoming more closely aligned with Western institutions - the EU and NATO (Masters, 2022). This resulted in Russia

accusing the US of trying to start a coup in Ukraine (Walker, 2022). The US, on the other hand, described Russia's actions in Ukraine as an "incredible act of aggression" (Dunham, 2014).

The 2016-2017 time period arguably marks another distinctive development in the bilateral relationship. Donald Trump, a US presidential candidate who later became the 45th president of the United States, was an openly pro-Russian candidate with the hope of improving the US-Russia relationship. Furthermore, Trump's campaign team was accused of conspiring with Russia to influence the outcome of the US election in Trump's favour. Following that, US intelligence arrived at the conclusion that Russia was behind a negative campaign against Hillary Clinton, the other US presidential candidate, with a state-authorised campaign of cyber-attacks and fake news stories (BBC News, 2019).

This case study raises several curious aspects to consider that served as a motivation to choose the time period as the second case study: Do Trump's candidacy and presidency change reporting in the selected American and Russian newspapers in terms of the tone and description of the Other? In addition, are there differences between the newspapers with contrasting ideological leanings? Do the Cold War themes disappear due to the election of a pro-Russian president?

To answer the questions, my thesis employs the international relations theory of poststructuralism. Poststructuralism is described by Hall (1997: 56) as based on the premise that "discourses produce a place for the subject", thus making them meaningful and effective. Consequently, the presence or absence of the Cold War themes alone would be meaningless as they cannot exist in isolation. It is unpacking their use and their context that makes things meaningful. To this end, I employ the method of Critical Discourse Analysis, revealing the diversity of possible articulations of the subject positions and contextualising the discourse associated with the thematic findings, while also paying particular attention to the notion of antagonistic identities.

As discussed earlier, my study aims to fill a gap in the existing scholarship. The next chapter gives a brief insight into the existing research done on the topic of the New Cold War. Due to being mostly considered a relatively new phenomenon, the New Cold War has not yet been studied as much as other phenomena in international relations, particularly in terms of the discursive aspects of the New Cold War. As explained further in the upcoming section, much

of the existing literature is specifically focused on the 2014 conflict in Ukraine. Nonetheless, the section includes several discourse-focused studies examining the New Cold War.

Chapter 1: Prior research on the New Cold War

Despite the ever-increasing use of the term "New Cold War", as mentioned, there is no consensus on its usage or its starting point. The earliest uses of the term are arguably associated with the scholarship of academics such as David Painter (1999) and Fred Halliday (1989) who use the term "New Cold War" or "Cold War II" to refer to the late stages of the "old" Cold War. In 2008, the term experienced a surge of popularity due to the book published by the journalist Edward Lucas *The New Cold War: How the Kremlin Menaces Both Russia and the West*, which argues that Putin's regime has caused a New Cold War. However, without a doubt, the conflict in Ukraine ignited a fresh debate, with D'Anieri (2019) arguing that "Russia's incursions into Ukraine shattered any remaining illusions about order in post-Cold War Europe".

Before looking into the existing scholarship on the New Cold War, it must be noted that the New Cold War has been mostly examined from a realist perspective. Thus, the New Cold War's media discourse has been clearly understudied, instead focusing on the approach of *realpolitik*. Thus, the first half of the section will give an overview of the conclusions drawn from several past studies before moving on to studies on the New Cold War media discourse.

1.1 What is the New Cold War, does it exist, and what is causing it?

As mentioned, a prominent work in the New Cold War literature is the book by Lucas (2008), which later saw an updated 2014 version to include the events in Ukraine. Lucas presents several arguments[1]: first, the actions of Russia remind of the ones seen in the Soviet era. The author criticises Russia for having authoritarian bureaucratic capitalism supported by its possession of natural resources that is also used to bully other countries. Furthermore, Lucas discusses Russia's oppressive regime, including its secret police and media censorship (that he views as the representatives of the state). Lucas posits that the oppressive Russian state also causes its rulers to see opposition as treachery, applying similar arguments to the state's abuse of civil society. The author concludes that, having realised the nature of the Russian state, the next step should be to give up on the idea that the West can influence or change Russian politics. Instead, Lucas invites the West to get accustomed to the idea of the return to the era

[1] As summarised by the author of the thesis based on the book *The New Cold War: How the Kremlin Menaces both Russia and the West*.

of great power politics. This is strongly emphasised due to the author's conclusion that Russia's aim is to harm the West and its allies. Thus, the Western response should be constructed based on the assumption that Russia wants to split them. Consequently, Lucas encourages the West to beat division and forget temporary disagreements. A key topic discussed by Lucas is also Europe's energy dependency on Russia, with the author positing that national defence must take priority over commercial interests.

Lucas concludes that, similarly to the "old" Cold War, the West is reluctant to fight the New Cold War. However, Lucas sees it as a necessity, emphasising the need for the West and its allies to prepare for the worst-case scenario when dealing with Russia. Finally, Lucas stresses the role of the war of values, encouraging the West to stand by its own values and not give up on them while seeking compromises with Russia.

On the other hand, Kalb, in his 2015 book *Imperial Gamble: Putin, Ukraine, and the New Cold War* blames the conflict on the lack of understanding between the West and Russia, arguing that Putin sees Russia as a global power, while the Western leaders dismiss this idea, assigning Russia the role of a regional force. At the same time, Kalb (2015: 246-247) posits that Putin also struggles to understand the West, being suspicious that it is carrying out a policy of containment similar to the Cold War times and fearing the anti-Russian revolutions in the post-Soviet spaces. Despite recognising Putin's ideas of Russia as a great power, Kalb (2015: 247) speaks of them as dangerous self-delusions and false beliefs that Russia will again rule with absolute authority. Indeed, Kalb (2015: 247-248) speaks of Russia as a "vulnerable third-world country" with an oppressed population and a weak economy that relies heavily on natural resources.

Discussing the Russian leadership, Kalb (2015: 248) notes Putin's conviction that only the authoritarian and ultranationalist regime can protect Russia from external threats. In addition, as argued by the author, Putin holds the belief that only he is able to make sure that Russia remains a strong and respected nation, pushing back the West- Russia's enemy, acting like an "old-fashioned tsar" (ibid: 249).

Finally, Kalb (2015: 263) concludes that there are two ways for the West and its allies to act during this New Cold War which Kalb (ibid) describes as "a dangerous challenge". This, according to the author, should be dependent on the developments in Ukraine. The author

(2015: 268-271) argues that the best approach for the US would be to drop the economic sanctions and cooperate with Russia on issues that Russia and the West can agree on, given that Putin is unlikely to drop his power delusions.

Smith (2020: 76) concludes that the concept of the New Cold War holds little analytical value, noting several differences. First, the author argues that Russia has an insurmountable power deficit in comparison to the US, with the current system leading toward multipolarity rather than bipolarity. Second, Smith (ibid: 77) posits that neither the US nor Russia has "a clear universalist ideology". Third, the author adds that, while nuclear fears have not completely disappeared, the interaction has largely moved to cyberspace, with a cyberwar emerging between the two countries. The Cold War characteristic that, according to Smith, has not ceased to exist, is the psychological dimension of the current conflict, with increased levels of anxiety, paranoia, suspicion, and distrust. Nonetheless, Smith concludes that the current tensions do not have the ideological or technological drivers of the time.

This idea is echoed by Wood (cited in Steele, 2018) who posits that we are not in a New Cold War, given that there is no clash of competing socioeconomic or ideological systems. Russia is not anti-West but rather "a part of the non-west". Similarly to Kalb (2015), Wood diminishes Russia's great power status, basing the argument on Russia's shrinking population, low GDP, and military budget which is only 8 percent of NATO's.

1.2 The 2014 conflict in Ukraine as a key theme in the Cold War: what happened?

A big theme in the New Cold War scholarship, albeit with many authors not using the term directly, is the topic of the 2014 conflict in Ukraine, with few disagreeing with the perspective that the crisis in Ukraine was the most dangerous threat to broader security in many years (D'Anieri, 2019: 253). It must, however, be acknowledged that the concept of the New Cold War has not been *solely* related to the conflict in Ukraine. The 2014 conflict, however, as discussed throughout the thesis, is frequently seen as either the starting point or the escalation point of the New Cold War. As such, it is imperative to examine existing scholarship on this topic. Notably, most existing studies on this issue are of an *explanatory* nature, thus looking into *why* the conflict happened.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, just like the phenomenon of the New Cold War as a whole, the 2014 conflict in Ukraine is also frequently analysed from the realist perspective. Indeed, as argued by Kleinschmidt (2018: 428) in the context of the 2014 events in Ukraine, "realist IR scholars had a field day attributing these actions to foundational realist hypotheses about security competition and the inevitability of great power conflict".

A significant part of the realist scholarship is centred around the idea of Russia being the cause of the conflict, albeit giving different explanations. McFaul (2014) blames the crisis on the changes in Russian internal political dynamics. Such a view is echoed by Charap and Darden (2014). Others (e.g., Mankoff, 2014) explicitly blame it on Russia's expansionist tactics and efforts to dominate the former Soviet Union territories. Similarly, Götz (2016: 228) posits that the annexation of Crimea and Russia's involvement in eastern Ukraine are "the latest signs of Russia's increasingly assertive behavior in the post-Soviet space". Drezner (2002) shares this opinion, asserting that "from 1992 onward, Russia economically coerced its near abroad all the time, which counters the opposing argument that Russia had "no ambitions to reconstitute and expand its sphere of influence".

Nonetheless, other authors see Russia's actions as defensive rather than aggressive. Walt (2014) critiques the arguments of McFaul (2014), arguing that Russia's behaviour must not be seen as a sign of Vladimir Putin's aggression but rather seen through the concepts of "power, interests, and strategy" and as a reaction to the interests and conditions Russia is facing. Expanding on Walt's ideas, Bock et al. (2015: 102) explain the conflict in Ukraine as Russia's reaction to the perceived threats to its interests, using the "balance of threat" theory. The authors (ibid) posit that Russia sees the Western political and military expansion and defence measures taken by NATO allies as "clear, immediate, and vital threats to Russia's national security". Thus, the interpretation of the authors of the Ukraine crisis in 2014 is one of Russia resorting to "balancing against any perceived threat" (ibid). Similarly, Korolev (2017: 97) sees Russia's actions in Ukraine as motivated by the necessity of anti-hegemonic balancing and "attempts to dismantle American unipolarity".

Another author echoing the argument that Russia's actions are motivated by the needed response to the West is Hahn (2018). The author (2018: 221) describes Putin's policies as "reactive and defensive" and a "countermove to mitigate the loss incurred in and the potential threat from Kiev". Furthermore, Hahn (2018: 237) posits that Putin had "solid arguments" for

"Russian intervention in the crisis and especially in Crimea". Similarly, Hahn (2018: 121) justifies the annexation of Crimea, arguing that it is "Russian" due to its "several-hundred-year tradition of being a Russian land".

The arguments by the aforementioned authors are elegantly summarised by D'Anieri (2019), who posits that the argument boils down to Russia fearing that more NATO expansion "brought more and more of Europe into an organization in which Russia had no voice". In addition, D'Anieri argues that Russia never ceased its claims on Ukraine, while the assertion of these interests inevitably seemed threatening to Ukraine and to states further west, such as Poland. Thus, Ukraine and NATO responded by drawing closer together, which grew Russia's sense of insecurity and led to perceiving NATO as a threat.

Indeed, some scholars go even further, suggesting that the West is to be *blamed* for the conflict. For example, John Mearsheimer's famous *Foreign Affairs* article 'Why is the Ukraine Crisis the West's Fault' (2014) challenges the common Western perspective that blames Russia for starting the conflict, arguing that it is in fact the West's fault. Mearsheimer (ibid) specifically mentions NATO expansion and the strategy to attempt to integrate Ukraine into the West as the main culprits. MacFarlane (2016: 354) agrees with Mearsheimer's perspective, arguing that NATO enlargement and the US and NATO policies are the cause of Russia's "return to a territorial and power-political approach to international relations within the former Soviet region". Similarly, Tsygankov (2015: 279) posits that the 2014 conflict in Ukraine was largely caused by the West's "lack of recognition for Russia's values and interests in Eurasia" and the "critically important role that Ukraine played in the Kremlin's foreign policy calculations".

Curiously, critiquing and reflecting on the arguments of other scholars, Kleinschmidt (2018: 437) offers a different perspective. The author recommends interpreting the events in Ukraine by considering that the evolution of the Russian political system created a course unlike the standard model of "Western modernity underlying world society theory". Furthermore, Kleinschmidt (ibid) posits that, due to its past political developments, the political system in Russia became "driven by a power-money nexus that, with the energy commodities boom of the 2000s, did appear as a successful, resurging great power". Nonetheless, it became increasingly dependent on using different energy prices to regulate the behaviour of both domestic and foreign groups and organisations, leading to "economic securitisation". As a result, when economic growth declined - already before the Euromaidan - the Russian political

system was struggling to keep the mechanism previously used to keep its established social structures. Thus, the author (2018: 440) posits that the conflict may serve the aim of maintaining the identity-driven cohesion of elites that were on the verge of turning against each other. Furthermore, Kleinschmidt does not neglect the ideological aspect of the conflict, as manifested by the conflict between Russia as a traditional state and Western liberalism, arguing that it was useful for "fixing social identities".

Therefore, as argued by Kleinschmidt (2018: 440) the conflict with both NATO and Ukraine presented the opportunity to legitimise economic underperformance by creating two enemies based on the previous conflicts. Consequently, the focus of the state's strength shifted from economic stability or social equity to defending the state against an effectively constructed external threat. Referring to a study by Keen (2000), Kleinschmidt (2018: 440) posits that war can be used as a way to create the right environment for pursuing the aims that exist in peacetime. In this case, the aim is determined to be the stability of the Russian regime.

Following that, the author concludes that the conflict in Ukraine "predictably led to strong symbolic antagonisms as well as to actual structural exclusions of Russian elites from the global financial systems. They were thus reduced to their role(s) within the aforementioned power-money nexus and devoid of any power alternatives". Lastly, Kleinschmidt (2018: 440-441) concludes that armed force was not used in a way that would "overturn the polarity of the international system", with the conflict never escalating to "the degree of actual strategic relevance that could be captured by the terminology of offensive realism".

While Kleinschmidt's (2018) study provides several interesting arguments, the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine in 2022 has arguably given additional credibility to realist theories. As argued by Callaway (2022) realism provides direct explanations for Russia's motivations in Ukraine, seeing the developments in Ukraine according to the premise that nations "seek power over rival states with the intent of becoming regional hegemons". As such, power maximisation is seen as a logical move that supports Russia's national interests in a similar way to the interests of Soviet and Tsarist leaders in the past.

Nonetheless, despite numerous authors favouring the realist perspective, others see the conflict through the constructivist lens. For example, a study by Ketenci and Nas (2021) examines the conflict in Ukraine through the prism of identity. The authors identify several key factors that

are believed to be the root of Russia's politics in Ukraine in the context of the 2014 conflict. Specifically, the study names Russia's Slavic/Orthodox and Imperialist/Great Power identities. The Slavic and Orthodox identity of Russia is argued to be related to the concept of the Slavic world, which has shaped the Russian national identity over the last three centuries. In the 21st century, the concept of the "Slavic world" was recreated again and employed to support the geopolitical claims of Russia on building special relations with Ukraine and Belarus, which thus supported and strengthened Russia's ideology (Ketenci and Nas, 2021: 63).

The Orthodox identity factor, also existing in other post-Soviet countries, is central to the special relationship claim. An argument is put forward, particularly supported by the Russian Orthodox Church, that the mentioned states must act in solidarity due to sharing the same Slavic roots. Furthermore, the Russian Patriarchate positions itself against Latin Christianity and "protects" the interests of Orthodoxy geopolitically. Following this position, the Moscow Patriarchate states that it "undertakes the task of Russian unification in the post-Soviet countries" (Ketenci and Nas, 2021: 64). This identity aspect is seen as a crucial part of the Russian national identity and as "the great success of the Orthodox geopolitics", with Russia wanting to make sure of the continuation of its influence in other post-Soviet countries (ibid).

Additionally, the authors (2021: 65) posit that Russia is concerned about the efforts of the Roman Catholic Church to increase its influence in Ukraine due to it being considered a strategy based "on Ukraine's move away from Russia" while "getting closer to the economic and political goals of the West". Thus, Ketenci and Nas (2021: 66) conclude that during the conflict in Ukraine in 2014, the Russian Orthodox church supported and praised the concept of the "Russian World" to justify Russia's military, religious and political arguments in Ukraine.

Finally, Ketenci and Nas (2021: 67) refer to the Imperialist/Great Power identity to Russia's imperial past. More specifically, the authors present an argument that Russia was an empire state with multiple identities since its foundation. Ketenci and Nas (ibid) point out two important dates of Russia's disintegration taking place: 1917 and 1991, with the border regions separated from the main region of Russia, and new states being established. While Crimea was transferred to Ukraine in 1954, the authors (ibid: 67-68) posit that the change "for imperial perceptions in the mental codes is difficult. It takes a very long time spanning centuries to experience any change". Consequently, after the Cold War, one of the biggest disappointments

and geopolitical losses for Russia was the loss of Ukraine which also signified the rejection of Russia's imperial identity.

The Great Power or superpower identity aspect is related to the premise that, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia made a big effort to increase its influence and power internationally. Based on this, the authors (2021: 69) conclude that, since Russians have historically assigned themselves the role of being an influential global power, the Russian Federation continues to have this view and the great power strategy has not ceased to exist.

Notably, while Ketenci and Nas (2021) emphasise different elements of identity, the identity itself seems to feature elements of realist thought. Zverev (2015) discusses this, arguing that the conflict in Ukraine is a mixture of realism and constructivism, featuring elements of both. The author (ibid: 11) argues that, according to the neorealist ideas, the national interests of Russia were not considered by the West which led to Russia trying to rebalance the system of international relations. As such, the only way to resolve the conflict is seen as the renegotiation of the system in order to "develop a new world order". In contrast, constructivists argue that the conflict has its roots in fears, mistrust and values, with the Russian elite suspecting and blaming the Western politicians for causing the revolution in Ukraine and attempting to undermine the political regime in Russia. At the same time, Western politicians are criticising Russia for its lack of democracy. Zverev (ibid) argues that neither approach alone can successfully explain the conflict in Ukraine, with both of them being useful for policymakers to "understand the counterpart's logic".

Rigby (2018) offers a similar view, arguing that while realism has been the dominant approach for analysing Russian foreign policy in recent times, it can at times appear lacking in convincing power. Similarly, constructivism provides some explanation for Russia's motivation but also appears lacking in convincing power alone. Thus, Rigby offers that the realist-constructivist approach could be used to bridge the gap between traditional perceptions of power and cultural determinants. The main argument, as outlined by the author, is that some of the core ideas of realism must have a constructivist base, for instance, in order to define the "Us" and "Them" in global politics and to determine with whom one is competing for power and influence. Finally, Rigby (2018: 52) concludes that scholars must make sure to look into the conflict from the Russian and its foreign policy perspective.

Another study emphasising the role of domestic developments is offered by Motyl (2015: 77) who argues that "the important dichotomy is not between realism and idealism but between the theory of realism and the empirical knowledge generated by Ukraine studies". The study names three reasons why realism is not suitable for explaining the 2014 conflict in Ukraine. First, while realists posit that the war is between two countries, attention must be paid to domestic developments in both Russia and Ukraine. More specifically, the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan are used as examples of domestic uprisings that "had nothing to do with the West". Second, the author lists the developments in Russia associated with Putin's leadership- the dismantling of democratic institutions and civil liberties, taking control of the media and economy, bringing back neo-imperial rhetoric and plans, and initiating a cult of personality, thus leaping "toward authoritarianism, empire building, and possibly even fascism".

Furthermore, Motyl (2015: 77-78) criticises realism for not acknowledging the role of ideology, culture, and norms. The author emphasises Putin's neo-imperial ideology, determination to "make Russia great again", the belief that Ukraine is an artificial state, and a hegemonic approach to Russia's near abroad. Additionally, Motyl (2015: 78) challenges the realist assumption that states or their leaders always act rationally, given the actions of Yanukovych that seemed to "undermine his own power" and Putin's obsession with making Russia stronger, although it is unclear how "how annexing Crimea made Russia stronger".

Finally, Motyl (2015: 78-82) challenges realism's ignorance about Ukraine, arguing that the ignorance is caused by accepting the narratives of Russia. Motyl (ibid) particularly emphasises Mearsheimer's (2014) famous work 'Why is the Ukraine Crisis the West's Fault', criticising Mearsheimer's statement (cited in Motyl, 2015: 81) that "the EU's expansion eastward and the West's backing of the pro-democracy movement in Ukraine - beginning with the Orange Revolution in 2004 - were critical elements" in causing the conflict in Ukraine. The author points out that Western support has been inconsistent and speculations about NATO actions in Ukraine have no ground due to Ukraine not being a NATO member.

1.3 Prior research on the New Cold War discourse

A few studies that explore the use of the New Cold War in media can be identified. The issue of the New Cold War exploring its use in media is carried out by Straugh et al. (2019). The study explores the frequency of the use of the term "New Cold War" in selected American, German, and Russian newspapers: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Kommersant*, *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* between 2005 and 2015. The frequencies were observed by entering the phrase "New Cold War" in the online archive search in each of the respective newspapers. The study concludes that "the periodic resurgence of the New Cold War analogy coincides with period events involving renewed conflict between the Cold War superpowers or their perceived successors" (Straugh et al., 2019: 115).

While analysing the term's re-emergence in the first ten years of the new millennium, the authors discovered a dual-peak pattern that coincided with Russian interventions in the Near Abroad around 2008 and 2014 that "proved transnationally robust". Thus, the authors conclude that political events and developments are likely to produce effects that increase the use of the term New Cold War among authors and the public alike (Straugh et al., 2019: 109). Nonetheless, one must note that the study did not include the content analysis of the newspaper articles. Rather, it looked at the frequencies and then used literature that corresponded to the periods of the peaks in search results. That way, the authors aimed to find plausible explanations for why the term's frequency varies over time.

A very interesting study in the context of the US media discourse is done by Tsygankov (2019). While not having a specific focus on the New Cold War discourse, Tsygankov (2019) discusses the portrayal of Russia mainstream US newspapers and other media sources, identifying five media narratives ("transition to democracy", "chaos", "neo-Soviet autocracy", "foreign enemy", and "collusion") involving Russia since the Cold War's end and examining them through a framework of three inter-related factors: historic and cultural differences between the two countries, inter-state competition, and polarising domestic politics. The author concludes that Americans' negative views toward Russia are caused by their suspicion and are further strengthened by a biased media that regularly takes advantage of such negativity.

More specifically, Tsygankov (2019: 56) posits that the US media coverage of Russia reflects American disappointment with Russia's failed transition to a Western-style system. Being used to the rhetoric of democratic transition, the media were not capable of using new language to describe Russian affairs, which soon caused them to turn to the familiar Cold War narrative of (neo-)Soviet autocracy and foreign threat. Two key contributing factors to the consolidation of this narrative, as named by Tsygankov (ibid), were increasing tensions between Russia and the West, and Russia's own strengthened state control and increasingly assertive foreign policy.

Finally, Tsygankov (2019: 99) concludes that the US media confirms prior academic conclusions about the media's importance in creating a nation's political and cultural identity. More specifically, the US media is likely to use one-sided interpretations of complex processes, exploit misleading historical analogies, and ignore areas that do not fit their favoured narratives of the Other. Furthermore, Tsygankov (ibid) posits that the US narrative about a threatening neo-Soviet autocracy has been instrumental in confirming the image of the US as the leader of the "free world" abroad. According to Tsygankov, this narrative appeals to the American public partly because old Cold War views have not ceased to exist and have not been replaced by a different understanding of new realities (ibid).

Another study that includes media sources from several countries, albeit being of less relevance to the thesis' focus, is done by Szostok et.al. (2016) who look at the media diplomacy and the coverage of the Ukrainian conflict in German, Polish, and Russian magazines (*Profil*, *Russkij Reporter, Polityka*, *Newsweek, Der Spiegel* and *Focus* (ibid: 160), focusing on interpretative frames that have been used to "identify responsibility for the development of the Ukraine conflict and to assess the validity of the political action taken by those governments". To achieve this, the authors looked at 400 articles from mid-February to the end of May 2014. The results of the study suggested that the magazines in Germany and Russia "did not overtly act with the ruling elite to manufacture consent". Meanwhile, the magazines in Poland "manufactured consent in which the journalists reproduced opinions expressed by the society rather than the ruling elite". Finally, an interesting finding was that 62 percent of the *Russkij Reporter* articles provided no evaluation of Russia's involvement in Ukraine (Szostok et al., 2016: 156-165).

A study exploring the discourse of the Ukrainian conflict in Russian and Ukrainian television in 2014 is done by Semykina (2021). The author used Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory

as her theoretical framework. The analysis explored reports devoted to events in Crimea on a Russian TV channel Channel 1 and a Ukrainian TV channel Inter, which were broadcast from 28.02.2014 to 16.03.2014. In total, 390 news reports were analysed. The results of the study indicated that the Russian channel's discourse emphasised decision-making processes in Crimea, Crimean residents and the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine, as well as Ukraine's relations with the West. Ukrainian channel's discourse stressed the military action in Crimea and Russia's involvement in the events in the region. The research concludes that both sides' interpretations used hegemonic discursive constructions, with anti-Westernism used for the Russian discourse, and "Russia as a potential enemy" used for the Ukrainian discourse.

As apparent, there still remains a scarcity of studies dedicated to comprehensively investigating the New Cold War phenomenon. The limited research can be attributed to its relatively recent emergence, with it gaining prominence mostly following the annexation of Crimea. Moreover, a noteworthy observation is the dearth of comparative studies that systematically analyse the newspaper discourse between the US and Russia, with a particular focus on how Cold War elements are embedded within such discourse. Hence, the primary objective of my study is to address this literature gap and contribute to a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

1.4 Cold War

To properly use the concept of the Cold War, one must first look at its definition, main characteristics, and its origins. The notion of the "Cold War", which originated soon after the ending of the Second World War in 1946, emerged as a commonly used political term in 1947 and has been used globally ever since. Despite being a distinct term used to characterise four decades of confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union, the term did not disappear with the end of the rivalry between the two, instead frequently being used to characterise other similar global national phenomena because of its rich global political meaning and reflection of new international relations in the nuclear era (Li, 2020: 87).

In terms of its characteristics, the Cold War is an opposite concept to a "hot war", while also not involving complete peace. A Cold War possesses three important features: first, there have to be two well-matched powers in the global system as it is hard for unbalanced powers or more than two powers to induce a Cold War. Second, the two major powers have to generally be competitors, not partners. In particular, the competitive relationship has to be "reflected in diplomatic confrontation through alliances, mutual military deterrence and arms races, economic closure and isolation, and ideological attacks". Third, it must not involve a direct military conflict between the two conflicting powers. A regular form of conflict in a Cold War is a proxy war, which is the dominant type of competition between the conflicting powers. These three basic features make up the main characteristics of the global system amid the US–Soviet conflict (Li, 2020: 87).

Despite the fact that the exact origins of the term "Cold War" are a subject of debate, the term seems to have materialised shortly after World War II. In recent times, the Cold War is conventionally believed to have lasted from the end of World War II to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The expression "Cold War" has come to be associated with the prevalence of a bipolar global system that was divided between two hegemons being at risk of open war. Therefore, as explained in the previous paragraph, the "Cold" part of the term makes a reference to the fact that the US and the Soviet Union were not involved in direct, traditional warfare, but were instead engaged in a "frozen conflict" that could not be perceived as peace. The Cold War was seen as becoming more intense after the Soviet Union acquired the atomic bomb and achieved nuclear equivalence with the US in 1949 (Richardson, cited in Straughn

et al., 2019: 106), with the nuclear tensions reaching their peak during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. In the following decades, the risk of nuclear war, geopolitical competition, and ideological differences were the key features associated with the period (Scheibach, 2009; Walker, 2011, cited in Straughn et al., 2019: 106).

There were a number of reasons behind the start of the Cold War. First, there was an increasing US–Soviet strategic distrust, with both countries having heavy destructive military forces. Strategic mistrust was a type of political sentiment that was inclined to arise once their common enemy disappeared. This tendency followed the general law of political science because the fear caused by security pressure is likely to cause sensitivity and suspicion. The power of the two nations caused new fear after the defeat of the common enemy, Germany. Truman, the US president at the time, and Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union, lost the determination and patience to keep communicating with each other. As a consequence, the separation of the decision-makers from both superpowers contributed to mutual distrust (Li, 2020: 87).

Furthermore, the ideological attacks of the two sides increased the US–Soviet distrust, with a clear ideological rivalry between the two superpowers. Indeed, the Cold War started mostly with ideological attacks, with each side viewing the other as an enemy. In 1946, Stalin stressed Lenin's theory of capitalism and the unavoidable nature of war at the Supreme Soviet conference, which caused major worries in the Western world. Thus, a few days later, George Kennan sent back the renowned "X Report", emphasising the ideological threat from the Soviet Union. Briefly after, McCarthyism rose in the US, with the strong ideological conflict worsening due to the confrontation between the two powers. As a result, the ideological conflict between capitalism and Communism constituted an important part of the Cold War (Li, 2020: 87).

Another aspect of the Cold War, caused by strategic and ideological distrust, was the adoption of closed and exclusive economic policies that stopped the US and the Soviet Union from pursuing mutually beneficial interests. As a consequence, the Soviet Union developed a negative attitude regarding its participation in the post-war reconstruction of the world economic order, refusing to join the Marshall Plan, the IMF, and the World Bank. In addition, the US developed economic sanctions against communist countries. As a result of those actions, two separate markets emerged, with the global economic system artificially divided. Those events further damaged social contact between the two sides (Li, 2020: 88-89).

In addition, the development of organisations further expanded the scale of the Cold War. The US started the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), while the Soviet Union established the Warsaw Treaty Organization in return. This caused the alliance members to submit to the needs of the conflict consciously or unconsciously by taking sides in several areas - politics, economics, and ideology. Any member aiming to change this antagonistic group structure faced major risks. Moreover, third parties, especially allies of each side, frequently further provoked a strategic confrontation between the two sides. Despite the two powers being unquestionably the dominant players during the escalation of the Cold War, third parties still contributed to the destruction of the fragile balance between the two (Li, 2020: 89).

While this section gives an insight into the phenomenon of the Cold War, it can naturally not be reduced to these arguments, with scholars debating its aspects and reasons up to this day. Rather, familiarising oneself with the historical nature of the phenomenon was necessary to continue the discussion on its ideological and rhetorical nature, which will be the subjects of the following sections.

1.5 Cold War: the ideological background

As argued by Garthoff (1998: 60-61), "the real record of the Cold War has still to be compiled". The sharply divided accounts of events on both sides not only differed over responsibility for increasing hostility, but over the facts. Even the identification of relevant events was conflicting or disputed. Progressively, the logic of the struggle led to paying attention only to actions of the Other that were hostile (or at least portrayed as hostile), while not recognising that many of those actions on both sides were responses to actions taken earlier by the Other. This approach helped both sides to demonise the Other and see oneself as being right. Consequently, this led to simplified black-versus-white categories and exaggeration.

Thus, the conflict provided each side with grounds not only to confirm its own perceptions that it was right but also to have suspicions and fears of the Other. This not only caused the creation of vicious propaganda and public perceptions but also affected and sometimes dominated the

judgements and beliefs of the political leaders. This was the most dangerous aspect of the process of mutual prejudgement and projection of blame (Garthoff, 1998: 61).

In addition, there was an underlying ideological concept that formed the essential foundation for the whole Cold War - the Marxist-Leninist notion of world-class struggle as an objective phenomenon, causing an inevitable unavoidable international geopolitical conflict. The fact that Marxist-Leninist views inhibited Soviet thinking and policy was recognised by Western leaders, who continuously emphasised that the ideology of Communism was its enemy. However, what was not reflected upon was that Communism also determined the Western policy of anti-Communism. Containment of Soviet and communist expansion was seen as important because Communism was perceived as the driving force behind the leaders of the Soviet Union (Garthoff, 1998: 62).

Thus, the shared ideological worldview of Communism/anti-Communism, causing an unavoidable contest, was the distinguishing feature of the Cold War. In the Western perception, the Cold War was a zero-sum game in which the gains of one side were unquestionably seen as losses to the other, preventing any compromise, reconciliation, and conflict settlement. In Marxist-Leninist terms, the essence of the conflict can be illustrated with the question *Who will prevail over whom?* In other words, the communist view posited that the ultimate aim and result would be not an equilibrium balance, but the win for the side that prevailed when "the correlation ultimately tipped decisively" (Garthoff, 1998: 62).

Thus, the leaders on both sides foresaw and tried to counter the efforts of the other side, believing that the enemy was determined to carry the struggle to the end. In addition, leaders on both sides had ideologies that predicted and sought to further the global hegemony of their own ideology. Despite the fact that the Marxist-Leninist ideology was most explicit, the American-led counter-communist ideology was not motivated only by the containment of Communism. There was a strong belief in "making the world safe for democracy" and beliefs that democracy excludes any place for an ideology that opposes pluralism, human rights, and other characteristics of a "world community" (Garthoff, 1998: 62-63).

1.6 Media in the time of the Cold War

Given the focus of the thesis on the Cold War themes in contemporary American and Russian newspapers, it was deemed necessary to give an insight into the role of media in the Cold War. In particular, this section will explain how the media on both sides of the ideological division created, contributed, and maintained political and cultural antagonism. In the case of the Cold War, the media's role in the creation, contribution, and maintenance of Cold War antagonism must not be downplayed, given their role in popular opinion formation that largely echoed the stances of the respective political leaders. Indeed, the Cold War was partly caused by mass media in both states constructing and disseminating the narratives that shaped the states' identities (Carruthers, 2011, cited in Stafford, 2013).

To understand the media's role in the creation and maintenance of Cold War antagonism, one must first look at the media in the appropriate historical context. At the time, the media mostly consisted of, print, film, radio, and TV. This is important to consider due to broadcasting requiring large amounts of funding and centralised media being extremely susceptible to state control. During the Cold War, the predominant medium evolved from radio and print into television (Bernhard, 1999, cited in Stafford, 2013).

Indeed, in the context of the US, network television and the Cold War were "two behemoths" that shaped America's political life in the second half of the twentieth century (Bernhard, 2010: 1). The media adopted the government policies and the politicisation of its content started almost straight after with the beginning of the Cold War. This is apparent with the early Cold War television reports that were frequently scripted and often created by the defence establishment (Bernhard, cited in Stafford, 2013). Television news illustrated the Communist threat to the American way of life by using ideas of capitalism. In the first five years of network news reporting, Americans learned about "the Marshall Plan, the Berlin Airlift, the Communist revolution in China, the explosion of the first Soviet atomic bomb, the conviction of Alger Hiss, the Korean War, and the Senate hearings on subversion conducted by Joseph McCarthy from their Farnsworth, RCA, or DuMont television sets". In addition, the news coverage included learning about the threats of the new nuclear age (Bernhard, 2010: 1).

Consequently, television became a symbol of and a channel for spreading the West's position in the Cold War. In its fight against Communism, the US emphasised the value of the freedom

of information - in thinking, speaking, writing, publishing, and broadcasting, arguing that it should be protected from totalitarian lies. Despite this belief in the superiority of a capitalist model of society, the global military threat created by Communism seemed to threaten the freedom guaranteed by American democracy. Thus, the national security state established offices, bureaus, and services aimed to control the flow of information both internationally and nationally to make sure that it would serve in the fight against Communism (Bernhard, 2010: 2). The support of media was crucial for the manufacturing of public support for government actions (Doherty, cited in Stafford, 2013).

In addition, media coverage raised domestic fears of imminent destruction. "The Red Scare" campaigns of the Western media were used in all media sources. The use of print media included easily decodable and emotional images that helped to reinforce the national identity of "virtuous and patriotic America fighting against a dangerous and destructive socialist east". The media spread extreme propagandist slogans such as "Better Dead than Red!", which created fear of Communism and nuclear war. It worked to crush any domestic sympathy for the enemy or refusal to accept conflict that often occurs during war. It was a deliberate decision to continue public antagonism towards the enemy and dismissal of their political and economic policies. With this goal in mind, media expanded the propaganda to each aspect of Western life, including radio, film, television, and print to even educational establishments. The film "Red Nightmare" became a part of the standard curriculum and served as evidence of the media creating state-sanctioned indoctrination of the general public. This act of media manipulation to create mass fear and paranoia cannot be undervalued due to the deliberate effort to influence the people to accept the dominant agenda. It also helped to enforce the polarisation of cultural and political dissimilarities (Mikkonen, cited in Stafford, 2013).

At the same time, the Soviet Union experienced its own media developments. As a contemporary observer pointed out, "The growth of radio and television during the years since Stalin died can best be described as a communications explosion" (Hollander, cited in Lovell, 2017: 355). Newspaper circulations increased, and a significant number of new journals and magazines were created. However, the most noticeable feature was the use of television for propaganda purposes. Transmission capacity increased from three stations in 1952 to almost 300 in 1971, with it becoming the most important propaganda weapon (Lovell, 2017: 356). The media aimed to create an illusory image of the Soviet Union as a social utopia where all economic problems were being resolved, where culture was allowed to flourish, where freedom

and justice triumphed, and where everyone was content. To achieve this, the Soviet press and the media organisations it was in charge of in Europe persistently attacked the West. The West was presented as economically and socially unstable, and, according to the Soviet media, this instability was the cause of a growing fascist movement. Communist propaganda was not created in order to engage in a debate; instead, it was meant to make the governments support the Soviet viewpoint. These media propaganda attacks were designed to weaken capitalist or social-democratic countries in every way possible (Schwartz, 2009: 209-210).

As such, we note that, while the Western media defended Western economic and military interests, the state-censored Soviet media was equally prepared to defend theirs. Consequently, all media were successful in producing public backing for their government's actions against the foreign enemy. Thus, the Western governments and the Soviet Union could have not created or maintained enough public support for the long conflict without the media's contribution (Doherty, cited in Stafford, 2013), with media propaganda techniques having been employed as a direct weapon against the enemy (Chisem, cited in Stafford, 2013).

Notably, the two enemies aimed to spread their ideas beyond their borders. This was accomplished by spreading US propaganda into the Soviet Union, using the radio to disseminate pro-capitalist positions to the Soviet population and create a more Western-friendly culture. Similarly, the Soviet media also used the radio in its own states and other countries as a way to spread propaganda. Due to the Soviet media being state-censored, it aimed to legitimise its appearance by hiding its production origins. The Soviet Union possessed many "international" radio stations that were actually based in the Soviet Republic (Chisem, cited in Stafford, 2013).

Thus, it is evident that the media strategies of both sides largely mirrored each other. This invites the question of whether they were part of a larger phenomenon. Zelizer (2018: 19-22) aims to answer this question by describing the media actions in the Cold War using the term "enmity". The author defines enmity as an "instrument in political discourse, used by political leaders to articulate who they are by defining what they are not". This subsequently leads to distrust, polarisation, negative thinking and stereotyping, aggression, deindividualisation, and demonisation (Spillmann and Spillmann, cited in Zelizer, 2018: 22). Central to these ideas are the ideas of "Us" and "Them", also known as Othering (Finlay et al., cited in Zelizer, 2018: 22). Zelizer (2018: 22-23) posits that such ideas used in journalism were the real drivers of the

Cold War, creating a mindset that existed for five decades. Created largely in media discourse, it is argued to be "more an idea than war". These ideas offered cues on what constituted an enemy, to recognise its presence, and how to minimise its threat, which involved a very particular kind of journalism in the Cold War's early years. Much of the journalism concerns itself with "establishing and disseminating enmity" that presented the two antagonists as polarised, mirror opposites of each other (Zelizer, 2018: 22).

Consequently, many Cold War journalists relied less on facts and more on "how the world was to operate", working to sustain the binary between Us and Them. Political and economic pressures motivated journalists to follow the narrative and downplay the problematic aspects of the conflict (Adler, 1991: 43). The created enmity affected the media's objectivity, neutrality, impartiality, and balance. For example, broadcaster Eric Sevareid criticised his coworkers for their "flat, one-dimensional handling of the news" (Zelizer, 2018: 24). Nonetheless, such developments made journalism central in reinforcing the ideology of the Cold War, with journalists becoming irreplaceable navigators of the Cold War enmity (ibid: 24).

Summarising these arguments, we observe that the media of both sides were involved in the war of ideologies. Indeed, as argued by Meyen et al. (2019), "There was no important Eastern or Western message that could be explained outside the Cold War frame of reference". Both ideologies involved media framing - what Somerville (2016) defines as ways of placing stories into contexts that allow the audience to know how to interpret them based on their existing knowledge and values. Thus, the Cold War as a discursive phenomenon can largely be described in terms of being a broad frame into which stories of conflict were fitted to allow the media to tell a story in an established form of discourse (ibid). Here, it is important to echo the statement of Stafford (2013) – it was the media that served as the Cold War's protagonist in cultivating and maintaining enmity.

Given these considerations, the next section inspects the Cold War as rhetoric. As argued by Graebner (2000: 1), the Cold War was fundamentally "a rhetorical exercise". This invites the question of how rhetoric was formed. In this thesis, the Cold War discourse is defined as describing events and issues in a way that contextualises them, using references, metaphors and associations. It is crucial to look at the role of the Cold War discourse in the New Cold

War news media narratives because of their influence on the public understanding of the world and the roles that different actors play in global politics.

1.7 The rhetoric of the Cold War

The Cold War rhetoric is crucial to our understanding of this phenomenon (Scott, 1997: 9). Medhurst (1997: 11) argues that rhetoric was not something "added" to the real issues of the Cold War. Quite the contrary, rhetoric *was* the issue, being the central concept of the Cold War that required serious attention. The Cold War was in its nature a rhetorical war, "fought with words, speeches, pamphlets and public information (or disinformation) campaigns, slogans, gestures, symbolic actions". The author further emphasises that what one sees as reality is bound to be connected to rhetoric as one cannot leave reality "voiceless" (ibid: 19). Medhurst (ibid: 33) sees the Cold War discourse as one that is deliberately designed to achieve particular goals, with the weapons being words, images, symbolic actions, and, on occasion, physical actions.

Similarly, Ivie (1997: 97) acknowledges the role of discourse, looking at the role of metaphor in the American Cold War rhetoric. To provide an illustration, the author gives examples of terms like "mortal threat to freedom", "a germ infecting the body politic", "a plague upon the liberty of humankind", and "a barbarian intent upon destroying civilization". Furthermore, freedom is portrayed as "weak", "fragile", and "feminine" vulnerable to disease and rape. Thus, the cost of freedom is high because the alternatives are metaphorically characterised as "enslavement and death". Additionally, images of freedom's vulnerability are linked to visions of the enemy's savagery, thereby encouraging the Mutual Assured Destruction logic as a response to "a barbarian who only understands and respects force". The use of such motives is common, with several recurring motives in the Cold War rhetoric. For example, the metaphor of savagery plays a central role in creating the image of a hostile and threatening enemy. Various terms portray the enemy as irrational, coercive, and aggressive, with those ideas present on both sides of the conflict (Ivie, 1997: 98).

To provide an example, Ronald Reagan and other people who were in positions of power normally used a variety of decivilising terms that compare the enemy with things like floods, tides, cold winds, and fire. In addition, they speak of the Soviets as "snakes, wolves, and other kinds of dangerous predators, and as if they were primitives, brutes, barbarians, mindless

machines, criminals, lunatics, fanatics, and the enemies of God" (Ivie, 1997: 100). In contrast, the US liberty was described as "a flickering flame" and "defenceless quarry set upon by relentless predators" (ibid: 103).

No doubt, the aforementioned arguments present strong images that have affected the past relationship between the US and the Soviet Union and continue to be used in the field of international relations. The fact that the images of both sides were promoted by both the people in power and the media invites the question if such ingrained perceptions can ever be reshaped. An interesting study tackling this issue is done by Jackson (2006) who discusses the transformational power of rhetoric. The author inspects the role of public rhetoric in producing a dramatic transformation in the relationship between Germany and the US who went from enemies to allies within the time period of ten years. More specifically, Jackson (2006: 242) argues that, after 1945, both West German and American political leaders used public rhetoric to argue that West Germany and the United States belonged to a single, coherent, meaningful entity known as the Western civilisation. Furthermore, policymakers in both countries repeatedly mentioned that the shared heritage faced a common threat in the form of the Soviet Union. Consequently, political leaders created cooperative policy initiatives, including the Marshall Plan and the grant of sovereignty to the West German state as a member of NATO, both of which were perceived as required measures to protect a shared civilisation.

Thus, emphasising the role of public rhetoric, Jackson (2006: 31) posits that it played the decisive role "not ... by modifying the subjective content of anyone's head" but rather by creating "the public discursive space in favor of one or another course of action". What historical actors really believed, as argued by Jackson, was "not relevant to the causal process". Finally, especially given the context of this thesis, another key argument by Jackson must be highlighted. More specifically, Jackson (2006: 244) argues that the West itself was a social construction regarding the attributes it is thought to have, the boundaries it is believed to possess, and even its very existence as a transnational community. Thus, the author (2006: 242) defines the West as a "causal story", arguing that it was a "story" related to particular sets of policies and organisations and their rhetorical strategies that "established them as socially and politically plausible during a particular period of time".

The research by Jackson (2006) illustrates two key points. First, discourse is crucial for image formation and change. Second, discourse is intentionally created and publicly spread by figures

of power, thus naturalising it to the general population. As known, the Cold War discourse was intentionally constructed to achieve particular aims with one or more specific audiences. In the Cold War, weapons used were words, images, symbolic actions, and, on occasion, physical actions. The Cold War was mostly a matter of symbolic action; action made to achieve strategic, social, political, economic, military, and diplomatic goals (Scott, 1997: 9). Therefore, the Cold War rhetoric was strategic in its essence (Medhurst, 1997: 19-20). Indeed, when studying its origins, one's attention is immediately drawn to public statements: Stalin's February Election address, Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech, Truman's speech in March 1947, Marshall's commencement address, and others (Hinds and Windt, 1991: 1).

Thus, rhetoric was used to justify policies, while forming perceptions, opinions, attitudes, and policies, and affecting the way people lived (Hinds and Windt, 1991: 6). The ideas described in the Cold War rhetoric spread fast, and their critics were dismissed. The rhetoric of the Cold War created a new political reality, which in turn created a new world order. This new reality was so powerful that it paralysed political thinking, instead encouraging to interpret the events using the rhetoric of war: "victory and defeat, good and evil, utopia and anti-utopia, black and white" (Hinds and Windt, 1991: 250). Thus, with both sides of the conflict using rhetoric for those purposes, the following sections will first look at the Cold War rhetoric in the US, followed by the Cold War rhetoric in the Soviet Union.

1.8 The Cold War rhetoric in the US

As noted, the Cold War rhetoric in the US was largely connected to news media. Mainstream news media played a big role in the creation of the hegemonic discourse of the Cold War. As a matter of fact, the term "Cold War" was initially popularised to the general public by journalists. Partly due to this, the Cold War as a rhetorical construction and the associated metaphors defined international affairs for a significant time period of the 20th century. As argued by the then-Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger in 1989, the Cold War, for all its risks, "was characterized by a remarkably stable and predictable set of relationships among the great powers" (cited in Grunwald, 1993: 14). The Cold War discourse was similarly convenient for the news media. As argued by Utley (1997: 5), in the US, "journalists quickly discovered that they could sell their editors – because their editors could sell the public – almost any story pegged to a Soviet or communist threat, from crises in Berlin to Vietnam to Angola."

This resulted into further legitimisation of the Cold War rhetoric in global politics. Indeed, as noted by Aronson (1970: 288), "the press helped to lead the nation into accepting a quarter century of the Cold War, with the awfulness that ensued."

Evidently, in the US, the Cold War was constructed from political discourse and arguments used by the media. Nonetheless, no single rhetorical statement started the Cold War. On the Western side, the Cold War was a process that began in 1946. Winston Churchill divided the world into two hostile camps via his famous metaphor of an "iron curtain". Subsequently, Harry Truman, the 33rd president of the United States, used that division and elaborated on the statements by claiming that the US and the Soviet Union were involved in an ideological battle between two diametrically opposed ways of life. Truman argued that the United States must protect its way of life globally. The political rhetoric of anticommunism was an exaggerated rhetoric in which the US was engaged in a battle with "political devils". The Marshall Plan used the same ideological perception of the moral and altruistic American nature. In addition, George F. Kennan's "long telegram" convinced the US administration and leading opinion makers that the Soviet Union was driven by evil intentions (Hinds and Windt, 1991: 247-249).

Thus, since the administration believed that it was battling an ideological enemy, it created its own ideological discourse. It was believed that only an equally powerful counter-ideology could compete in the ideological challenge with the Soviet Union. Therefore, anti-communism became the ideological purpose of the US. By 1947, the anticommunism rhetoric was accepted as a political reality by the American people. The main metaphors used were ones of division, disease, and the Cold War. The metaphors of disease were specifically created to describe the Soviet actions and ideology. In addition, comparisons to Nazi Germany were used to convince the American public that they are once again involved in a similar struggle to the one they had just confronted. The historical comparisons to another enemy made the public believe that lessons learnt from the past were perfectly appropriate for handling the present (Hinds and Windt, 1991: 247-249).

Indeed, an important linguistic tool in the Cold War American discourse was a metaphor, revealing a variety of ways that the US referred to the Soviet threat. Metaphors were used to illustrate the rhetorical essentials of the logic of confrontation. The Soviet Union - the US adversary - was described as a mortal threat to freedom, a germ infecting the body politic, a plague upon the liberty of humankind, and a barbarian intent upon destroying civilisation.

Freedom was illustrated as weak, fragile, and vulnerable to disease and rape. The price of freedom was seen as high due to the alternative being enslavement and death. The rhetoric revealed a continuous tension between expectations and unpredictable outcomes, reflecting on freedom's vulnerability in a hostile world. Images of freedom's vulnerability were connected to visions of the enemy's savagery, therefore strengthening the logic of peace through strength that believes in nuclear weakness inviting aggression by a barbarian who only understands and respects force (Ivie, 1997: 72).

Indeed, metaphors included a number of recurring motives in the Cold War rhetoric. For example, the metaphor of savagery in its repeated use helped to construct the image of a hostile and threatening enemy. Numerous terms described the enemy as irrational, violent, and aggressive. Ronald Reagan, the 40th president of the US, and others in positions of power typically used a range of decivilising terms that associated the Soviet Union with natural menaces such as floods, tides, cold winds, and fire. They referred to the Soviets as snakes, wolves, and other kinds of murderous predators, and characterised them as primitives, brutes, barbarians, mindless machines, criminals, lunatics, fanatics, and the enemies of God (Ivie, 1997: 72-75).

Furthermore, metaphors portrayed the Soviet Union not only as a barbarian but also as threatening America's fragile freedom. For example, the Cold War rhetoric speaks of the beacon of liberty as a flickering flame and freedom as a frail body threatened by the cancer of Communism, and as a defenceless quarry set upon by relentless predators. Consequently, liberty, being unsafe, is dependent on its protectors who are prepared to defend it (Ivie, 1997: 75-76). Thus, every move by the enemy was portrayed as motivated by the willingness to oppress the freedoms of others and considered "a crime against the society" (Turusova, 2020: 4).

To summarise, the rhetoric constructed in the Cold War by the US was largely associated with protecting oneself and American freedom from the threatening enemy that was described using the metaphors of disease, natural disasters, predators, and evil. The US response was thus portrayed as a necessity to protect oneself from an irrational, brutal enemy. However, at the same, the Soviet Union was creating its own rhetoric to reach its strategic aims. Thus, the following section will focus on the overview of the Soviet Cold War rhetoric.

1.9 The Cold War rhetoric in the Soviet Union

The start of the Cold War brought with it an official anti-American campaign in the Soviet Union that affected all areas of political and cultural life and significantly limited possibilities for contact with the former allies. While the political and cultural focus on the US was not a new phenomenon in the Soviet Union, it reached its greatest ideological heights in the early years of the Cold War when both countries were adjusting to the adversarial roles they found themselves in. The bipolarity caused stronger enmity and competition than the two countries had ever seen in times of peace (Magnusdottir, 2018: 1-4).

In the Soviet Union, media propaganda in the times of the Cold War was crucial in the identity building of the state. Historians compare its importance to the work of the military and special services. It was the Soviet media that created the image of a Soviet Union as being much better, fairer and more righteous than the West. The Soviet media propaganda was mainly based on intimidation using the negative image of the enemy or promoting Soviet patriotism. In various media materials, including articles and visual images, the opponent was portrayed as immoral (Vyshanova, 2016: 3). Melnik (2016: 21) describes this as the demonisation of the US, following a script where its actions are portrayed as violent actions of "an aggressor" that wants to cause harm to "the victim". At the same time, the Soviet Union was illustrated as the defender of the country that is devoted to its society and, most importantly, its own ideology (Vyshanova, 2016: 3).

The role of the Soviet press as the main propaganda channel was already determined in the first years of the existence of the socialist system, and the Cold War period only strengthened this role (Melnik, 2016: 16). Plahina (2016: 165-166) outlines several themes that appeared in the Soviet printed press during the Cold War period. A key theme in the rhetoric is ideology, arguing that the Soviet Union lives in a fierce class struggle between two worlds - the world of socialism and the world of capitalism. The Soviet press claimed that, in ideology, as in other spheres of Soviet relations with the capitalist world, socialism was on the historical offensive, while capitalism was on the defensive. The US and its Western allies were portrayed as "the imperialists on the alert". However, at the same time, Soviet readers were directly warned of the capitalist threat to their existence, arguing that the US was a threat to peace, freedom and independence.

Curiously, the press was not reluctant to discuss US propaganda, examining the big and very sophisticated apparatus of propaganda that was used to influence public opinion. The press claimed that the US is using propaganda tools to manipulate the masses and also extend their influence in some of the socialist countries, looking for the weak spots in the socialist parts of the world. However, these attempts were described as unsuccessful and pitiful (Plahina, 2016:165).

Thus, Soviet journalism in the time of the Cold War formed a political narrative that described capitalists as enemies, at the same time glorifying the socialist and communist systems. To support this narrative, the media engaged in selective reporting, only focusing on the negative things about the capitalistic societies, reporting things like the growth of inflation, hopelessness, unemployment, life in slums, and mental and physical exploitation of young people. This was accompanied by a one-sided, biased presentation of political, economic and cultural events, highlighting positive aspects of the Soviet Union, while greatly exaggerating the negative things in the Western countries, even on relatively neutral topics such as culture and sports. For example, American music was described as cheap and destructive to national cultures and books were depicted as dreadful (Plahina, 2016:165).

Another key theme in the print media discourse was the enemy image, appealing to such feelings and emotions of readers as contempt, hatred, and horror. The values of the Soviet Union were interpreted as moral, while the capitalist values were considered immoral. To implement the narrative of capitalists being enemies, a number of manipulative techniques were used. This included disinforming the Soviet public, denigrating the enemy, and glorifying the Soviet Union. The ideological propaganda included stereotyping - the simplification of the image of the enemy, with its nature described as primitive and its actions as predictable. This led to exaggerations, omission of unwanted information and straightforward slander, abuse and insults of the enemy. For example, capitalists were portrayed as murderers, exploiters, slave traders, leeches, and soulless people with interests limited solely to making money (Plahina, 2016: 166-167). Meanwhile, the Soviet Union was seen as the defender against the capitalist states. Furthermore, the Soviet media implied that the countries of the capitalist system are leading the world to military conflicts and the destruction of the normal existence of society, while the socialist countries are doing everything in their power to avoid military conflicts (Turusova, 2020: 5)

In addition, the enemy image-building included attacking the American media for spreading lies, being shameless, and cynically manipulating people. Such deeds were explained as caused by capitalism, with its mercantilist nature killing all ideals (Plahina, 2016, 166-167).

As such, we notice that throughout the Cold War era, both Soviet and American media outlets frequently employed similar tactics when depicting each other in negative terms. This shared approach can be attributed to the underlying ideological and geopolitical tensions between the two superpowers, which influenced their respective media narratives. Both sides used propaganda techniques to highlight the flaws and shortcomings of the other, perpetuating negative stereotypes and promoting a sense of fear and animosity. Furthermore, both sides selectively presented information to suit their respective political agendas, employing selective reporting and biased interpretations of events. In essence, the Soviet and American media engaged in a propaganda war during the Cold War, using similar methods to negatively portray each other and bolster their respective ideological positions. Thus, it becomes even more crucial to investigate whether present-day Russian and American newspapers persist in employing such strategies.

Chapter 2: International relations theories explaining the Cold War

This section will include a number of international relations theories that attempt to explain the Cold War. Hurst (2005: 1) argues that the historiography of US Cold War foreign policy "has been dominated by a half-dozen key perspectives". Usually, it starts with traditionalism, followed by revisionism, post-revisionism, corporatism, and world-systems theory. Another approach is the poststructural perspective. While this thesis uses the poststructuralist approach, it is nonetheless important to overview the alternative methods in international relations scholarship. The main theories are outlined excellently by Hurst (2005) in his book *Cold War US Foreign Policy*. The analysis of Hurst is used due to its deep analytical outlook on each of the explanations. In particular, Hurst explains each perspective's underlying theoretical framework and how it explains American foreign policy, which is followed by a critique of that theory and explanation.

2.1 Traditionalism

Before discussing the traditionalist approach in detail, it must be noted that traditionalism is not a unitary phenomenon. In particular, there is a group of realist scholars who can be grouped together with traditionalists, although they are different from them in some ways. Those differences can be best understood if one thinks of the US foreign policy as containing two elements: first, the explanation of the US actions and, second, the evaluation of the actions of the US. While realists agree with traditionalists on the explanation of the US actions, one can see some disagreement with the *evaluation* of the actions (Hurst, 2005: 21).

Realists agree with traditionalism that the US foreign policy during and straight after WWII was motivated by legal and moral principles. However, while traditionalists considered this in a positive way, realists saw it as a cause of the US problems, arguing that the American foreign policy was too naïve. This opinion was based on the idea that power and actions motivated by self-interests were the norms of global affairs. While realists welcomed the American policy of containment, they saw it as a belated recognition of how things really work. Thus, realists partly agree and partly disagree with traditionalists. Nonetheless, the distinction between the two approaches is often blurred (Hurst, 2005: 21-22). Thus, the approach of realism is not discussed in detail as a separate phenomenon.

Until the 1960s, the traditionalist vision was the predominant one (Sewell, 2002: 1). Traditionalists account for the American Cold War policy as an initial continuity with pre-war traditions. More specifically, at the end of WWII, the US wanted to build peace, with the United Nations keeping the peace and democracy in victim and aggressor nations alike. In addition, the US hoped that the American-designed financial institutions would sustain free trade, which in turn would expand global wealth. However, the plans of the US were negatively affected by the Soviet Union, with the US feeling compelled to protect freedom and democracy against the threat of Communism (Hurst, 2005: 12). This is a point where there is a strong agreement between realists and traditionalists, both seeing the Cold War as started by the Russians (Hurst, 2005: 22).

Traditionalism places the responsibility for the Cold War on the expansionist policy of the Soviet Union shortly after WWII. The theory argues that, after defeating Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union attempted to dominate its neighbours and establish a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. Therefore, according to traditionalists, it was the Soviet policies that forced the US to intervene, which subsequently led to the Cold War (Sewell, 2002: 1-7). As established, traditionalism is characterised mostly by a normative commitment to the fundamentally virtuous nature of the US foreign policies, treating the government decision-makers as the focus of analysis (Hurst, 2005: 21). Traditionalism utilises the binary approach of good vs evil, in which the American policy is always honest, generous, and good, while the Russian policy is always devious, threatening, and selfish (ibid: 23). In relation to the Soviet Union, traditionalism does not concern itself with its motives, rather stating that Communism is a wicked system, causing the communist states to have adverse aims (ibid: 25).

In general, naturally, traditionalism can be critiqued for its oversimplified, black-and-white way of viewing things. In addition, its one-sided nature of the attribution of responsibility for the Cold War is a significant weakness (Hurst, 2005: 23). This perspective often overlooks the complexities and nuances of the historical context, international dynamics, and the contributions of other actors in shaping the conflict.

2.2 Revisionism

Revisionism got its name due to its attempt to revise the narrative of the American Cold War foreign policy that was created by traditionalism. The emergence of revisionism caused a heated debate in the history of the Cold War due to its questioning of the wisdom and morality of American foreign policy (Hurst, 2005: 29). The revisionist argument assumed that US foreign policy was driven mostly by "an ambitious vision of a reconstructed liberal capitalist world order" (ibid: 54). Revisionists perceive the actions of the US as not being reactions to Soviet machinations but as "another and more accelerated step in a long imperial journey from continental to global power" (Paterson, 2007: 391).

Hurst (2005: 30) elegantly summarises the key premises of revisionism under four points:

1) A claim that economic factors were central to the US foreign policy, either as objective material causes or in the form of beliefs or ideology of decision-makers;
2) The placing of expansion, both in terms of territory and economy, at the core of US history and foreign policy;
3) An emphasis on the dynamic nature of the US foreign policy that contrasts with the traditionalist image of US actions being reactive and hesitant;
4) An implicitly or openly negatively critical perception of the American foreign policy, whether because of its intentions, results, or both.

However, revisionism is heavily criticised for these assumptions. For example, there is no logical reason to assume that economic concerns dominate all other policy objectives. Similarly, the flaws of the revisionist arguments are demonstrated by using the example of the explanation of US policymakers' response to Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe at the end of WWII. While revisionists argue that the American opposition to this development was motivated by their wish to keep open-door access to that region, the US lacked economic interests in Eastern Europe (Hurst, 2005: 38-40).

In addition, revisionists fail to recognise the role of Soviet ideology as an important causal factor for the Cold War, while, at the same time, ironically stressing the American political economy as a causal factor. Furthermore, revisionists do not recognise that the US, just like the Soviet Union, had the right to pursue its own interests against a potential threat (Zawitoski, 1977).

2.3 Post-revisionism

According to Gaddis (cited in Hurst, 2005: 61), the initial hope of the post-revisionist school was that "if only we could take the strongest elements of these two previous approaches [orthodoxy and revisionism], discard the weaker ones, and ground the whole thing as much as possible in whatever archives were available, then truth would emerge." With this comment, Gaddis illustrates certain key elements of post-revisionism, the most important being its wish for synthesis. Indeed, many post-revisionists deliberately avoided the ideological perspectives and one-sided judgements of traditionalists and revisionists, preferring what they saw as an "objective" approach that would select all relevant causal factors and combine them into one explanation of events. Unlike more basic approaches, post-revisionists emphasised a multi-factor explanation for making sense of US foreign policies (Hurst, 2005: 61).

Nonetheless, others would object that, rather than trying to construct a synthesis from the best elements of both prior interpretations, post-revisionists try to justify the broad conclusions of traditionalism while rejecting those of revisionism. Indeed, a typical method of post-revisionism in engaging with revisionist arguments is a "yes, but" approach that includes the acceptance of the broad contention of the revisionists but reinterprets its meaning and implications. However, the specific arguments of the traditionalists might be rejected but their argument of American policymakers having done the right thing is typically supported (Hurst, 2005: 61). In addition, post-revisionists posit that the US policymakers were rational and practical men with a good understanding of American interests and what would serve those interests best (ibid: 63).

The post-revisionists add that if the US had interests and aims, revisionists "exaggerated the purposeful and confident way that pursued them" (Hurst, 2005: 64). According to post-revisionists, American actions were frequently uncertain and hesitant, motivated by fear just as much as ambition. This argument is seen in the context of the US policy toward Eastern Europe. More specifically, senior American policymakers are illustrated as acknowledging and accepting the Soviet wish for a sphere of influence in the Eastern European region but hoping that it could be executed in ways that are compatible with American interests and principles (ibid: 64).

Furthermore, post-revisionists argue that, while facing unilateral Soviet moves attempting to impose direct control, the US had to hesitantly adopt a confrontational position. Nonetheless, post-revisionism posits that this process took two years, involving a lot of confusion, a reversal of course, and overall confusion about the behaviour of the Soviet Union. In addition, it was motivated by anxiety and uncertainty about the consequences of Soviet actions (Hurst, 2005: 64).

Most importantly, post-revisionism includes economics as a motivation for US foreign policy, accepting the argument that the American foreign policy after 1945 was created to restore global capitalism. Nonetheless, post-revisionists add their own interpretation to this premise, positing that the US policymakers were considering things based on the historical lessons of the 1930s that proved that a closed economy and limited trade created war, while free trade was associated with peace and prosperity. Thus, post-revisionists conclude that the US commitment to free trade was in essence a political decision with the intention of securing peace and stability. As such, while economic self-interest was involved, it was a secondary consideration (Hurst, 2005: 64).

In addition, post-revisionism stresses the role of domestic politics in forming US actions. In particular, the American policy towards Eastern Europe was partly explained in this manner. More specifically, post-revisionists posit that the Soviet wish for a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe was incompatible with the domestic pressure for self-determination and democracy in Eastern Europe. However, the two objectives were incompatible, given that democratically elected regimes in Eastern Europe were highly likely to have hostile attitudes toward the Soviet Union. Thus, post-revisionists conclude that, due to being unwilling to explain this to the American public, American policymakers found it more convenient to move towards a confrontation with the Soviet Union than to pursue a pragmatic accommodation at the cost of the nations in Eastern Europe, risking a domestic protest (Hurst, 2005: 65).

These ideas are echoed by Gaddis (cited in Hurst, 2005: 67-68) who posits that the US, trying to find peace and security in “a world order based on self-determination, free trade and collective security”, clashed with the Soviet Union taking care of its own security by controlling the countries on its periphery. As a result, the incompatibility of these two perspectives on establishing security led the Americans to adopt the policy of containment.

There is no doubt that the post-revisionist approach adds more analytical arguments to the theories explaining the Cold War. For example, the claim that the US policymakers, while seeking certain aims, were unsure how to reach them while both averting Soviet domination and still continuing cooperation, is much more rational than the "naivety and innocence" of traditionalist perspective or the continuous drive for global domination as depicted by revisionists (Hurst, 2005: 76).

Nonetheless, it is common for post-revisionists to emphasise their efforts to avoid the "value-laden" approaches of prior theories and to only look for an "understanding of what happened and why". However, while making the claim of being impartial, post-revisionists, consciously or unconsciously, engage in their own act of containment. To differentiate one's approach to "understanding" from the "value-laden efforts" of past scholars is to conclude that past scholars did not attempt to understand events. It is an assertion of one's own scholarship being better than the others while not basing it on proof and arguments as much as on a highly controversial and arguably disputable difference between methods (Hurst, 2005: 78)

2.4 Corporatism

Corporatism, just like revisionism, is focused on the domestic economic sources of foreign policy. Nonetheless, advocates of this approach emphasise that their approach is not only different but also better than revisionism. This is due, as argued by corporatism scholars, to a more sophisticated notion of the domestic political economy and an ability to join a wide variety of factors into the explanatory framework. Agreeing with revisionists on the key primacy of the domestic political economy, corporatists nonetheless reject the role assigned to geopolitics in post-revisionism. More specifically, corporatists view themselves as going beyond both revisionism and post-revisionism while joining the best principles of both. By arguably doing so, corporatism bases its explanation of US foreign policy on the development of the American political economy, while also trying to include external factors, such as the actions of the Soviet Union (Hurst, 2005: 89-90).

Corporatist foreign policy is understood as being the result of the interlinkage between the state, competitive capital, and the other functional economic groups in the corporatist coalition. The outcome is a complex formulation of the relationship between the state and the capitalist class, which views it as an interplay between two independent groups, rather than the simplistic

determination of the actions of one by the other. By examining the different interests of separate sectional groups, it is plausible to create more specific hypotheses about the type of foreign policy that is in their interests. The hypotheses are then falsifiable by researching which sectoral interests dominate within government, what foreign policies are being adopted, and which groups are against them (Hurst, 2005: 98-99).

However, interestingly, this perspective has generated a very limited amount of work, in relation to both quantity and scope. In addition, it now seems to have been abandoned by its original advocates in favour of other approaches. The scholars originally developing the approach have failed to take advantage of its strength, with this approach remaining underdeveloped and under-utilised (Hurst, 2005: 90). Furthermore, what is missing from the perspective is geopolitics. While corporatism might find a reasonable description of US foreign economic policy and possibly even an explanation of the particular nature of that foreign economic policy, they would not address the larger nature of the American Cold War foreign policy. Thus, what is needed, is an explanatory approach that considers factors from both domestic society and the international system where all factors interact (ibid: 107).

2.5 World-systems Theory

World-systems theory provides an analysis of American foreign policy, explaining it mainly in relation to the effects of global capitalism as a structured system, and the position of the US within that system (Hurst, 2005: 111). A key author in the world-systems theory is Thomas McCormick (cited in Hurst, 2005: 111) who provides an overview of the American foreign policy in the second half of the twentieth century. The key idea used by McCormick is that capitalism is a global system into which all states are unified. That system is explained by a global division of labour between the core (industrialised), peripheral (underdeveloped), and semi-peripheral (semi-industrialised) areas. Thus, to figure out the global role of a country, one must find its position in this system. In the case of American foreign policy after 1945, the most crucial part is to recognise the US position in the system as the "dominant core state or hegemon".

Hegemons have an important role because, while the economic dimension of the system is international, the political system is organised around a nation-state. Thus, nation-states are

motivated by their own interests rather than those of the system, consequently often pursuing economic policies such as mercantilism and protectionism while obstructing the free market. Nonetheless, the clash between the interests of the capitalist system and the nation-states can be lessened by the existence of a hegemon, which is "an economically dominant core power sufficiently strong to exert its will on the other states within the system". Therefore, the hegemon can utilise its power to secure the free flow of goods and capital and to reduce economic nationalism (Hurst, 2005: 111). Thus, world-systems theorists posit that the US is a core economy in the world system, depending on its prosperity "upon the continued integration of the periphery into [..] system (ibid: 116).

Nonetheless, Hurst (2005: 119) brings up excellent points in the critique of this approach. First, the actions and relationships of classes and states are reduced to mere expressions of the global economy. Second, the behaviour of the state is reduced to a simple expression of ruling class interests, which are argued to be determined by the world capitalist system. Thus, the state apparatus is robbed of all autonomy, serving as an illustration of the oversimplified claims of this theory.

2.6 Poststructuralism

As argued by Hurst (2005: 140), poststructuralism takes the arguments about the US foreign policy and the Cold War in an entirely new direction. Poststructuralism rejects the straightforward strategies suggested by the other perspectives, offering an alternative epistemology or theory of knowledge. It is a theory concerning the relationship between human beings, the world, and the creation and reproduction of meanings (Belsey, 2002: 12-13). It examines how social relations of power fix the meaning and importance of social practices, objects, and events, defining some as self-evident, given, natural, and enduring. Poststructuralism gained prominence as a widespread "linguistic turn" in the social sciences, which stressed the creation of meaning and the "social construction" of reality and emphasised the construction of meanings in the works of Derrida and Foucault (Woodward, 2009: 396).

Both dimensions of poststructuralism – the epistemological and the ontological – focus on a set of essential questions. These include: If meaning and representation are not determinate and contextual, and if, the "real" world is constructed, then how does power produce its own truths? In addition, if the difference in the world is not a residual from or a bad copy of a singular

identity, but is rather the immanent force characteristic of all materialities, including imaginings, emotions, words, and meanings, then how does one go forth in the world to think and speak in terms of things and their qualities? (Woodward, 2009: 397)

Poststructuralism can thus be used as a tool for understanding and explaining international relations, including phenomena like the Cold War. It helps to understand and (re)consider the sphere of international relations. It must be emphasised that language is seen as the most effective expression of poststructuralism (Sayin and Ates, 2012: 13). Indeed, poststructuralism focuses on the centrality of discourses as ways through which people experience and understand themselves and others. It was developed mainly by several French-language philosophers of the 20th century, in particular, Jaques Derrida and Michel Foucault, who challenged two traditional approaches: 1) traditional Marxist and elitist models of society in which one class exerts power over another; 2) "scientific" approaches that argue for access to universal truths (Newman, 2020).

Rather, poststructuralists see power as a fluid phenomenon, arguing that "science" does not provide access to truth, but is solely a discourse (a way of speaking and/or acting). In poststructuralism, there is no difference between discourses and subject identities. This means that we cannot see identity as related exclusively to a subject, because that identity is composed of interviewing discourses that exist at a societal level. Thus, discourses create the identities of subjects (Newman, 2020).

These ideas are echoed by the structuralist linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (cited in Baxter, 2016) who argues that discourse, far from reflecting an already existing reality, creates social reality. Meaning is produced by the use of language rather than reflected by language. The author posits that the system of language includes signs, which are divided into signifiers (for example, words and visual images) and signifieds (concepts). Thus, individual signs obtain meanings through their relationship with other signs. As a result, the language that an individual acquires and comprehends is the result of an existing social contract to which all language users are subjected.

While relating poststructuralism to the analysis of foreign policy and international relations, I use the ideas of several scholars. According to Gadamer (cited in Sayin and Ates, 2012: 18) "Understanding international relations is, one might recognize, first of all, an attempt to make

sense of intercultural relations where language, social practice, and social meanings meet and challenge each other". As such, poststructuralism "interrogates changing meanings, recognizing their ambiguities, and accepts that there could be no single "underlying truth" hidden behind them." Therefore, it helps to understand international relations with a more critical perspective, reassessing, rethinking, and reexplaining issues and matters in the area of international relations (Sayin and Ates, 2012: 19).

Furthermore, when discussing the relationship between poststructuralism and foreign policy, Hansen (2017: 162) posits that language is important for politicians to legitimise their policies. Consequently, the discourse they use is not neutral given its political implications - discourse has a certain power. For example, if an act is described as genocide, it puts pressure on the global community to intervene. Sayin and Ates (2012: 18-19) build on these ideas, emphasising the relation of knowledge to power. In other words, being powerful involves having knowledge.

In addition, I adopt the theoretical perspectives of Derrida (1987; quoted in Baxter, 2016) who argues that meanings in discourse also emerge in their difference from others. To name an example, former US President George Bush used the term "axis of evil", which implied a strong contrast between the US and the countries that were described using this term (e.g., Iraq, Iran, and North Korea) (Hansen, 2017: 163). Thus, according to poststructuralism, foreign policy involves the creation of discourses of danger. The use of comparisons and metaphors is common in such foreign policy. For example, as discussed earlier, during the Cold War, Communism was often portrayed as a disease, virus, or other pathology, thus using the approach of "demonising" the Other (Campbell, 1990: 143).

Furthermore, poststructuralism includes the idea that language is created using dichotomies (e.g., the modern and the pre-modern, the civilised and barbaric). Naturally, these dichotomies are not neutral due to one side being portrayed as superior to the other. Poststructuralists concern themselves with how these dichotomies work, therefore contributing to the understanding of world politics (Hansen, 2017: 163).

Nonetheless, poststructuralism admits that discourses of danger are not stagnant, with several new "discourses of danger" emerging after the end of the Cold War (e.g., the war on terror) (Buzan, 2006: 1101). This is an example of yet another theoretical thought of Derrida (1987;

quoted in Baxter, 2016) who posits that any meaning can only be fixed temporarily due to being dependent on a particular context. Thus, texts are constantly open to shifting to other contexts. Poststructuralism sees American foreign policy as creating threats because those threats are necessary to create and recreate American identity. In other words, the creation of the Self also needs the creation of the Other (Campbell, 1990: 143).

Indeed, in poststructuralism, the identity of the Self is created by contrasting it to the identity of the Other(s). Thus, identity is seen as relational and performative. While identities are seen as "real", they cannot exist unless we reproduce them (Hansen, 2017: 169) Indeed, when poststructuralists refer to identity, they usually speak of "subjectivities" and "subject positions" to emphasise that identity is not something one has but rather that it is "a position that one is constructed as having" (ibid: 171).

Poststructuralism sees identities as being interconnected with foreign policy, with both affecting each other. While identities are created by a foreign policy that creates and recreates them, we cannot argue that identities create foreign policy. At the same time, foreign policy is made while utilising the understanding of particular identities (Hansen, 2017: 169).

In relation to the concept of identity in the Cold War, the US enmity toward Communism and the Soviet Union served as a code for the creation of multiple boundaries between the civilised and barbaric, and the "normal" and "pathological" (Campbell, 1998: 171) From the American perspective, the American identity was associated with the ideas of freedom of choice, individuals, democratic institutions, and private enterprise economy. This resulted in associating contrasting practices as threatening, especially those involving communal identity, social planning, and public ownership of property. The idea of Communism was seen as barbaric and distinguished from the "civilised" identity of the US (ibid: 141). Thus, "they" in the East were seen as more dangerous (ibid: 173).

One of the main aims of poststructuralism is therefore to explore the way in which social antagonisms are created; what precise structures they take; and how they are accommodated within forms of social life. Antagonism suggests that the articulation of elements results in a structural dualism, where two large discursive structures oppose each other, splitting the social sphere into two antagonistic camps (Jacobs, 2018: 302).

2.7 Orientalism

Classic Orientalism is concerned with the study of Asia, the Middle East, and Northern Africa (the "Orient") from a European and American perspective (the "Occident"). A central breaking point in the history of Orientalism was the work by Said (1978), who adopted a critical perspective on the way Orientalists viewed Eastern culture, tradition, and art. Rooted in colonialism, he criticised Orientalism from a postcolonial perspective as a practice that was characterised by prejudices and misperceptions of the "other" cultures; it framed the Orient through an occidental lens (ibid). Drawing on poststructuralism and Critical Discourse Analysis by Lacan, Foucault and others, this new critical orientalist tradition argued that studies of the East reproduced the West's own cultural artefacts and public narratives. Said attempted "to analyse the authoritative structure of orientalist discourse - the closed, self-evident, self-confirming character of that distinctive discourse which is reproduced again and again through scholarly texts, travelogues, literary works of imagination, and the obiter dicta of public men of affairs" (Asad, 1980: 648). The West hence exercised discursive power over the East through the practice of colonial orientalism, by telling Westernised, recurring stories about how to understand the East.

The lens of (critical) Orientalism has been applied to the study of Russia and the Soviet Union (Bolton, 2009; David-Fox et al, 2006; Khalid, 2000). Summarising this literature, Brown (2010: 149) argues that the mainstream Western discourse on Russian foreign policy "displays a number of the characteristic symptoms of Orientalism – the exaggeration of difference, assumption of Western superiority and resort to clichéd analytical models."

Brown (2010) examines three key characteristics of Said's model of Orientalism in relation to Russian foreign policy: Firstly, differences between Russian and Western foreign policy are exaggerated by portraying Russian foreign policy as unpredictable, driven by ideological rhetoric, and irrational. As a case in point, Khrushchev's famous shoe-banging at the United Nations General Assembly in October 1960 has often been interpreted as a "lack of sophistication and refinement in Soviet diplomatic practices" and as a deliberate attempt to derail United Nations proceedings (Neumann and Pouliot, 2011). In realist accounts, this incident has been described as a rational strategy to appear irrational enough to pull the nuclear weapons trigger and deviate from the deterrence equilibrium invoked by Mutually Assured Destruction (Freund, 1987). It could arguably only work sufficiently well because of the

Western understanding of the Soviet leadership as sufficiently unpredictable and irrational to begin with.

Secondly, Russian foreign policy follows an outdated "Hobbesian" model by which national sovereignty, nationalism, and the display of strength take precedence over multilateral integration and a common European security architecture. Brown (2010: 154) argues this approach has been labelled "inferior" to Western approaches, "anachronistic", and "so backwards as to be rooted in a different historical era". Western superiority also extends to foreign policy implementation, which has been described as "chaotic, error-prone and even feckless", and the Western narrative that Russia had gone off the right path in the 1990s and would have had to be re-integrated into the Western security architecture. Thirdly, Western analytical categories with reference to Russian foreign policy frequently "oversimplify" Russia as driven by a recurring instinct to expand and achieve nationalist ends through autocratic rule and the use of force, as if by design throughout history (ibid: 155).

Nonetheless, Orientalism often depicts non-Western societies as passive and subordinate to Western powers. However, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries played active and influential roles in shaping global events. Reducing their actions to mere objects of Western perception overlooks their agency and contributions to the dynamics of the Cold War. In addition, the Cold War was not solely a result of cultural misunderstandings or stereotypes. Economic and political factors, such as competing geopolitical interests, nuclear arms race, and ideological competition, played significant roles in shaping the conflict (see, e.g., Lewkowicz, 2018). Orientalism does not adequately address these critical dimensions of the Cold War.

2.8 Othering

The case of the Cold War is a clear example of the use of Othering involving both sides of the conflict. The Cold War conflict has been described in the political rhetoric of both sides as a conflict between diametrically opposed enemies, and a continuous battle between capitalism and Communism and freedom and oppression. Consequently, the continuation of the Cold War as an ideological conflict was dependent on Othering. In the context of the Cold War, the Othering process expressed itself in the form of an ingrained political and ideological antagonism which focused on the idea of the perceived enemy being an evil and destructive force. Therefore, both sides viewed the Other as a malevolent threat. As a result, the key cultural narrative which preserved the political tension during the Cold War was one of radical difference and antagonism (Corcoran, 2012).

Thus, the phenomenon of the Cold War cannot be fully understood without looking into the concept of Otherness. In addition, to understand the relationship between the Self and the Other, narratives should be the main focus of attention. It is narratives associated with group identities that create practices in groups, define the Self and the Other, and create collective memory. Taken together, it is narratives that allow us to make sense of conflicts (Murer, 2012). Given these considerations and the focus of the thesis on newspaper rhetoric - a form of narrative - the first half of the section will look at the concept of Othering, while the second part will examine Othering in the US-Russia relationship.

However, before considering Othering as a concept, it must be noted that it is not possible to entirely separate the concept of Othering from enemy image creation. The most common form of Othering can include extremely negative perceptions and the formation of the Other as one's enemy. However, in a milder form, Othering might refer to establishing strong boundaries between oneself and one's inner group and the Other.

With the rise in popularity of identity politics, it has become very frequent to refer to the Other as the enemy (and vice versa) yet this invites the question of how the Other becomes an enemy. Considering this question involves a number of crucial considerations, with the most important being contingency. By paying attention to the processes and dynamics of "becoming", one can see both the Self and the Other as developing throughout history and going through different stages, with their relationship evolving, changing, and having both a point of beginning and a

possible end. Consequently, the defining process involves observation and interpretation (Murer, 2012).

In this section, I discuss the concept of Othering as defined by Szpunar (2011: 4) who describes its function as defining what a group is by demonstrating what they are not. For example, as Europe's "contrasting image, idea, personality, experience", the Orient helped Europe to define itself (Said, 1994:1). The creation of such boundaries necessitates an overarching binomial opposition- Other-Us, which is often strengthened by using complementary binaries. The resulting structure is retained because in such processes only "we" can speak. More specifically, the Other is defined not using *their* own terms but in "ours". It is also crucial to recognise that such processes are never neutral and do not simply correspond to reality. In fact, even when facing counterevidence, or seeing changes in empirical "reality", the Other-Us boundary frequently continues to exist "through selective perception, tact, and sanctions" (Barth, 1969: 30). This phenomenon is elegantly described by Said: "[c]ultures have always been inclined to impose complete transformations on other cultures, receiving these other cultures not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver" (1994: 67). Thus, in other words, the Other is then a function for "us".

However, despite its rather negative nature, Othering has always existed due to the human need to establish a sense of identity with reference to a particular group (Daloz et al., 1996: 12). For humans, the group and not the individual, is essential for survival. Groups provide protection against threatening environments and external enemies and also give a sense of psychological security. Given that the majority of the group's members share the same customs and norms, they can easily understand each other's behaviour, and the group contains the values that give meaning and significance to their lives. Thus, a threat to the group's integrity, particularly when posed by a group with a contrasting worldview, concerns the very basis of its members' psychological and biological survival (Frank and Melville, 1988: 1999).

It is, however, easy to see those we consider different from us as threatening. Under such circumstances, the natural human need to seek belonging turns into tribalism - a reactive creation of strict boundaries, which "insulates and defends 'me and mine' against what appears to be an overwhelmingly complex and threatening world" (Daloz et al., 1996: 12). Therefore, Othering is still common in modern societies, with its widest and colloquial form defining it as a culturally affected, extremely negative, and stereotypical evaluation of the Other. Others are

then branded as “enemies” if their appearance involves some kind of threat perception (Fiebig-von Hase and Lehmkuhl, 1998: 3).

Fiebig-von Hase and Lehmkuhl (1998: 16) argue that the most crucial *active* behavioural pattern of Othering is in-group/out-group discrimination, which is closely tied to friend/enemy schema (Spillmann and Spillmann, 1998: 51). Empirical research indicates that members of an in-group react with a deliberate bias toward alien groups. This bias is preserved by a set of stereotypical assumptions about the attributes of the members’ own group as contrasted to those of others, as recognised earlier by Szpunar (2011). In case of a threat, the pressure to create a distinction between the in-group and out-group will intensify. Those in-group members who do not agree with such distinctions are threatened with sanctions or excluded (Fiebig-von Hase and Lehmkuhl, 1998: 16). This is motivated by the perception that, in times of crisis or threat, all untrustworthy individuals must be expelled from the in-group. As such, those “elements” which are perceived to be the source of the crisis must be instantly excluded, along with everyone else who supports, sympathises with, or resembles the Other. Thus, in such settings, new boundaries of a Self-group can be drawn (Murer, 2012).

The previous example illustrates a certain level of fluidity in the process of Othering in group formation and rearrangement. In addition, Othering allows for flexibility in terms of one’s Other - the images of Other(s) can change over time, and so can the perceptions of *who* one’s Other is. Social change is an important variable in Othering since it requires individuals to change their behaviour while facing uncertainty. Consequently, a general feeling of insecurity might be created which might cause political intolerance, ethnic prejudice, religious fundamentalism, and radical nationalism with their stereotypical black-and-white thinking. Thus, social strain seems to be the key reason why people become victims of hate propaganda. It is at times of social unrest, economic crisis, questioned cultural identity, and war when images of the Other are propagated to create or strengthen group cohesion and national unity (Fiebig-von Hase and Lehmkuhl, 1998: 25). In the context of a cultural crisis, Othering can be helpful for the making of a surrogate identity since in-group/out-group separation supports the process of group construction and characterisation (Fiebig-von Hase and Lehmkuhl, 1998: 25).

Such reactions provide an explanation of how group integration is improved by stigmatising out-groups as adversaries. The opportunity to use enmity for group cohesion seems to be one of the reasons which make the production of the Other attractive for group leaders (Fiebig-von

Hase and Lehmkuhl, 1998: 16). Indeed, Beck (1998: 76) posits that the special characteristic of exclusion and either/or thinking can be utilised to create a consensus on empowerment. Othering offers simplification, with one being either "for or against", thus eliminating the possibility of neutrality.

As such, it does not come as a surprise that foreign policy has always been about engagement with the Other. Foreign affairs assume a distinction between "us" and "them," with policymakers having the task to make decisions regarding how we are going to act toward "them", and how they might respond to us. This is particularly true during war, with war presuming a relationship of antagonism, although that antagonism can take a number of different forms (Ayres, 2007: 107). Murer (2012) warns that the danger for politicians, policymakers, scholars, and analysts emerges when they focus too narrowly on one identity form while neglecting the others. This act of reducing the Other to only one aspect of their identity prevents them from stopping conflicts and limits our own ability to "negotiate complicated, and at times competing, collective identity constellations". Arguably, an extreme form of Othering was used in the Cold War and still persists in the contemporary clash between the US and Russia. As such, the next sections will outline Russia as the Other of the US and the US as the Other of Russia.

Russia as the Other of the US

Unlike studies analysing Russian political discourse on the US, studies of American political discourse on Russia have paid attention to the aspect of continuity. Moreover, it has been concluded that the image of Russia as the Other in American discourse can be traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century when opposition to the Russian tsarist regime emerged and started a large-scale movement hoping to create a Free Russia. Nevertheless, it was not until the twentieth century that the Russian Other became the most significant other involved with the US (Zhuravleva, 2010: 45).

Interestingly, it is argued that the negative portrayal of Russia in the American discourse has coincided with the times of cultural and political crises in the US, which supports the argument of Jervis (1976) that Othering is used due to the existence of selfish state interests. Indeed, Zhuravleva (2010: 45) argues that the negative image construction of Russia in times of crisis has resulted in seeing Russia as a possible danger to America's liberal policies. The Russian

theme played a big role in the socio-political debates on US foreign policy, as well as in defining its role in "changing the world", and its national and cultural identity. During crises, American editors, journalists, and cartoonists developed the idea that Americans are responsible for changing the world. When describing the relationship between the US and Russia, they often used binary opposition terms such as "light and darkness", "civilization and barbarity", "modernity and medievalism", "democracy and authoritarianism", "freedom and slavery", and "the West and the Orient" (ibid).

The "selfish state" argument is also used by Malici (2009) who studies the foreign policy of the US toward the so-called enemy states. The author's findings indicate that many conflicts between the US and its enemy states are of its own making. The conventional wisdom of Othering enemy states is the assumption that they are ruled by irrational and unpredictable leaders who are fighting a war against the United States. In this process, the Self prematurely defines the Other as a future enemy, and it is this image rather than the reality that causes the development of conflict. Thus, a relationship that could have developed in different ways, develops into a conflict. The phenomenon of self-fulfilling prophecy is therefore causing the emergence of real conflicts despite the fact that it has been caused by unverified or false beliefs (ibid: 40-42).

Malici (2009: 42) defines several stages of such a self-fulfilling prophecy. First, the Self creates an outlook about the Other, with this outlook having no factual basis. In international political theory, it is often encouraged by the "inherent bad-faith model" – the tendency to imagine non-realistic and implausible worst-case scenarios. The Self then acts toward the Other according to its constructed expectations. The Other then interprets the meaning of Self actions. As conflicts are normally reciprocated, the Other responds correspondingly. As a result, the Self sees the reaction as the confirmation of its initial prophecy. It is argued that this is the process of how states usually make enemies. The author posits that it is important to emphasise that the conflictual relationship between the Self and the Other is not caused by a real threat but rather is the result of false assumptions. The incorrect assumptions can result in misinformation, wrong perception, or uncertainties that have distorted reality. Nevertheless, it should be noted that false assumptions could also be the result of rational calculation. In this case, the Self is not misinformed, but rather deliberately creates a false identity for the Other because it can help the Self fulfil its goals. This is confirmed by international relations theory, which argues

that a well-constructed enemy image strengthens the leading position and authority of the Self (Malici, 2009: 43). The author describes two alternative courses for the United States.

The first course involves continuing to create inaccurate, dishonest, and reactive perceptions of other states. The other option is using the self-fulfilling prophecy in reverse. By doing that, The Self is willingly constructing a desired identity of the Other. Assuming that the Other is willing to alter its course, both actors can establish a new positive relationship. In other words, if the United States is willing to alter its relationship with other states, it should treat the Other as if it already has a new identity. The end result is that both the Self and the Other agree on a new "definition of the situation'' or a new intersubjective identity. Such tactics should invite cooperation and reciprocation and should be pursued for a longer period of time, even if reciprocation cannot be observed immediately (ibid: 49).

Similarly to Petterson (2012: 3), Campbell (1992:8), who represents the poststructural perspective, argues that US foreign policy is about creating foreign threats, as they are necessary for the creation and recreation of the American identity. To reinforce the Self, it is necessary to create the Other. For that purpose, the state has to define Otherness and create threats. Foreign policy is a way of creating those discourses of threat, and is not directed just at the outside world, but also serves internally for the purposes of creating the identity of the state. Indeed, contemporary scholarship has described foreign policy as a phenomenon in which there is an internally organised response to ideological, military, and economic threats (ibid: 36). It is argued that, similarly to the principles used by the Christian Church in the past, the state security policies replicate the same ideas. The state promises security to its citizens whilst arguing that they would otherwise face dangers. Thus, Russia's image as the antithesis of American identity actually contributes to forming the American Self (ibid: 50).

Finally, Williams (2012:2), who has focused on analysing the US political and popular culture in the time period of 1991-2003, employs the feminist perspective, arguing that the US is deploying the image of "Cold War triumphalism". The author posits that the US portrays Russia as its inferior, female, and subservient Other. Williams (ibid: 2-3) argues that the US employs the discursive construction of Russians as the Other, subjecting them to a Cold War time version of Orientalism. Furthermore, the author posits that members of the current US foreign policy establishment have found it difficult to alter ideology that was shaped by the Cold War (ibid: 15). The author concludes that while American rhetoric during the Cold War

was matched by that of the Soviet Union after the Soviet Union collapsed, the rhetorical strategy of the US could no longer rely on the existing notions of "Us versus Them". Instead, Russia was defined as both perpetrator and victim of its own crimes (ibid: 91).

Evidently, the results of previous studies show that there is no consensus on the reasons behind the use of Othering. Findings suggest that several different motivations might exist, which suggests that the positive image method suggested by Malici (2009) should be viewed critically, considering the existence of other explanatory theories.

The US as the Other of Russia

By analysing several prior studies on how Russia builds the Other image of the US, several frequently used statements can be identified. First, the US is seen as the most significant Other in Russia's foreign policy (Leichtova, 2014: 24). Second, Othering plays a big role in Russia's national identity formation - studying mirror images is essential for understanding Russia and its identity (Neumann, 1996: 150). In the case of Russia, images of the US are not only antagonistic but also show envy and a strong feeling of dislike (Petersson, 2006: 4), with the national identity of Russia is being formed by acting as an antagonist to Western imperialism, or as a balancing power of Western supremacy (Leichtova, 2014: 24). Thus, interacting with the West is viewed as the main aspect for evaluating Russia's success or failure, and it is seen as the Other with which it compares its strategies (ibid: 37). Finally, the third commonly used explanation on the image building on the Other in Russian foreign policy is associated with recognising the US as a threat, while also blaming political and economic troubles on the US as Russia's external foe (Frank and Melville, 1989; Shlapentokh, 2011).

However, another way of Russia Othering the US that has gained the attention of scholars and the media is the reference to the clash of values between Russia and the US. Supporting this position, Karaganov (2016) argues that the current Western liberal values cannot be compatible with those that are supported by the Russian nation. The author recognises that in the early post-Soviet period, the disintegration of the Soviet Union made people believe that the clash of ideologies was over, and the world was adopting a common system of values based on Western liberal democracy and capitalism. Nonetheless, Karaganov (ibid) posits that Western countries have shifted away from Christianity and encouraged nonviolence and pacifism;

values that Karaganov finds unsuitable for both the national identity of Russia, and the current political climate of the world.

Thus, Karaganov (2016) concludes that Russia is considered to be a threat to Europe mainly because it offers an attractive set of values for the rest of the world, such as national dignity and courage. The author states that Russia's anti-Western ideology could be temporary, motivated only by the need to stop the geopolitical expansion of the West and to prevent its attempts to impose "democratism", which embodies the source of conflict. Harasymiw (2010) echoes Karaganov's statements, arguing that the New Cold War is as much about competing economic interests as it is about political systems and ideologies. Stating that high-level ideological propaganda exists on both sides, Harasymiw sees it as the source of the clash.

Finally, another suggested reason for Othering the US can be understood by tracing the development of the US-Russia relationship over the years to see how Russia ended up seeing the US as its adversary. To do this, one must first look at the period of the collapse of the Soviet Union. For many Western observers, its dissolution was seen as a sign of the permanent superiority of the United States. The perception of Russia's decline was so ingrained and irreversible that it created the illusion of it not being able to resist Western initiatives and act against Western policies. This was particularly problematic when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had several rounds of expansion in the 1990s and early 2000s under US leadership. The American leaders did not consider Russia's objections and miscalculated the lengths to which Russia was willing to go to secure itself against perceived threats (Rumer and Sokolsky, 2021).

Indeed, Rumer and Sokolsky (2021) posit that Russia was often dismissed as a state in decline "clinging to the remnants of its superpower status", being in no position to challenge the American and Western vision of European security architecture. Thus, this led to the US not considering Russia's interests, while boasting its superiority in ideological, military, economic, and diplomatic spheres. As such, the renewal of Russia's Cold War military capabilities and return to policies motivated by security requirements and threat perceptions was hardly ever considered.

Similarly, to Rumer and Sokolsky (2021), Stoner (2021: 12) argues that Russian foreign policy became increasingly assertive, a trend that intensified as Putin's system of governing

developed. Throughout these developments, Putin insisted that Russia was simply protecting its historical interests in its natural spheres of influence and security. For Putin, Russia had returned to global politics to re-establish its status as a "great power" and to oppose an unfair Cold War settlement seen as imposed upon it by the United States (ibid:13).

Stoner (2021: 13) illustrates this by quoting Putin's justification of Russia's foreign policy after the annexation of Crimea:

> "[T]he Ukrainian crisis was not caused by the Russian Federation. It has emerged in response to the attempts of the USA and its Western allies who considered themselves "winners" of the Cold War to impose their will everywhere. Promises of non-expansion of NATO to the East (given yet to the Soviet authorities) have turned out to be hollow statements. We have seen how NATO's infrastructure was moving closer and closer towards Russian borders and how Russian interests were being ignored"

The quotation is illustrative of a broader phenomenon - the rhetoric on Russia's restored greatness, often involving criticism of the West, describes its revanchist perspective in international relations (Stoner, 2021: 13). Indeed, the author (ibid: 236) concludes that "Russia by almost thirty years after the Soviet collapse was not playing a weak hand of cards well in the international arena, as some have suggested". Instead, Stoner (ibid) posits that a "resurrected Russia" had gained power with which it can challenge other players in the construction of a new global order.

However, Stoner (2021: 265-266) makes another interesting point, positing that conflict between Russia and the West is not inevitable and thus does not need to be seen as "predestined or permanent". Instead, it is determined by the political regime in Russia. Consequently, Stoner (ibid) concludes that, if the nature of domestic politics were to change, then the way in which Russian leaders use Russia's power abroad would also change. Thus, with a regime change, it may as well be that the bad relationship between Russia and the US can be rectified.

To summarise, evidently, existing scholarship shows that Othering plays an important role in the national identity formation of Russia. In addition, it suggests that a real clash of fundamental values continues to exist in the US-Russia relationship. Additionally, the

relationship is marred due to Russia's opposition against not being recognised as a great power, subsequently putting the US as the Other threatening Russia and not acknowledging its legitimate interests in its spheres of influence.

Nonetheless, there are still some interesting and relevant questions to be addressed. The continuity aspect is not covered – it is not clear how the process of Othering and negative image creation has changed over time. In addition, little attention has been paid to the Cold War puzzle – it is not clear how the Cold War political discourse has affected the formation of the US as Russia's Other.

2.9 Sociological perception of identity

Nonetheless, comprehending the notion of Othering in international relations, as well as the formation of identities, necessitates a more profound exploration of the underlying significance of the term "identity". No doubt, the term "identity" includes a lot of vagueness, thus making it hard to define. However, a solid definition is provided by Bamberg (2010: 1) who posits that identity includes the attempts to both differentiate and integrate a sense of self along different social and personal. In other words, when we construct a certain identity for ourselves, we are in some way associating ourselves with a particular group or class, while, at the same time, differentiating ourselves from others who do not belong to that group or class, "although the differentiating role played by identity far outweighs its integrating one" (ibid). Thus, Bamberg (ibid) concludes that identity has three main features: "(a) sameness of a sense of self over time in the face of constant change; (b) uniqueness of the individual vis-à-vis others faced with being the same as everyone else; and (c) the construction of agency as constituted by self and world (with a world-to-self direction of fit)".

The explanation by Bamberg, while useful, is very condensed. A broader and more elaborate discussion is done by Brubaker and Cooper (2000: 6) who argue that the definition of identity depends on "the context of its use and the theoretical tradition from which the use in question derives". Nonetheless, the authors name some of the key uses of the term:

1) *As a ground of social or political action*- this relates to the idea of action being caused by particular self-understandings;

2) *Understood as a collective phenomenon,* identity denotes "sameness" among group members;
3) *Understood as a core aspect of individual or collective "selfhood",* identity is used to illustrate something "deep, basic, abiding, or foundational";
4) *Understood as a product of social and political action*, identity is used to highlight the "processual interactive development" of collective solidarity;
5) *Understood as the product of multiple and competing discourses*- identity is used to illustrate the fluid and fragmented nature of "the self". This usage is particularly inspired by Foucault and poststructuralism.

This invites the question of whether one can really extract or categorise the essence of the term. In relation to this, to unpack the term in more simple terms, Brubaker and Cooper (2000: 14) create three clusters of alternative identity meanings:

- *Identification and categorisation*- the authors see this as a processual, active term, thus requiring us to determine who is doing the identifying. Used as an active verb, the term can include characterising oneself, locating oneself in comparison to others, or situating oneself in a narrative. One key distinction is the relational and categorical modes of identification. More precisely, one might identify himself or herself using a relational web, or as sharing the same categorical attribute. In addition, one can distinguish between self-identification and identification by others (Brubaker and Cooper (2000: 14-15).
- *Self-understanding and social location*- also called "situated subjectivity" (ibid: 17). This relates to the cognitive and emotional sense that people have of themselves and their social world. A sense of oneself is not homogenous or unitary, being able to take many forms.
- *Commonality, connectedness, and groupness*- relates to the self-understanding that involves phenomena conceptualised in collective identities. This is often used in relation to discussions of race, ethnicity, and nationalism, among other phenomena.

We note that, while Brubaker and Cooper (2000) admit the broad and rich nature of the term "identity", some ideas emerge. We see identity being used to categorise oneself, both in relation to the deeper self and in relation to others, including commonalities and connections we have

with groups. At other times, identity can emerge as a response to a competing discourse. Finally, we learn that identity is subjective and fluid.

These considerations raise the question of whether Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) differ from the perceptions of what identity is in the poststructuralist framework. This requires us to sketch the key ideas of identity in poststructuralism.

2.10 Identity in poststructuralism

In poststructuralism, identity is described as:

> "fluid, multiple, diverse, dynamic, varied, shifting, subject to change and contradictory. It is regarded to be socially organized, reorganized, constructed, co-constructed, and continually reconstructed through language and discourse. It is unstable, flexible, ongoing, negotiated, and multiple. It is indeed a collection of roles or subject positions and a mixture of individual agency and social influences (Zacharias, cited in Kouhpaeenejad and Gholaminejad, 2014: 200).

Rather than being unique and fixed, poststructuralism sees identity as "a process", a constant and ongoing engagement of individuals in interactions with others. According to the poststructuralist perspective, identity is considered as being unstated, contextually driven, and emerging within interactions of a discourse. To put it another way, identity is actually a type of "becoming", it is social, a learning process, and an interplay (Kouhpaeenejad and Gholaminejad, 2014: 200).

In poststructuralism, the identity of the Self is created by contrasting to the identity of the Other(s). Thus, identity is seen as relational and performative. While identities are seen as "real", they cannot exist unless we (re)produce them (Hansen, 2017: 169) Indeed, when poststructuralists refer to identity, they usually speak of "subjectivities" and "subject positions" to emphasise that identity is not something one has but rather that it is "a position that one is constructed as having" (ibid: 171).

Poststructuralism sees identities as being interconnected with foreign policy, with both affecting each other. While identities are created by a foreign policy that creates and recreates them, we cannot argue that identities create foreign policy. At the same time, foreign policy is made while utilising the understanding of particular identities (Hansen, 2017: 169).

To provide an example, in relation to the concept of identity in the Cold War, the US enmity toward Communism and the Soviet Union served as a code for the creation of multiple boundaries between the civilised and barbaric, and the "normal" and "pathological" (Campbell, 1998: 171) From the American perspective, the American identity was associated with the ideas of freedom of choice, individuals, democratic institutions, and private enterprise economy. This resulted in associating contrasting practices as threatening, especially those involving communal identity, social planning, and public ownership of property. The idea of Communism was seen as barbaric and distinguished from the "civilised" identity of the US (ibid: 141). Thus, "they" in the East were seen as more dangerous (ibid: 173).

By outlining the poststructuralist ideas on identity, it becomes evident that Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) approach and the poststructuralist perspective do not exclude one another. Thus, rather than separating these approaches, I propose to see them as being parts of each other, while naturally keeping in mind that the concept of identity is problematic to conceptualise per se.

Chapter 3: New Cold War

The focus of my thesis on the time period characterised by many as the New Cold War makes it important to understand its meaning and origins. Scholars, media professionals, and politicians have widely referred to the recent US-Russia tensions using this term, thereby indicating its resemblance to the historical Cold War but with distinct features and dynamics. Exploring the meaning and origins of the New Cold War allows for an in-depth analysis of the geopolitical shifts, ideological confrontations, and power struggles between the US and Russia in the contemporary era. This understanding is crucial for grasping the complexities of the current international relations landscape and shedding light on how historical Cold War themes are manifested and modified in present-day discourse and conflicts.

Relatively little scholarship has focused on the development of the term "the New Cold War" as a present-day analogue of the Cold War. Two of the earliest usages of the term were in 1955 by the then US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and in 1956 when *The New York Times* warned that Soviet propaganda was provoking a return of the Cold War. The term emerged again after the inauguration of Ronald Reagan in 1980, whose firm foreign policy agenda ended the time period of détente. Following this, some mentions reappeared in the early 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union caused uncertainty in the international system (Jorden, 1956, cited in Straughn et al., 2019: 107).

The question of when the New Cold War began is also dependent on its differing causal narratives. For instance, those who see it as a result of Putin's wish to increase Russia's influence mostly speak of its starting point as the rise of nationalism and authoritarianism that followed Putin's election as the President of Russia (e.g., Lucas, 2008) or Russia's annexation of Crimea that came later (Legvold, cited in Straughn et al., 2019: 114). In contrast, for those supporting the anti-West views, the New Cold War is at times illustrated as a continuation of the Cold War. For example, Cohen (cited in Straughn et al., 2019: 114) argues that the Cold War never ended, due to the dismissive treatment of Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union which was then followed by the eastward enlargement of NATO and the EU.

As argued by Straughn et. al. (2019: 110), commentators largely agree on particular connotations of the "Cold War" analogy, with the term describing a dangerous, adversarial period, and an all-time low point in the relationship between the US and Russia. Furthermore,

the return to the past is not used in its literal sense. Rather, the term signifies the worsening of relations between Russia and the US (often also with NATO, the EU, and the West) that is reminiscent of the previous conflict between the Soviet Union and the US. Consequently, such comparisons to the "old" Cold War provide a common point of reference, allowing us to understand the expression "New Cold War" as a way of realising the seriousness of the contemporary situation.

Advocates of the New Cold War term believe that a New Cold War is already ongoing. From their perspective, accepting this reality is needed to find a fitting response. Therefore, despite recognising the term's potentially dangerous nature, its proponents argue that it is crucial to accept the reality. For example, Legvold (2014: 74) notes that "using such a label is [..] a serious matter." However, "it is important to call things by their names, and the collapse in relations between Russia and the West does indeed deserve to be called a new Cold War" (ibid).

One of the main arguments among critics against the use of the term is that, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was quickly deprived of its position as a superpower. Ashford (cited in Straughn et al., 2019: 111) argues that "Russia is no longer a great power, nor a genuine military threat to the United States". Nonetheless, others oppose this view and advocate for the use of the term. Kroenig (cited in Straughn et al., 2019: 111) argues that Russia can still achieve its foreign policy aims through "a combination of hybrid warfare and nuclear brinkmanship" in spite of its reduced military and political strength".

Regardless, the aggression and threat of Russia is a common theme when discussing the New Cold War. The critics of Putin have very little doubt that the main cause of the New Cold War is Moscow's illiberal foreign policies. Kirchik (2014, 38) argues: "Like the Cold War of old, this new conflict was initiated by Russia, which cannot tolerate independent and sovereign states along its borders".

At the 2016 Munich Security Conference, the then-Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev announced, "speaking bluntly, we are rapidly rolling into a period of a New Cold War" (Kremlin Press Service, 2016). Indeed, the geopolitical circumstances indicated that, since the actions of Russia in 2014, cooperation between Russia and the U.S. had come to a halt. The situation was further escalated by Putin approving a military doctrine that officially names

NATO “the greatest existential threat to the Russian state” (The Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 2015).

One of the uses of the New Cold War as a term is associated with the West’s efforts to expand NATO and the EU up to Russia’s borders, together with Russia’s desire to increase its influence in the Near Abroad. The resulting conflict is recognised to be at the core of the current strained relationship. Anti-West proponents, use similar arguments albeit laying the blame solely on the West due to it ignoring Russia’s security interests in the region, arguing that NATO’s continued enlargement of forces in Central Europe and the Baltic states could cause an even more serious defensive response from Russia (Batchelor, 2014)

In relation to the military aspects, Russia has made efforts to revitalise and modernise its military. This has led to the creation of new military brigades, technological progress, and a resumed focus on its nuclear arsenal. NATO and the West have responded in a similar way, moving a large number of American and other allied forces to Europe for the first time since the previous Cold War. In addition, proxy wars between Russia and the West have started and fought in Ukraine and Syria (Shuya, 2019: 2).

Those proxy wars have resulted in several rounds of international sanctioning by Western countries against Russia for its part in inciting war in Ukraine and Syria. The outcome of these sanctions has had mixed results but has led Russia to seek new economic cooperation with countries that are already having disagreements with the West, which has resulted in a further increase in tensions and continues to drive the world into another East against West confrontation (Shuya, 2019: 3).

The last instrument of power employed for the New Cold War is information, which may end up being a key factor in the New Cold War. Similarly to the first Cold War, information, misinformation, and propaganda play a crucial role in the way in which Russia and the West interact with each other. The West generally provides liberal access to information while Russia exerts control of what information is allowed to be published to the general public, including controlling the content of the media. The advancements in technology that appeared at the end of the first Cold War led to the Internet providing easily accessible information. The invention of social media has made the spread of propaganda even faster. As such, information and disinformation have become key defining weapon of the New Cold War (Shuya, 2019: 3).

However, as already noted in the prior research on the New Cold War section, the phenomenon is understudied in relation to the use of information, propaganda, and discourse. This can be explained by two factors. First, the existing studies tend to focus on the realist perspective. Second, the New Cold War is still a new phenomenon and, naturally, many of its aspects are still understudied. Thus, the gap in existing scholarship was one of the motivators for this thesis.

Chapter 4: The New Cold War case studies

As previously mentioned, my thesis examines the discourse of three American and three Russian newspapers during the period of 2014-2017. This time frame was chosen due to its significance in the context of the US-Russia relationship, marked by two pivotal developments: the 2014-2015 conflict in Ukraine, including the annexation of Crimea, and Donald Trump's pre-election period and first year of the presidency from 2016 to 2017. The subsequent chapters will delve into these two events as "case studies", aiming to analyse and elucidate their importance in shaping the dynamics of the US-Russia relationship during that period.

4.1 First case study: Ukraine

The Ukrainian crisis was singled out as the most serious crisis in Europe after the end of the Cold War (Burns, 2015: 63). As a result of the Ukrainian crisis, relations between Washington and Moscow are arguably worse than US-Soviet/Russian relations at any time since 1986 (Saunders, 2014: 2). The Ukrainian crisis and the annexation of Crimea opened a new chapter of disagreements between the West and Russia. While the US and the EU introduced an array of economic sanctions on Russian individuals and businesses (BBC, 2017), Russia responded by banning Western agricultural products and raw materials (*The Guardian*, 2014). Furthermore, NATO suspended all practical cooperation with Russia (Reuters, 2014).

Indeed, the year 2014 was considered to be one of the most dramatic years in the history of Ukraine. It saw the annexation of Crimea by Russia, the proclamation of two pro-Russian republics, and the conflict between Ukrainian government troops and pro-Russian forces (Arcimaviciene, 2020: 17). While debating the development of the conflict, scholars stress the crucial role of an informational component, including the elements of ideologically polarised opposition in the discourse while contrasting the Russian and the American side (Horbyk, 2015; Pasitelska, 2017). Furthermore, identity politics are argued to be instrumentalised and manipulated by political actors (Zhurzhenko, 2014: 250). Suny (1999:144) argues that national identities are "provisional stabilities", which are "formed in actual historical time and space, in evolving economies, polities, and cultures, as a continuous search for some solidity in a constantly shifting world"). Using examples of post-Soviet republics, Suny has shown that

“national identities and conceptualizations of interest can change rapidly in politically fluid moments", such as military victory or defeat, secession or partial occupation of a state's territory. Thus, the case of Ukraine represents a unique moment in the recent Russia-US history, making it ever so important to explore the ways two countries form the identity of the Self and the Other.

Several authors have explored the role of language in the Ukrainian conflict. Arcimaviciene (2020) has analysed President Poroshenko’s and President Putin’s speeches, highlighting two different metaphoric approaches. It is concluded that President Poroshenko’s discourse features metaphors of the West being a Moral Agent, while Russia is portrayed as an Enemy/Criminal. In addition, Ukraine is described as a Victim, which necessitates an obligation from the West to protect it. This is achieved by rhetorically building an image of an in-group (the US, Canada, and the West) against the out-group that is represented by Russia. The image of the in-group is rhetorically built by using the concepts of freedom, democracy, and truth. In contrast, the image of the out-group is built by using the concepts of chaos, instability, and disruption. As such, the discourse creates two confrontational realities: the Self and the Other (Arcimaviciene, 2020:54-55).

By contrast, President Putin uses the language where Russia is portrayed as either a Victim or a Protector of the Oppressed (Crimea and Russian people). The in-group is described by using ideals like empathy, self-denial, strength, discipline, and spirituality. In addition, Putin is also referring to the concepts of patriotism and nationalism. Putin’s discourse is described as centred around the idea of targeting an ideological oppressor - the West (Arcimaviciene, 2020:55). Ideological criticism of the US is also found in the Russian media analysis by Pikulicka-Wilczewska and Sawka (2015). The findings indicate that Russia portrays the West as “lacking moral integrity”. In particular, the US is accused of promoting democracy and self-determination “just for export” while denying rights to African and Native Americans, and “judging everyone by their own flexible standards”. Furthermore, the West (above all the US) is related to seeking global dominance and acting without due consultation with others (Pikulicka-Wilczewska and Sawka, 2015: 185-188).

In addition, Pasitselska’s analysis (2017) of the discourse of the central Russian TV channels in the time frame from 2013-2017 has similar findings, arguing that there is a renewed discourse of the “American threat” that takes its roots from the Soviet Cold War discourse. The

study posits that a powerful cultural-historical construct of the Cold War opposition was restored during the Ukraine crisis: "Russia as a stronghold of stability" versus "USA, desirous for world domination". Further Cold War elements appear in the portrayal of the US as a "geopolitical rival" in the division of spheres of influence in the world. The most frequently used discursive delegitimising tool is the demonstration of "perverted" European values, comparing them to "traditional" Russian values (Pasitselska, 2017: 605-606).

The existing research on the rhetorical aspect of the 2014 Ukrainian conflict is mainly concerned with the position of Russia. At the same time, it reveals the usage of binary opposites and moral categorisation which is a characteristic element of the Cold War. The perspective on whether the rhetorical elements of both sides mirror the other is missing. Thus, using the analysis of the linguistic features of salient discourses and prevalent narratives constructed by both countries, this thesis reflects on and compares competing worldviews.

4.2 Second case study: Trump's pre-election year and his first year of the presidency: Why is Trump's case special?

Donald Trump's presidency surprised the world and became a key moment of the 21st century. Trump's status as a political outsider, his outspoken nature, and his willingness to change past practices and expectations of presidential attitudes and behaviour made him a constant focus of attention, as well as a cause of deep partisan divisions (Dimock and Gramlich, 2021). Perhaps the most controversial aspect of Trump's presidency was his pro-Russian attitude, with Vladimir Putin famously arguing that he wanted Trump to win the 2016 US presidential election (Murray, 2018), describing him as "a very outstanding person" and "talented" (cited in BBC News, 2015). Indeed, in 2016, YouGov research across the G20 nations published an article revealing that Trump was the preferred choice for the US presidency in only one country: Russia (Slutsky and Gavra, 2017).

Trump has been described as a "great disruptor" - one who has challenged some of the most ingrained assumptions not only about American domestic politics but also his nation's foreign policies. The American people who were extremely polarised, tired of their country's engagement in multiple wars, and angry over the economic situation, chose Trump as a non-establishment candidate in the 2016 US presidential election (Pant, 2020). Analysts, political experts, politicians, and members of the public were trying to explain his election win, with

several possible explanatory causes and no general agreement. However, Boczkowski and Papacharissi (2018: 12-14) argue that the general consensus seems to be that media played an important role in this extraordinary turn of events that led to Trump's election victory.

Due to the focus of the thesis, the first half of the section describes reasons why Trump's candidacy and subsequent presidency serve as curious cases in the US-Russia relationship. The following section deals with Trump's effects on the media. The final section of the case study offers an overview of whether media coverage of Trump could be using Cold War elements.

Trump in the context of the US-Russia relationship

As stated, one of Trump's notable goals prior to his presidency and his early presidency was to improve the relationship with Russia. Trump repeatedly stated that the relationship between the United States and Russia was the worst it has ever been (Shuya, 2019: 7). This was indeed supported by research from the Pew Center (2018), which indicated that almost 68% of Americans do not trust Russians and President Putin. Trump emphasised the need to improve the bilateral relationship by reminding Americans that both nations are the two biggest nuclear powers. Nonetheless, his sentiments differed from the ones of lawmakers on Capitol Hill. In particular, since his inauguration, lawmakers from the Democratic Party argued that Russia and the US are enemies, with this being associated with Russia's attack on the US Presidential Election which subsequently resulted in the election of Trump (Shuya, 2019: 7).

The Russian involvement in the US 2016 election involved a number of different things. Over the course of the election Russians checked state voter databases for insecurities; hacked the Hillary Clinton campaign, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and the Democratic National Committee; attempted to hack the campaign of Senator Marco Rubio and the Republican National Committee; spread politically damaging information on the internet; spread propaganda on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram; organised rallies in Florida and Pennsylvania; and arranged meetings with members of the Trump campaign and its associates. The aim, as established by the US intelligence community and supported by the evidence gathered by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, was to cause damage to the Clinton campaign, increase Trump's chances to win the election, and create distrust in American democracy overall (Abrams, 2019).

The involvement of Russia in the US election was famously branded the "cyber cold war against the West" by the then US presidential candidate Hillary Clinton who suffered from hackers stealing information linked to Clinton's campaign and passing it to Wikileaks so it could be released to undermine her. Nevertheless, the allegations of Russia's involvement were denied initially denied both by Trump and Putin (Walker, 2017).

However, in 2018, Trump announced that he accepts the US intelligence community's conclusion on Russia's meddling in the 2016 election (Abramson, 2018). Similarly, while Lawmakers representing the Republican Party had fought this claim early on, after the US-Russian Summit in Helsinki in 2018, they joined the Democratic lawmakers in protesting Trump's moves to re-establish relations with Russia. While aiming to improve the relationship between the two countries, the summit only further increased hostilities in the American public and rose the level of distrust that the American public had in Trump. The summit caused a further delegitimisation of Trump, turning Congress against Trump as a response to his failure to hold Putin and Russia responsible for meddling in the 2016 US Presidential Elections (Fox, 2018).

The relentless investigation angered Trump and prevented him from fulfilling his publicly stated intention of improving the relationship with Russia. Trump's potential connection to Putin got significant media coverage and was perceived by many as a threat to democracy, with *The Washington Post* calling it, the "crime of the century". Trump's decision to ignore the information supplied by the intelligence services and the consensus view of the Russian involvement shared by members of Congress and the media led to the presumption that Trump had something to hide. The most common explanation was that Trump was in some way indebted to Putin, either due to financial dependency or because the Kremlin held power over him (Sakwa, 2022: 14).

Importantly, the case of Trump illustrates the power of narrative. As argued by Sakwa (2022: 14):

> American innocence and democracy were portrayed as under attack by a uniquely and historically malevolent force. Instead of focusing on the social and political discontent exposed by the campaign and Trump's election, attention shifted to the Russian attack on American democracy.

The confrontation was not only encouraged by the media; it also became a subject of information warfare and ultimately media manipulation (Sakwa, 2022: 15). To provide an example, *The New York Times* published over 3000 stories on Russiagate, with several published a day at the peak. Sakwa (2022: 15) summarises this as an example of discourse concentration that dominates the information landscape, the media space, and the public. This raises the question of the causes behind such developments. Thus, the next section will look at the relationship between Trump and the media.

Trump's effects on the media

The case of Donald Trump was curious not just from the perspective of the events but also due to Trump's demeanour and the effect both of those had on the media. Trump often made headlines using simple, emotional, and provocative messages, thus drawing media attention, with his messages becoming "newsworthy". Nonetheless, the gained journalist's attention often resulted in Trump victimising himself. The consequential attention gained by Trump and his delegitimation of one political side by the other, which is normally expressed as polarisation, affected the balance of reporting in political coverage, creating an asymmetry in how much coverage both presidential candidates received. Thus, Trump's rhetoric and strategising affected the balance and quality of reporting (Zelizer, 2018: 25).

Indeed, Mir (2020: 27) argues that the American mainstream news media, including newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post,* increased the numbers of their readership due to "the feverish interest of the public in Donald Trump" that was encouraged and exploited by the media. Despite being targets of Trump's insults, the media continued to be eager to publish articles covering Trump due to it serving both Trump and the media outlets. As argued by *The New York Times* writer Jim Rutenberg:

> There is always a mutually beneficial relationship between candidates and news organizations during presidential years. But in my lifetime I have never seemed so singularly focused on a single candidacy.

Thus, Trump provided news media with a lot of content that attracted audiences, increased their ratings, and brought in money from advertisements. This was also associated with very

opinionated news media reporting. Boyer (2019) argues that Trump's behaviour "shattered presidential standards", which in turn caused *The New York Times* and other elite news outlets to scrap their rigorous, long-held standards of objectivity. *The New York Times* writer Jim Rutenberg (2016) argues that, while reporting of Trump "upsets balance, that idealistic form of journalism with a capital "J" we've [the journalists] been trained to always strive for", the "balance has been on vacation since Mr Trump stepped onto his golden Trump Tower escalator last year to announce his candidacy". However, Rutenberg views this as necessary, arguing that "If you view a Trump presidency as something that's potentially dangerous, then your reporting is going to reflect that".

Similarly, Carolyn Ryan, *The New York Times* senior editor for politics, (cited in Rutenberg, 2016) described the coverage of Trump in the following way:

> If you have a nominee who expresses warmth toward one of our most mischievous and menacing adversaries, a nominee who shatters all the norms about how our leaders treat families whose sons died for our country, a nominee proposing to rethink the alliances that have guided our foreign policy for 60 years, that demands coverage — copious coverage and aggressive coverage.

The Washington Post held a similar stance, with its managing editor Cameron Barr (cited in Rutenberg, 2016) stating that

> "When controversy is being stoked, it's our obligation to report that. If one candidate is doing that more aggressively and consistently than the other, that is an imbalance for sure. But it's not one that we create, it's one that the candidate is creating."

The liberal media source coverage of Donald Trump created accusations of them deliberately acting against him, particularly among Trump's supporters. For example, Rush Limbaugh, an American conservative political commentator, argued that the liberal media is trying to "take out" Trump (cited in Key, 2016). Trump himself criticised the media's behaviour in the run-up to the US election, saying "there has never been dishonesty like it" (cited in Sky News, 2016),

calling *The New York Times* "frauds" and arguing that the news profession used to have a very high favourability rating *before* he started his political career (cited in Boyer, 2019).

However, the lack of balanced reporting also appeared in the conservative media channels. For example, the conservative American media like the Fox News channel were reluctant to report false statements made by Trump, preferring to instead call them "controversies". The lack of objectivity in conservative media's stance made it largely indifferent to adverse Trump behaviour such as intolerance, name-calling, bullying, disregard for conflicts of interest, extremism, and exaggeration (Zelizer, 2018: 25).

As a result, both the liberal and conservative media coverage of Trump was characterised by journalists not being able to adequately contextualise events, evaluate or criticise Trump. Zelizer (2018, 27) argues that this was directly related to the Cold War thinking still present in the current media. The author posits that this is partly caused by Cold War enmities playing a crucial role in Trump's success, which includes mobilising fear, anger, frustration, and resentment to divide the society into "in-groups" and "out-groups" (Wodak, cited in Zelizer, 2018: 24). Thus, such coverage of Trump reminds of the way journalists of the Cold War era dealt with enemy formation – accepting it as dogma, underestimating its impact, and neglecting the idea of addressing the events with nuance and thoughtfulness. This offers a similar case to the one of Trump where covering anger, resentment, and polarisation associated with Trump made it easy for journalists to import enmity into their news coverage.

Zelizer (2018: 26-27) argues that this has happened in three ways. First, journalists have continued to embrace the Cold War tools - deference, cronyism, understatement, false equivalences, and lack of neutrality, impartiality, and balance, which were largely used in coverage of Trump. Second, the inability of journalists to go beyond the Cold War enmity in their coverage caused them to embrace the dichotomous black-and-white thinking, being unwilling to "stretch beyond people like themselves" (ibid: 27). Third, journalists' inability of seeing themselves as part of the problem resulted in their inability to see the impact of institutional culture that has an effect of journalist authority; with the culture showing patterns of entrenched power sharing, concentrated government ownership, self-censorship, corruption, inclination toward impunity, and corruption. Thus, Zelizer (2018: 27-28) concludes that journalistic judgement was flawed in the coverage of Trump the same way that it was in the

Cold War coverage, with many journalists using techniques that should have been left in the past.

Indeed, a 2017 study by the Pew Research Center indicates that media sources with a right-leaning audience offered more positive and fewer negative evaluations of Trump and his administration and had reporters who were "less likely to challenge something the president said than outlets whose audience leans to the left or those with a more evenly distributed audience". Stories from media sources with a right-leaning audience were at least five times more likely to include a generally positive evaluation of Trump's words or actions than stories from media sources with a left-of-centre or more mixed audience. Furthermore, they were also at least three times less likely to include negative assessments of Trump. In addition, another area of difference is the likelihood of the reporter of a story refuting or correcting a statement by Trump or a member of the administration. Overall, this was observed in one in ten stories, but it was about seven times as common in stories from outlets with a left-leaning audience than right-leaning ones.

While the evidence indicates that Trump's candidacy and presidency caused increasing polarisation in the US media, including the way Trump was portrayed, the Russian official media presents a different case. As argued in the study by Slutsky and Gavra (2017: 334), Russian official media actively supported Trump and intentionally constructed a positive opinion of him. Trump's coverage was overwhelmingly positive, with him being described as "not an ordinary person", "charismatic", "charming", "capable of thinking in broader scopes than his opponents", "a talented politician", and "a serious businessman" (ibid: 337). Furthermore, Trump was portrayed as the only presidential candidate who could save the relationship between the US and Russia. Trump was also praised for supporting Russia's policy abroad (ibid). The portrayal of Trump's relationship with Putin is equally positive and optimistic, praising Trump for acknowledging Putin as a strong leader and giving Putin credit for revealing the truth about Western leaders (Slutsky and Gavra, 2017: 339).

While the overviews of the aforementioned authors provide useful insights, the authors discussing Trump's US media coverage have not done it using the Cold War framework or themes. While Zelizer (2018) touches upon the tactics of the Cold War in Trump's American media coverage, the statements seem of a general nature, not providing specifics of how these Cold War media tactics manifest themselves in media discourse. In addition, the Cold War

themes in Russian media sources in the 2016-2017 time period associated with Trump's pre-election and early election period have not been investigated.

Thus, prior research on how Trump might have affected the use of the Cold War themes in American and Russian newspapers is lacking. As a result, my thesis aims to fill the gap in the literature by investigating whether and how Cold War themes are used in the selected American and Russian newspapers- *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Izvestiya*, *Argumenty Nedeli*, and *Novaya Gazeta*.

Chapter 5: Media

5.1 The use of media

The chapter is going to provide an overview of reasons for selecting newspapers to fulfil the goals set by the thesis. Section 5.1 explains how media as a broader type of resource is fit to address the set research questions using the poststructuralist framework. Section 5.2 is focused on the news media, including the subsections on news values and factuality and bias in news. Finally, section 5.3 justifies the choice of newspapers as a distinct media source and their suitability for the aims set in the thesis.

It should, however, be recognised that the use of the word "media" to draw general conclusions is problematic due to a range of different types of media sources, with each of them having its own specific features. There are obvious but important differences between different types of media in their channels or communication and the technologies they draw upon (Fairclough: 1995: 38). Nonetheless, a number of authors (e.g., Chouliaraki, 2008; Fairclough, 1989; Fairclough, 1995; Richardson, 2007; Mouffe, 1999; Oktar, 2001; Weber, 2002; Ferree et al., 2002) use the term "media" while examining the outlining the common features of different media types. While recognising the individuality of each type of source, I first aim to outline how the general features of media, as defined by the scholarship of the authors cited, connect to the poststructuralist lines of argument used in the thesis.

However, first and foremost, one must recognise that studying media is naturally frequently associated with studying discourse, albeit not being limited to it. In the case of my thesis, it would be impossible to reach its aims without studying the language. More specifically, in this case, the newspaper discourse is limited to studying language in a political context. Indeed, Chilton and Schaffner (1997: 206) argue that:

> It is surely the case that politics cannot be conducted without language, and it is probably the case that the use of language [..] leads to what we call 'politics' in a broad sense.

Pelinka (2007: 129) echoes this, insisting that "language must be seen and analysed as a political phenomenon". Additionally, these statements are not only applicable to the discourse

of political leaders. On the contrary, as stated by Seidel (1985: 45), political discourse can appear in various semantic places where meanings are "produced and/or challenged". Indeed, what source counts as "political" must be "determined situationally", being a matter of interpretation (Chilton and Schaffner, 1997: 212).

It should be noted that to fulfil the purpose of this thesis, it must be acknowledged that the media does more than just report the "truth". It also actively constructs the world and allows us to act on it by engaging with audiences. Indeed, a study by Chouliaraki (2008: 372) argues that media engender "specific dispositions to feel, think and act". Nonetheless, it cannot be convincingly argued that only media affect the way audiences act. Instead, many societal processes are affecting public action. Studying these factors in their entirety would require a complex and consuming analytical procedure that goes beyond the aims set by this thesis. Consequently, based on the theoretical arguments of Fairclough (1989), the assumption of the thesis is that media sources in general, including newspapers, report different realities, and in doing so, invite different reactions from their audiences.

The poststructuralist approach used in my thesis recognises that media language can be viewed as performative: it fulfils a certain function. Within media, rhetoric can be divided into three categories: informing, deliberating, and witnessing. They are employed by journalists as tools of reporting, and, consequently, constructing the world. As a result, journalism can create agendas, opinions, identities, and social realities (Fairclough, 1995: 2; Richardson, 2007: 13). We can thus conclude that knowledge about the world cannot come from simply observing it; instead, understanding the world is also a product of social processes and interactions (Burr, 2000: 4). As argued by Gergen and Gergen (2004: 7) "social construction is the creation of meaning through collaborative activities". Media sources, in particular, are believed to be central to these processes.

Being the source by which information is spread, it is also the system that selects and verifies information, therefore withholding and/or discrediting other information. As a consequence, reporting, filtering, and exchange of information create deliberative discourses (Dzur, 2002). However, in the majority of cases, media deliberation does not meet these criteria as it is created by many competing actors, all of whom represent different beliefs and interests (Ferree et al., 2002: 286). We can thus conclude that media can not only create meanings and construct our perceptions of the world but also contribute to the construction of different social realities. This

emphasises the importance of investigating the contents of newspapers which are believed to have different political leanings.

Even though answering Weber's question of whether "media reflect reality or construct it in the first place?" (2002: 2) goes beyond the aim of the thesis, it is reasonable to accept Schudson's (2000:38) statement that "newspapers participate in the construction of the mental worlds in which we live". Using the scholarship by Chouliaraki (2008: 372) who illustrates how media contribute to "dispositions to feel, think, and act", the thesis studies whether and how discursive and linguistic practices in newspapers are used to represent Russia as the "Other" of the US (and vice versa) and whether the formation of the image of the Other involves themes and discourse associated with the Cold War. Subsequently, I look at the types of "dispositions" that might be produced in readers. While doing this, my thesis employs poststructuralist critique which is concerned with uncovering the presence of binaries and dichotomies (Darkins, 2017), while also recognising that things are defined largely by what they are not (Edkins and Zehfuss, 2005).

The thesis recognises that the power of journalistic sources to do things and the way social power is used and represented in journalistic language are particularly important to consider. Journalism has social power through which it can create public discourse, shape people's opinions and views of social reality, and affect what people have opinions on. For these reasons, the impact of media sources needs to be taken very seriously (Richardson, 2007: 13).

Nonetheless, one should recognise that a single text on its own is often quite insignificant: the effects of media power are cumulative, working through the "repetition of particular ways of handling causality and agency and particular ways of positioning the reader". Therefore, media discourse can exercise a powerful influence on social reproduction because of the scale of the modern mass media and the extremely high level of exposure to what can be a relatively homogeneous output (Fairclough, 1989: 54). As a consequence, the thesis has used a relatively large number of newspaper articles and several American and Russian newspapers to determine which discursive themes have been repeatedly used in the texts.

5.2 News media as a source

The principal outlines of news media influence were outlined by Walter Lippmann in 1922, noting that what we know about the world is largely based on what the media decide to tell us, thus strongly influencing the priorities of the public. Images held by the public of public and political figures are the most obvious examples of agenda-setting by the news media (McCombs, 2011: 6). News media plays a central role in creating and then upholding a particular discourse that affects our daily lives and produces an environment where we make our perceptions about ourselves and the world around us (Conboy, 2007: 106). Furthermore, it is an obvious driver of political discussions, while also being the main source of information about politics (Zaller, 2003).

Importantly, news media uses certain ideologies to create and maintain social coherence. This involves maintaining a consistent set of views and interpretations of the world to appeal to a relatively stable audience. Therefore, we can expect to find evidence of how meanings and values are produced which reflect and construct both the dominant social and political frameworks of the news media and the wider society to which they belong (Conboy, 2007: 106).

Indeed, the fact that news content can have notable effects on political attitudes and outcomes has been confirmed empirically by Gentzkow and Shapiro (2004), Gentzkow (2006), Stromberg (2004), DellaVigna and Kaplan (2007), Gerber, Karlan, and Bergan (2006), among others. Thus, mass media reflect, manifest, and validate different contending political and societal discourses, which have an influence on the meaning construction and the evolution of society (Creutz-Kämppi, 2008). Fowler (1991: 4) further emphasises the role of news media by defining them as "a representation of the world in language" and arguing that because language is a semiotic code, it imposes a structure of values on whatever is represented. As such, news is "not a value-free reflection of facts". These statements are echoed by Schudson (2000: 38) who argues that news is "merely an account of the real world … not reality itself but a transcription". This means that a news story is a constructed reality with its own internal validity (Schudson, 1991: 141).

Consequently, the language used in news media sources helps to create and recreate categories in which a society represents itself by offering labelling expressions which strengthen images of groups. It allocates different semantic roles to the members of various groups, therefore dividing power and opportunity unequally among them (Fowler, 1991: 120). In addition, the

discourses of news media relate to their individual institutional and economic positions, and to the circumstances of the various news sources. Consequently, is evident that several cultural and economic features combined provide different sources with unique importance in the production and reproduction of ideology (Fowler, 1991: 120). As such, news journalism performs the dual role of interpretation and provocation: they report the events from a particular standpoint and generate various thoughts, opinions, and actions. In other words, they report and shape reality at the same time (Schudson, 2003: 2).

This serves as further evidence that news is not simply discovered and gathered but also constructed, with the news media selecting reporting based on a complex set of aspects. These aspects are known as "news values", playing a gatekeeping role and filtering and limiting the content of the news. The origins of news values include journalistic conventions, common consent, hierarchy, identity of sources, publication nature and regularity, and others (Fowler, 1991:13). While it is not possible to provide an overview of all scholarship published on news values due to a high number of publications on this topic, given that the empirical analysis of the thesis concerns itself with newspaper content, I provide an insight into the findings of several key authors.

5.3 News values

The set of values applied by different new media – local, regional, national and international – are as varied as the media themselves (Brighton and Foy, 2007: 1). One of the most influential papers on this topic is "The Structure of Foreign News" by Galtung and Ruge (1965). Since the publication, news values have been an important concept in journalism to explain gatekeepers' choices in the media world (Meissner, 2015), continuing to be named as "prerequisites" of news selection in the 21st century (Herbert, 2000: 72-73). Indeed, Harcup and O'Neill (2001) consider news selection one of the central questions in journalism. Thus, I begin by providing a brief insight into the arguments of Galtung and Ruge (1965), followed by a number of additional academic studies that build on Galtung and Ruge's scholarship and provide additional ideas.

Galtung and Ruge (1965: 64) present the argument that the global community of nations is structured by a number of variables and highly stratified into what the authors call "topdog" and "underdog" nations. Consequently, the world is seen as divided into two relatively similar

levels of human organisation: the inter-individual and the inter-national. The two levels are described as connected to each other, with nations being inter-dependent.

Galtung and Ruge (1965: 64) conclude that action is based on a national actor's perception of reality, while international action is based on the image of international reality. While the authors recognise that the image is not formed only by news media, their omnipresence and perseverance make them one of the most important international image formers. Based on these premises, Galtung and Ruge (ibid: 65-71) indicate twelve basic news values, providing a structural basis for journalists to report stories that are "newsworthy". Galtung and Ruge's twelve basic news include frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite people, reference to persons, and reference to something negative. Provided that people can absorb a limited number of news, Galtung and Ruge (1965) recognise that journalists select and report information to appeal to their readership. Therefore, news values are employed by news producers who structure the news around these values.

Peterson (cited in McQuail, 1992: 217) whose studies are focused on foreign news and international news selection, supports the statements of Galtung and Ruge (1965), arguing that:

> [t]he results suggest strongly that news criteria shape a picture of the world's events characterised by erratic, dramatic and uncomplicated surprise, by negative or conflictual events involving elite nations and persons.

Gans (1980: 147-152) adds to these arguments, arguing that domestic news stories gain importance by satisfying one or more of the following indicators: rank in government and other hierarchies, impact on the nation and the national interest, impact on large numbers of people, and significance for the past and future. Additionally, Schultz (2007: 197) notes that who is applying news values can be as important as news values themselves. The author posits that the level of autonomy of a journalist making choices about news is dependent on the type of news organisation that employs them, the type of journalism they produce as well as the level at which the journalists operate. Therefore, some journalists have a more powerful position than others with "different forms of capital being the key to understanding the distribution of agents in the social space" (ibid: 194).

Nonetheless, Hall (cited in Cohen and Young, 1981) illustrates the need to add "ideological news values" to the "formal news values" (such as linkage, recency, and newsworthiness of event/person). The idea of ideological news values deals with what the author describes as the "consensus knowledge" of the world, which provides a framework within which the news operates. Furthermore, Hall and Brunsdon (2021: 85) applying the perspective of Gramsci and Althusser, argue that while Galtung and Ruge's (1965) rules can help to identify the formal elements within the construction of news, they do not explain the ideological meanings behind such "rules".

This argument is based on the premise that formal news criteria selection is rooted in ideology due to the selection process taking place out of awareness. Thus, the authors argue that we also need to see formal news values as an ideological structure. As a result, Hall and Brunsdon (ibid: 87) view formal news criteria as rooted in the ideological sphere. The authors illustrate this with a statement that, unless we define what is seen as normal, natural, and right about one's society, we can't report news based on criteria such as violence or unpredictability. Therefore, Hall and Brunsdon (ibid) conclude that ideology is a fundamental element in the news. As argued by Gramsci (cited in Hall and Brunsdon, 2021: 89-91), ideology consists of a collection of preconstituted elements, which can be arranged and rearranged in many different ways. Consequently, the dominant ideology of society often appears redundant: we are already familiar with it, we have seen it before, and many different signs and messages seem to signify the same ideological meaning. Ideology classifies the world in terms of political and moral values, giving events a certain ideological reference in the current settings. Thus, we must recognise that ideological discourse presents events based on the preferred political and moral explanation. These statements are echoed by Hartley (1982: 79) who argues that focusing on news values alone may disregard the ideological determinants of news stories.

While the aims of this thesis are not directly related to determining which of the news values are used, they might be helpful in understanding why particular themes frequent the news. However, while Galtung and Ruge (1965) suggest a list of factors and then formulate their hypotheses, my thesis does an empirical study of what actually appeared in newspapers, approaching the matter from another angle. Thus, due to the nature of the aims of the thesis, it adapts the ideas of Hall (1973) who stresses the role of explaining the ideological meanings behind news values. In addition, while considering the potential bias of the selected

newspapers, I note the arguments by Schultz (2007) who emphasises the importance of the producer of the news in the creation of news values.

5.4 Newspapers as a source

Wodak and Kryzanowski (2008: 32-33) discuss the general importance of print media, arguing that high-circulation print media reflects the social mainstream or a variety of mainstreams, given that in pluralistic societies there is more than one. Thus, if one is interested in dominant discourses, the major daily and weekly print media is a relevant source to use. Another reason for using print media is related to their impact. While it is considered axiomatic within the critical discourse analysis paradigm that all discourse is not only socially constituted but also constitutive, this dialectic is particularly relevant to the print media. Dissemination to large audiences enhances the power of discourse that creates widely shared constructions of reality. Thus, print media represents a key source for social scientists.

More than any other news media form, the newspaper has an explicitly normative role in how people perceive the world (Conboy, 2007: 12). Large numbers of people are reliant on newspapers for information on events of national importance, with newspapers being the ones deciding which events qualify to be turned into stories. It is important to see what they say about society because they contribute to the character of society (Bell, 1998). Thus, the development of the news can be considered the social construction of reality (Conboy, 2007: 5).

Given the power and significance of news journalism, it is no surprise that the discourse of newspapers continues to be analysed (Richardson, 2007: 2). In his book *Analysing Newspapers* Richardson (ibid: 10-14) outlines several key assumptions related to newspaper language. First, language is produced by society and helps to recreate it, producing social realities. Second, the use of language enacts reality. Third, the use of language has power, with some sources having more power than others. Fourth, language is political, which is the consequence of language being social and having power. Finally, language is always active and directed at doing something.

Fowler (1991: 87) echoes this statement, arguing that language is a practice and, consequently, speaking and writing something is at the same time a way of doing something. Lexical choices

in some cases suggest that newspapers are going beyond simply posing questions to readers or asking for judgement and are contributing to the formation of discourse. Employing what Fairclough (2007: 101-136) calls "intertextuality" – a reference to previous historical texts – the newspapers tacitly address political or social issues. They adopt positions on these issues and thus encourage further audience deliberation. Using a combination of suggestive, intertextual, and critical words, newspapers not only inform their readers but also steer them in certain directions.

Furthermore, Fowler (1991: 122-124) suggests that the articulation of ideology in the language of the news fulfils, cumulatively and through daily recitation, a background function of reproducing the beliefs and paradigms of the community generally. Against that background, the individual papers are involved in more particular and active engagements with the ideas of the culture, modes of engagement, and worldviews, which differ according to the situation and needs of each paper. The economic and political circumstances of the newspaper industry give it a vested interest in mediating ideas from particular perspectives, varying somewhat from paper to paper, and so the point of view, or worldview, of a particular paper has a function and an expression that needs to be studied.

In addition, it must also be emphasised that there is some evidence indicating that newspaper reporting has generally become less neutral over time. The analysis by Kavanagh et al. (2019: xvii) finds that there were quantifiable changes in certain linguistic areas between the pre-and post-2000 periods in the news presentation in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, with the post-2000 reporting engaging in more storytelling, personal perspective, and emotion. Thus, the information has become more subjective and consists less of the detailed event- or context-based reporting that used to characterise news reporting in the past. In addition, the American Press Institute (2018) reports that only 43% of Americans believe that they can tell the difference between news and opinion in online-only news. Furthermore, 42% of American respondents said that news reporting seems closer to commentary than just the facts. This point supports the idea of examining the overall discourse of newspapers, encompassing various types of articles, as the opinions of newspaper audiences may be influenced by the newspaper as a unified entity. This approach is particularly relevant due to the limited focus on or comprehension of different article types.

5.5 The use of poststructuralism for newspaper analysis

The conceptual framework draws on the literature review to develop the foundation that guides the discourse analysis. Building from the theory of poststructuralism, framing is adopted as a tool to identify speech acts in newspaper articles. As part of the larger context of media effects research (Scheufele, 1999: 104), framing is considered a narrative structure within journalism; a regulative technique intended to "prioritise some facts or developments over others, thereby promoting one particular interpretation of events" (Norris et al., 2003: 11). My thesis assumes that journalists can present alternative realities, and that audience interpretation will vary depending on how events are framed. As Entman (1993: 52) explains: "To frame is to select aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular … causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described."

It is still widely believed that poststructuralism advocates liberty in interpretation. For example, one of the leading English authors and critics David Lodge argues that deconstruction "opens up the text to multiple interpretations" (1988: 25). Indeed, adopting Derridean terminology, Roland Barthes (1979: 8) argues that "the critic dismantles the text's "presence" and in the process dismantles the I who reads the text. Barthes (ibid) defines the I as already being "a plurality of other texts, of codes which are infinite". In fact, given that texts can have multiple meanings, the author argues that it is the reader who determines the work's meaning rather than the writer.

Therefore, Barthes (1979: 10) defines subjectivity as only a "deceptive plenitude . . . merely the wake of all the codes which constitute me". The author argues in favour of his "step-by-step" method of working one's way through the text, which he separates into units of meaning and discloses the "different levels of connotation and the codes that constitute them" (ibid: 12). Similarly, Miller (1982:1) argues one's focus should be on how meaning arises from the reader's encounter with words.

We conclude that discourse is both the product of structures and the producer of structures. It is this process of being produced and re-produced. Reproduction may be conservative, sustaining continuity, or transformatory, causing changes. Orders of discourse embody ideological assumptions, and these sustain and legitimise existing relations of power. If there

is a shift in power relations, one can expect a transformation of orders of discourse. Conversely, if power relations remain relatively stable, this may give a conservative quality to reproduction (Fairclough, 1989: 39-40). As a result, discourse and its effects involve not just elements in the social situations of discourse, but partial determinants of social orders (ibid: 42). People are not always aware of those determinants; therefore, the approach of poststructuralism can help with the analysis of meanings created in discourse.

It has been suggested that newspapers constantly and actively set the limits that audiences use to interpret and discuss public events (Tuchman, 1978: ix). Applying definitions of framing broadly to this dissertation, it is assumed that journalists frame speech acts to solicit distinct consequences and outcomes. In considering how newspapers inform, deliberate and witness, this thesis examines how frames might potentially construct ideas, contexts, and actions in readers.

The study of speech acts in national newspapers could thus contribute to the numerous studies on the roles that the press plays in contemporary society. Thus, my thesis relies on the poststructuralist theory which maintains that almost all meanings are socially constructed and that all discourse is a social product and a social practice - and my contention that all discourse is better understood if subjected to critical linguistic analysis.

5.6 Factuality in news: journalistic objectivity and bias

My empirical task of analysing newspaper articles necessitates consideration of the concept of media bias and its potential manifestations. Media bias refers to the selective presentation or coverage of information by media outlets, which may favour certain perspectives, ideologies, or political affiliations while marginalising others (Schiffer, 2018: 40). Since newspapers serve as influential sources of information and shape public opinion (Foos and Bischof, 2021), understanding the presence and influence of media bias in their content is crucial for an accurate and comprehensive analysis. However, the issue of media bias is complex. When discussing the issue, the criticism directed at media bias is applicable to *any* representational discourse. Put simply, any statement or written content about the world is expressed from a specific ideological standpoint.

Similarly, in the realm of journalism, the term "objectivity" stands as a fundamental professional value. In essence, objectivity relates to identifying facts and evidence, separating journalism from propaganda, entertainment, or fiction (Sambrook, 2012: 3). Nonetheless, the concept of objectivity encompasses diverse definitions and interpretations within the profession, leading to variations over time within individual countries and differences among journalists from various cultural and political contexts (Donsbach and Klett, 1993). The discussion on objectivity also raises the question of whether it is possible to be objective. As stated by Streckfuss (1990: 974): "Objectivity was founded not on a naive idea that humans could be objective, but on a realization that they could NOT". Streckfuss (ibid: 982) discovered that once the word "objectivity" had started appearing in journalist textbooks, it had shrunk to "a practical posture of day-to-day production", which meant separating facts from opinion and impartial and balanced reporting. Nevertheless, the concepts of impartiality and balance are also subjects of ongoing debates and discussions (eg., Wallace, 2013; Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2014). Indeed, Muñoz-Torres (2012) highlights the continuous and unresolved discourse surrounding objectivity. He observes that this debate is plagued by misunderstandings arising from the ambiguous interpretations of the concept. The epistemological essence of objectivity in journalism lies in the notion of value-free facticity, where journalists set aside their opinions, rely on factual information, and report in a neutral manner. According to Muñoz-Torres (2012: 570), in addition to the epistemological interpretation of objectivity, there is also an ethical dimension. From an ethical standpoint, objectivity encompasses notions of "balance", "fairness", and "non-distortion", which relate to the moral integrity of journalists.

To clarify the concept, Muñoz-Torres traces its philosophical origins to the theory of scientific objectivity rooted in empiricist philosophy and positivism. He suggests that the idea of objectivity is built upon the flawed premises of positivism, which considers facts to be devoid of values. However, Muñoz-Torres (2012: 577) argues that the fact-value dichotomy is erroneous, as knowledge requires a subject, the knower, to acknowledge the object of knowledge. Moreover, according to Muñoz-Torres, if the knower has no prior experiences, they will lack the necessary knowledge of what to search for and how to identify a fact once they encounter it. Thus, despite their best efforts to remain objective, these inherent subjectivities influence their perception of events and how they interpret and present information. As a result, complete detachment from personal views is practically impossible. Considering this, Jones (2009: 83) contends that the role of journalists is not simply to present absolute truth but rather to assist the public in determining what holds true. According to Jones

(ibid: 88), journalists should strive to uncover a pragmatic truth rather than an idealised and flawless one. Indeed, when discussing media "objectivity", Stephens (2023), a columnist from *The New York Times*, contends that journalists are responsible for gathering and presenting pertinent facts and credible evidence. However, beyond this point, truth tends to be influenced by personal interpretations, "lived experiences", moral assessments, and other subjective elements that impact all journalists but should not shape their reporting.

What makes things more challenging is that media bias and objectivity can differ significantly between democratic and non-democratic countries due to various factors that shape the media landscape in each context. In democratic countries, media outlets strive for impartiality and balance in their reporting to ensure that diverse perspectives are presented to the readers. However, achieving absolute objectivity is considered challenging, and bias can still exist in the reporting process. On the other hand, in non-democratic countries, media freedom is often restricted, and journalists may face government censorship and control, leading to significant bias and lack of objectivity in their reporting. In non-democratic countries, media bias is often prevalent due to government control and censorship. Journalists may face pressures to adhere to the government's narrative, leading to biased and propagandistic reporting that serves those in power rather than the public. The lack of media freedom in non-democratic countries makes it challenging for readers to access diverse viewpoints and critically evaluate information. Thus, the media becomes a tool for reinforcing the regime's agenda and suppressing dissent, which undermines the public's access to accurate and honest journalism. Media bias and lack of objectivity in non-democratic countries can have severe implications for the readers. The dissemination of biased and manipulated information limits the readers' ability to make informed decisions and participate effectively in their societies. It restricts their access to diverse perspectives, hindering their understanding of complex issues and events (Repucci, 2019). In the case of my research, this aspect was particularly important, given the well-known issues with press freedom in Russia. Thus, while examining Russian newspapers, it was important to consider this issue.

Recognising that there are many interpretations and lists of what constitutes media bias is essential in understanding the complexity and subjectivity of this topic. It is crucial to acknowledge that media bias can be multifaceted and can manifest in various ways, making it challenging to provide definitive and universally accepted definitions and lists of bias types.

However, in research, we must choose a framework of reference. In this case, I considered the twelve types of media bias as outlined by Mastrine (2022: 3-21), briefly outlining them below:

1) *Spin*- using imprecise, attention-grabbing, or exaggerated language. When journalists apply a "spin" to a story, they veer off from objective and verifiable facts
2) *Unsubstantiated Claims*- in their reporting, journalists occasionally present assertions without providing supporting evidence to substantiate them. This may occur in the article's headline or within the main body of the text. Such statements that give the appearance of factual information but lack specific evidence are a clear indication of this particular form of media bias.
3) *Opinion Statements Presented as Facts*- at times, journalists may employ subjective language or expressions while claiming to report in an objective manner. A subjective statement is one that relies on the writer's personal opinions, assumptions, beliefs, tastes, preferences, or interpretations.
4) *Sensationalism/Emotionalism*- Sensationalism involves presenting information in a manner designed to shock or strongly affect the audience. This approach often creates a false impression of a significant climax, suggesting that all prior reporting has culminated in this ultimate story. Sensationalist language tends to be dramatic but lacks clarity. It frequently includes exaggerated statements, sacrificing accuracy, and distorting reality to manipulate or evoke intense emotions in readers.
5) *Mudslinging/Ad Hominem*- mudslinging is a form of media bias that involves making unfair or derogatory statements about an individual with the intention of harming their reputation. Likewise, ad hominem attacks focus on criticising a person's motives or character traits rather than addressing the substance of their argument or idea.
6) *Mind Reading*- mind reading takes place when a writer presumes to understand what another person is thinking or believes that their own perspective accurately represents the objective reality of the world.
7) *Slant*- Slant occurs when journalists selectively present only certain aspects of a story, often cherry-picking information or data to favour one side of the narrative.
8) *Flawed Logic*- a method of distorting people's opinions or reaching unjustified conclusions based on the provided evidence.
9) *Bias by Omission*- a form of media bias where media organisations decide not to report on specific stories, exclude information that could back an alternative perspective, or leave out voices and viewpoints from the other side of the narrative.

10) *Omission of Source Attribution*- a well-rounded and informative article should furnish the background or context of a story and attribute information to named sources ("on-the-record" information). However, it is not uncommon for reporters to refer to groups like "immigration opponents" without specifying the individuals or organisations behind these labels.
11) *Bias by Story Choice*- occurs when a media organisation's bias becomes evident through its selection of which stories to include or exclude. For instance, an outlet that frequently covers climate change might showcase a distinct political inclination compared to another outlet that prioritises stories on gun laws. This suggests that the editors and writers at the outlet perceive certain subjects as more noteworthy, significant, or relevant, thus revealing their political bias or partisan agenda.
12) *Subjective Qualifying Adjectives*- journalists may display bias when they incorporate subjective and qualifying adjectives before particular words or phrases. Qualifying adjectives are descriptive words that ascribe specific characteristics to a noun. By using such qualifiers, journalists influence how one perceives or interprets an issue, instead of merely presenting the facts and allowing one to form their own judgments.

While my research does not directly concern locating bias, it is still useful to be aware of their types while conducting the analysis and thus approach the articles with a more critical mindset. It allows me to be better at recognising factors that might influence the presentation of information. Consequently, it helps me to critically engage with the information presented in newspapers and develop a deeper understanding of the complexities of the information landscape, thereby allowing me to make more informed judgments.

Chapter 6: Methodology: a theoretical outline

6.1 Outline of approach: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

This thesis examines the use of Cold War themes in selected Russian and American newspaper discourse in accordance with the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Thus, before proceeding to discuss CDA as a method and justifying its choice, it is necessary to establish what is meant by the term "discourse". Discourse can be viewed as a field of both ideological processes and linguistic processes with a link between the two. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002: 1) argue that language is structured and understood according to patterns associated with a particular social domain and which people tend to follow. Thus, discourse is "a particular way of talking about and understanding the world or an aspect of it" (ibid). Given that discourse is understood to be a pattern of communication within a particular context, its nature is socially constructed knowledge that has the power to "selectively represent and transform" as a result of a given context (Machin and van Leeuwen, 2007: 61).

Given that my thesis uses newspapers, one must examine how "discourse" is perceived in the news and, more specifically, how it fits newspaper analysis. For the purposes of the news media, discourse can be viewed as an expression of systems of knowledge and power through language. Analysis of the language of the news provides an account of how news is structured and what vocabulary is being used, drawing language into a wider set of references to social, cultural, and political areas. Thus, discursive language analysis tries to establish the connection between the language of the news and the dominant patterns of belief and power. Consequently, it can be seen as an investigation of the strategies that legitimise social order. Since discourse analysis looks at how the language of the news simultaneously acts upon the social world and is created by that world, it can be considered a form of speech act analysis. News media allow access to resources such as information, opinion, and institutional authority. In addition, it encourages us to consider the political implications of the texts and helps us chart the relations between social groups. The critical interpretation allows us to analyse socially shared representations of hierarchies and the power relationships they create (Conboy, 2007: 117-118).

In light of this, I must examine the theoretical basis of CDA as a method and the argumentation behind its selection. In doing so, I should begin by clarifying that it can be difficult to precisely define CDA's specific practices and goals as the method allows for various approaches to studying media texts, which all unite in their epistemological commitment to critique (Fairclough, 1995). In spite of the fact that CDA is multidisciplinary and methods differ, notable practitioners have identified and used consistency in the approach, including van Dijk, van Leeuwen, Wodak, and Fairclough. Namely, using CDA, a social problem is identified, and the aim of the analysis is to highlight "ideology and power" in texts (Wang, 2014: 2).

CDA views "language as discourse and as social practice" (Fairclough, 2001: 21) and studies the relationship between language and ideology (van Dijk: 1997). Using and elaborating on Halliday's (1985) approach that perceives "language as firmly rooted in its sociolinguistic context" (cited in Orpin, 2005: 37), CDA involves a description of the text, interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction, and explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context (cited in Fairclough, 2001: 21–22). Fairclough (1995: 132-133) summarises the essence of CDA in the following way:

"By critical discourse analysis I mean analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power, and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony."

Consequently, CDA as a method allows analysts to explore how the ways of representing the world, performing identity, and constructing belonging are normalised in media spaces, as well as revealing how media representations vary the discursive constitution of different social phenomena. Given that my thesis concerns itself with exploring how the narratives of the selected Russian and American newspapers articulate the identity of the Other, consequently revealing the political positions presented to their audiences, CDA as a method is fit to achieve these goals. By using the poststructuralist understanding of meaning and representation being indeterminate and contextual, and the "real" world being "constructed" (Woodward, 2009: 397), I aim to explore how newspaper "power" works to produce "the truths", including the contexts they appear in.

In addition, the selection of CDA as my approach provides a framework to answer the research question of whether one can describe the recent newspaper American and Russian newspaper rhetoric using Cold War themes. It is also fit to examine the differences and similarities between the Russian and the American newspaper discourse in terms of the ways they describe each other. Finally, it allows us to build a comparison between the two selected time frames. CDA helps to ascertain how the text is understood as a social and cultural practice and how it is perceived by its audience by doing a textual analysis to explore latent meanings and implicit patterns. In light of the idea that language use is a social practice that is historically situated, socially shaped, and socially constitutive of social identities, relationships and representations, CDA is useful for investigating newspapers and their symbolic power (Phillips, 2007). Indeed, it should be noted that CDA has been successfully used for a high number of studies focused on newspaper analysis, such as Yu and Zheng (2022); Alyahya (2023); and Shojaei et al. (2013) among many others.

As mentioned, CDA has various approaches to studying media texts, with researchers varying their approach based on their research aims and epistemology. Therefore, my research has a certain level of flexibility in selecting a fitting CDA approach. In this case, it is critical to emphasise that the thesis adapts the poststructural thought, which examines how certain mechanisms of power - political technologies of inclusion/exclusion – are normalised and legitimised (Çalkıvik, 2017: 2). As stated by Gregory (cited in Çalkıvik, 2017: 2), "[p]oststructural practices … investigate how the subject - in the dual senses of the subject-matter and the subject-actor - of international relations is constituted in and through discourses of world politics." Thus, in poststructuralist theory, there is no such thing as value-neutral, objective claims and universal truths (Çalkıvik, 2017: 3). The poststructuralist theory emphasises viewing discourse as a meaningful practice by which human subjects experience and comprehend themselves and others. As a consequence, according to the poststructuralist perspective, power flows through society, benefitting certain positions and viewpoints (Newman, 2020).

An approach in CDA embracing the poststructuralist position is the "Essex school", which can be characterised as a theoretical approach of poststructuralist discourse theory. It was pioneered by Laclau and Mouffe (1985), understanding discourses as systems of meaningful practices

that form the identities of subjects and objects. More specifically, Laclau (2017: 585) uses the term "empty signifier", illustrating the idea that concepts do not have a predetermined meaning.

In light of those theoretical and epistemological considerations, my thesis uses the CDA conceptual approach outlined by Wodak and Meyer (2009) in combination with Laclau's notion of empty signifiers. In the following chapters, I provide a more detailed explanation of those concepts and their application to my thesis.

6.2 Key CDA concepts

As discussed earlier, prominent CDA scholars including van Dijk, van Leeuwen, Wodak, and Fairclough have identified that a common feature in CDA approaches is highlighting "ideology and power" in texts. Similarly, Titscher et al. (2000: 151) emphasise the importance of power and ideology, stating that they may have an effect on each level of creation, consumption, and understanding of discourse. In addition, the way discursive practices represent things and position people can have major ideological effects and affect power relations (Wodak, 1996: 15).

In light of this, it is not surprising that the chosen CDA approach for this thesis based on the scholarship of Wodak and Meyer (2009: 1) focuses on three salient concepts: critique, ideology, and power. First, my thesis uses the concept of "critique" as a guide in empirical analysis. Second, the concepts of "ideology" and "power" are used as empty signifiers or two key concepts that are then filled with meaning, in this case by using the selected newspaper discourse.

Critique

Critique is conventionally understood as the practical linking of social and political engagement with the sociologically informed construction of society. Therefore, "critique" is fundamentally about highlighting the interconnectedness of things. CDA emphasises the need to gain a thorough understanding of how language is used to form and transmit knowledge, to organise social institutions or to exercise power (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 7). Reisigl and Wodak (2001) define being "critical" as opening up complexity, challenging reductionism,

dogmatism and dichotomies, and by conducting these processes, making opaque structures of social power relations and ideologies manifest. Indeed, researchers in the field of CDA typically understand their work as critical of society or particular social phenomena. These scholars aim to uncover power struggles, ideology, and social injustice in a variety of discourses (Herzog, 2016: 279).

van Dijk (cited in Billig, 2003: 38) elaborates on these premises, arguing that the targets of CDA are power elites that create social inequality and injustice. Thus, CDA is seen to be a way of criticising the social order. Similarly, Fairclough (1992: 12) argues that "critical approaches differ from non-critical approaches in not just describing discursive practices, but also showing how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies." In language studies, the term "critical" was first used to characterise an approach that supported the idea of using language to explain social events (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 7). Nonetheless, the terms "critique", "critical", and "criticism" have a number of understandings in CDA. First, critical discourse analysis researchers "make the implicit explicit". In particular, it entails making explicit the implicit relationship between discourse, power and ideology, challenging surface meanings. Being "critical" involves careful and transparent text analysis, with some approaches also bringing the socio-political and structural context into the analysis. At this level, CDA research involves revealing interests and contradictions among the text creators (Unger, Wodak, and Khosravinik, 2016: 3-4). More recently, the concept of critique is used to denote the link between social and political engagement and the sociologically informed construction of society (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 7).

In my thesis, I use this approach to examine two key things. First, I explore how the selected newspaper discourse is used to create and describe "empty signifiers"- in this case - the concepts of ideology and power, thus filling those concepts with meaning. Second, I look into how social and political events and settings can explain concept formation in particular ways. In other words, I investigate how the selected American and Russian newspapers describe the Other through the concepts of power and ideology. In addition, social and political contexts are used to reveal their interconnectedness with the newspaper discourse.

There is a caveat that concerns this approach. The task of selecting the key Cold War themes or concepts is a challenging one due to a lack of studies that provide a clear framework. As a consequence, I was tasked with finding an approach that would fit the research philosophy of

poststructuralism and be suitable to address my research questions. Naturally, as is the case with all research approaches using CDA, using the key concepts of "power" and "ideology" meant setting certain limits to the research scope. However, the two concepts are often discussed in relation to the Cold War (see e.g., Kramer, 1999; Lewkowicz, 2018). While admittedly setting certain boundaries, the concepts of "power" and "ideology" open up a field of possibilities in exploring how each side constructs the Other. In addition, it allows one to be open to discovering tropes in state image construction that go beyond the ones of the Cold War. The following sections aim to achieve two goals. First, it explains the concepts of "power" and "ideology" in CDA. Second, it illustrates the importance of these concepts in relation to the Cold War, as well as the more recent tensions between the US and Russia, being widely described as the New Cold War (see e.g., McLaughlin, 2020; Smith, 2019; Hahn, 2018; Conradi, 2017).

Power

Power is a central concept of CDA, as defined by Wodak and Meyer (2009). The importance of the concept in CDA is also emphasised by other scholars (see Titscher et al., 2000: 151) who argue that a central focus of CDA is the question of power, including how it is represented and, both explicitly and implicitly, reproduced in the news. CDA scholars often analyse the language use of those in power, with researchers being interested in the way discourse (re)produces social domination. It sees power as a systemic and constitutive element or characteristic of society because the text in CDA is often seen as a manifestation of social action which itself is widely determined by social structure. Thus, CDA interests itself in overall structural features in social fields or in overall society. In modern societies, power plays an important role in understanding the dynamics of control (of action), while also being mostly invisible. Therefore, power's manifestations are examined by CDA, with the relationship between social power and language being a permanent topic. The notion of power struggles, as well as the intertextuality and recontextualization of competing discourses in various public spaces, are objects of close examination (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 19-20).

Power also revolves around relations of difference; particularly about how social structures differ. Since language and other social matters are inextricably tied together, language is involved in power in several ways: it indexes and expresses power, and it is involved in power disputes. Regardless of the source of power, language can be used to challenge, subvert, and

alter power distributions in the short and long term, *regardless* of whether power derives from language (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 20). The majority of critical discourse analysts thus agree with Habermas' (cited in Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 20) claim that "language is also a medium for dominating and imposing social force".

Thus, we note that power and language are interconnected. While power's source is not *always* language, it is certainly employed in efforts to strengthen one's own power, defy the power of others, and change power dynamics. In other words, one does not deny the existence of a material reality beyond language or the fact that "knowledge" becomes accepted as such due to the power and prominence of certain actors in society. As a result, language can serve as a finely articulated means of expressing differences in power within social hierarchies, becoming powerful through its use by powerful people (Mc Morrow, 2018; Elsharkawy, 2011).

Using language, certain actors, concepts, and events are put in binary oppositions, with one element of the set being favoured over the other to create or perpetuate meaning. The power relation that is associated with this relationship attempts to reinforce the preferred meaning within the discursive construct. International relations as a discipline has many of these oppositions which are used by elites to both create favourable meaning out of certain events and to allow for this meaning to be easily understood and accepted by the wider audience. One of the most common uses of binary oppositions is to establish different groups or countries in terms of "Them" and "Us" (McMorrow, 2018).

Barnett and Duvall (2005: 55) use the concepts of "structural power" and "productive power" to describe these processes. Structural power is described as the creation and reproduction of internally related positions of subordination or domination that actors occupy. It is thus defined as "the constitution of all social subjects with various social powers through systems of knowledge and discursive practices of broad and general social scope." Productive power concerns discourse and the social processes through which meaning is produced, fixed, lived, experienced, and changed. Structural power typically envisions hierarchical and binary relations of domination. Contrarily, productive power considers the boundaries of all social identity, and the capacity and inclination for action for both the socially advantaged and disadvantaged, as well as a number of various social subjects that are not included in a binary hierarchical relationship. Some of the examples of the analysis of productive power in international relations are related to the discursive creation of the subjects, the fixing of

meanings, and the terms of action, of global politics. Categories of classification, like "civilised", "rogue", "European", "unstable", "Western", and "democratic states", are representative of productive power, as they create asymmetries of social capacities (ibid: 56).

This thesis employs the poststructuralist approach in order to understand the concept of "power", which holds the argument that language is inseparably bound up with power, where power is viewed as representational power. It emerges in and through texts and discursive practices by means of which ideas are circulated and how these interpretations are transformed into conceptual prisons, which stop meanings from being fixed (Merlingen, 2013). In this case, the key concept of "power" is employed to address the issue of power struggles between the US and Russia, *revealing what "power" entails for each side when describing the Other*. While this study is exploring language, in particular, the discourse of the selected newspapers, my thesis supports the poststructuralist and CDA view that language and power (re)create each other.

In addition, it must be noted that instead of exclusively viewing one side as "oppressed", in my empirical analysis, I reflect on the present-day power struggle and balance between the two superpowers, as discussed by several authors (e.g., Stent, 2020; Davis and Slobodchikoff, 2022). Notably, there is no consensus on how to classify Russia as an international power and views on its global impact are varied (Muraviev, 2018). While admitting Russia's political insecurity, its political system is at the same time viewed as a threat to the former Soviet Union countries. Thus, while we can expect to see the theme of power balance in the selected newspaper discourse, the topic will be viewed considering the complexity of the bilateral power relationship.

Furthermore, in addition to using critique to uncover how power relations are constructed in the selected newspaper discourse, this thesis also evaluates the role of newspapers and *their power*, both in terms of opinion formation and, at times, the reflection of the opinions of the countries' ruling elites. As such, I inspect not only how power relations are depicted, but also discuss the formation of perceptions and images created by discourse, bringing socio-political context to the analysis, as suggested by Wodak and Meyer (2009). In addition, analysis of power is crucial for understanding the function of news discourse in power relations. Media representations cannot be adequately analysed without considering the role of power. As stated

by Wodak and Meyer (2009: 10), language reflects power, and it is exercised where there is contention over power and a challenge to power.

Taking previous arguments into consideration, it is no less important to look at how power manifested itself in the Cold War, and what role it plays in the recent US-Russia relationship. First, I examine the Cold War period. According to Foucault (cited in Garland, 2014: 370), in each period a generalised structure dominates, affecting the discourses of that time frame. It does not only focus on the discursive side of phenomena but *also includes the material aspects*, with the poststructuralist approach examining *both the objects themselves and the knowledge systems that have created the objects*. While analysing recent events and settings, it is also important to consider their genealogy by revealing the power relations upon which they depend and the contingent processes that have brought them into being (Garland, 2014: 372).

It is conceivable that we are witnessing the rebirth of a new era of conflict and the beginning of a New Cold War. Some describe the current conflict in Ukraine as a turning point in history (Smeltz et al., 2022), reminding us of what is at stake in cases of great-power conflict (Ferguson, 2022). Indeed, the recent US-Russia relationship is often referred to as a great power competition (Congressional Research Service, 2023). Hence, the question also arises as to how "power" manifests itself both in the Cold War period and the recent bilateral relationship between the US and Russia.

The power struggle between Russia and the US has a long history. For forty years after World War II, the two superpowers leading antagonistic political blocs dominated international affairs. In essence, the Cold War was a global contest between great powers based on ideological rivalry. Both the Soviet Union and the United States were engaged in a military, economic, cultural, and even moral struggle to prove the superiority of their systems. Occasionally, they engaged in proxy wars on the periphery of their spheres of influence, but mutually assured destruction kept them from going to war (Dashdorj, 2021). Thus, the conflict between and the associated ideologies defined the central drama within the global system. During this time frame, each superpower had armies and arsenals unequalled by others. Nonetheless, they were organised in completely different ways. The US had a democratic political system and a market economy, while the Soviet Union had a totalitarian political system and a command economy. Since each country believed its system was superior, it actively promoted the spread of these political and socio-economic systems in other countries

while also countering the expansion of the other's system. This ideological division encouraged competition between them. Thus, the Soviet Union and the United States were rivals not only because they were the two greatest powers in the global system, but because they had antithetical views on how political, social, and economic life should be organised (Brookings Institution, 2016: 1).

Nonetheless, the power balance changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It could be argued that Russia was "humiliated" by having to accept an agenda that was largely determined by the United States. From Russia's perspective, its legitimate interests were ignored by the US, including ignoring its perceived right to a sphere of influence in the post-Soviet states (Stent, 2020). In the eyes of Russian leaders, their country is a great power capable of controlling its own destiny. It rejects democratic promotion as a cover for US-sponsored regime change; it does not accept American primacy; it wants to accelerate the transition from a unipolar to a multipolar world; it believes that it has a right to a sphere of influence and will resist perceived US invasions; and it relies on anti-Americanism to justify its unpopular policies at home (Rumer and Sokolsky, 2019). Russia's national narrative emphasises the role Russia played in defeating Germany during World War II in Europe. Both support the Kremlin's claim to special rights in European affairs. In addition, in Russia, threat perceptions are rooted in its strategic culture and show remarkable continuity with the Soviet past. With NATO's expansion since the end of the Cold War, many of the concerns the Soviet Union's leaders had with the US deployment of intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe during the 1980s have been rekindled. However, there is little chance that Russia will settle for a status quo, much less confront future threats to its heartland (Rumer and Sokolsky, 2020).

At the same time, US foreign policy is rooted in the post-Cold War consensus of American primacy in a unipolar world, insistence on no spheres of influence, and commitment to democracy promotion. A sustainable US policy toward Russia has been a challenge for successive administrations for nearly thirty years. The US-Russian relationship has exhibited a familiar boom-bust pattern: new administrations come in dissatisfied with the state of the relationship and promise to improve it. In order to develop a partnership, a policy review is launched. Pessimism gradually replaces optimism as obstacles emerge to improving relations. The conflict between Russia and the US is far from being fixed, with US-Russian relations argued to be at their lowest point since the Cold War (Rumer and Sokolsky, 2019).

In addition, today's China and Russia are now rivalling the liberal international system led by the US with autocratic and illiberal projects. As a result, many developing countries and even many developed countries can explore alternatives to Western largesse and support. In addition, illiberal, often right-wing transnational networks are challenging the liberal international order that had been so implacable. As a result, the US global leadership is unravelling. Another important shift marks the end of the post-Cold War American unipolar era. The transnational civil society networks that once anchored the liberal international order are no longer as powerful and influential. Liberal democratic principles are now being challenged by illiberal competitors in many areas, including gender rights, multiculturalism, and the principles of liberal democracy (Cooley and Nexon, 2020).

The power battle between the US and Russia also manifests itself in rhetoric, significantly increasing since the annexation of Crimea, reaching a critically low point after the start of the war in Ukraine in 2022. While Russia took anti-Western rhetoric to new heights (Cullison, 2022), the US portrayed Russia as an aggressor that must be defeated. For example, in 2022, the US Defense Secretary announced that he hoped the war in Ukraine would result in a "weakened" Russia (Ryan and Timsit, 2022). The concept of "power" also continues to be relevant in the current Russia-US relationship in the way country leaders, the media, and the general public make references to the Cold War to explain current events. While the ideological conflict of the Cold War has evolved, there are still significant ideological differences between Russia and the US, particularly regarding governance, human rights, and global influence. References to the Cold War emphasise the clash of values and beliefs that continue to influence their relationship.

Ideology

The other key CDA concept is ideology. Before discussing it from the perspective of Wodak and Meyer (2009), we must first examine what ideology stands for in CDA. While there is not a single definition of ideology, van Dijk (1995: 18) thoroughly describes the concept of ideology in the following way:

> the interface between the cognitive representations and processes underlying discourse and action, on the one hand, and the societal position and interests and social groups, on the other hand...As systems of principles that organize social cognitions, ideologies are assumed to control, through the minds of the members, the social reproduction of the group. Ideologies mentally represent the basic social characteristics of a group, such as their identity, tasks, goals, norms, values, position and resources.

Indeed, CDA is interested in exploring ideology to uncover its hidden and latent type of beliefs, which often appear disguised as conceptual metaphors and analogies. A key concept of ideology is the "worldviews" that make up "social cognition": "schematically structured complexes of representations and attitudes concerning certain aspects of social life" (van Dijk, cited in Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 18).

Thus, ideologies serve as mental frameworks - the languages, concepts, categories, images of thought, and systems of representation that social groups use to determine, understand, and explain how society works (Hall, 1996: 26). CDA researchers are also interested in the functioning of ideologies in everyday life. There are certain ideas that come up more often than others in daily discussions. It is not uncommon for people from diverse backgrounds and interests to have startlingly similar thoughts. The dominant ideologies appear to be "neutral", holding on to assumptions that are largely unchallenged (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 18).

However, ideology does not remain static forever but is rather constantly shaped and reshaped by new discourses and interdiscursive dynamics. After all, according to CDA, discourse is both "socially constitutive and socially conditioned" (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258). Thus, the relationship between discourse and ideology is dialectical since it reflects ideology and shapes social cognition. More specifically, according to Fairclough (1992: 87), ideology involves producing, reproducing, or transforming relations of dominance through the construction of

reality. In Fairclough's (1995: 14) view, "to show that meanings are working ideologically it is necessary to show that they do indeed serve relations of domination in particular cases."

Therefore, remarkably, for Fairclough (cited in Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 2), ideologies are closely linked to power, another salient concept of CDA:

> …because the nature of the ideological assumptions is embedded in particular conventions, and so the nature of those conventions themselves, depends on the power relations which underlie the conventions; and because they are a means of legitimizing existing social relations and differences in power.

In Fairclough's (cited in Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 18) view, power, dominance, and exploitation are all aspects of the world that are represented by ideologies. The enactment of them can occur through ways of interacting and embedding them into ways of being. van Dijk (1998) echoes Fairclough's views on ideology as a specific construction of reality that is related to domination. In particular, van Dijk (1996: 9) discusses mental schemes, which convey ideologies through stereotypes, opinions and attitudes. His framework assumes that ideologies organise attitudes, i.e. complex structures of opinions:

> Knowledge […] is a specific sociocultural form of beliefs, viz. those that are held to be true by a speaker or a community, because they can be justified by sociocultural criteria of truth.

Habermas (cited in Kopytowska, 2012: iii) expresses similar views, adding and emphasising the role of discourse as a key point. The author views ideology as linked to the situation in which power determines the core processes of symbolic reproduction, social integration, and cultural transmission. Languages play an important part in those processes:

> Language is also a medium of domination and social power. It serves to legitimate relations of organised force. In so far as the legitimations do not articulate the relations of force that they make possible, in so far as these relations are merely expressed in the legitimations, language is also ideological. Here it is not a question of deceptions within language but of deception with language as such.

Thus, ideology helps people make sense of political complexities and proclaim particular political truths. In addition, it helps to "create specific instruments to advance political objectives", providing a logical structure to the political aspirations of certain communities. Consequently, ideological frameworks also determine how that political community views itself in comparison to other political communities. The more well-established the ideology is, the more chances there are that it will have an influence on social norms that guide the international order (Lewkowicz, 2018: 1).

There is no doubt that ideology played a significant part in the Cold War, with the conflict commonly seen as an ideological conflict between the capitalist US and the communist Soviet Union. Although it was called a war, there was no direct military confrontation (McKelvie, 2022). Indeed, Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a cold war as a "conflict over *ideological differences* carried on by methods short of sustained overt military action and usually without breaking off diplomatic relations." Similarly, the recent tensions between the US and Russia are frequently discussed from an ideological perspective, with Putin having said that the world is facing a confrontation between the civilisations of the West and Moscow (cited in Bloomberg, 2022). The conflict between the US and Russia has been described as one between democracy and authoritarianism and ethnic nationalism. While it is clear that ideological differences are not identical to those during the Cold War, there seems to be another split into two hostile blocs. In view of these considerations, the following sections examine the role of ideology both during the Cold War and the New Cold War.

6.3 Empty signifiers

As discussed in the previous sections, my thesis employs three salient CDA concepts as described by Wodak and Meyer (2009): critique, power, and ideology. While the first concept – critique – deals with *how* to approach discourse analysis, the other two concepts concern *what* core concepts we look for in discourse. However, while making sense of the concepts of "power" and "ideology", we have also learned about the fluidity and contextuality of their meaning. More specifically, both CDA and poststructuralism scholars have pointed out the importance of discourse for *reality construction* in international relations theory. By connecting language, knowledge, and power, such approaches emphasise the production of reality through articulatory practices (Wullweber, 2015: 2). According to Laclau and Mouffe (cited in Iglesias,

2017) the articulation of meanings is a hegemonic practice in which hegemonic actors and counterhegemonic actors struggle to fix a particular meaning to a signifier because the meanings are open, non-essentialist, and impossible to be completely undecidable. Fixations are temporal and can be contested and rearticulated.

Such elements can be formed by rival political projects seeking to fix their meaning. Here, we must emphasise that different actors are likely to produce contrasting meanings. In other words, the term is "empty" until it is filled with meaning by particular actors. Such terms become the so-called empty signifiers. They are ideological elements that are not securely fixed in a particular discourse and can thus be constructed in different ways. Nodal points that characterise each empty signifier are points of signification within a discourse that partially fix the meaning. Those points can also be called "signifieds". Thus, important to the fixing of the meaning of empty signifiers are the actions of social powers, which create political distinctions between differently positioned agents, therefore forming boundaries between the "insider groups" and "outsiders", thus illustrating the antagonism (Howarth, 2015: 10-12).

Furthermore, discourse theory implies that the articulation of meanings builds up a chain of equivalence, that is, multiple positions come together under the same concept. The chain of equivalence is seen as the opposite of the chain of difference. Laclau (cited in Iglesias, 2017) proposes an antagonistic frontier between the logic of equivalence and difference. According to Laclau and Mouffe, a discourse maintains its dominance by "suturing". Since there is no substantive outside (only a lack) on which to anchor a discourse formation, empty signifiers serve to stabilise it from within. Discourse formations maintain hegemony by uniting people to reinforce particular relations of dominance through a shared interpretation. By quilting points into a unity, a discourse becomes systematised (cited in Haugaard, 2006: 49). In general, political signifiers imply specific relations of dominance (ibid: 52). In addition to giving meaning to a policy field, a political process, or a socioeconomic program, empty signifiers can also be shaped by ongoing political processes. Using this concept, it is possible to explain how, on the one hand, certain words or phrases become politically significant and, on the other hand, how ongoing political struggles give meaning to certain terms (Wullweber, 2015: 3). Thus, an empty signifier is a signifier whose meaning is temporarily fixed, and which is continually contested and rearticulated in a political setting (Iglesias, 2017). Consequently, there is no access to any reality outside signification.

Empty signifiers assume that the general interest cannot be objectively determined. Instead, people choose positions based on what they perceive as important and appropriate in a political process (Wullweber, 2015: 5). The meaning of such signifiers varies from person to person: they may refer to many or any signified, depending on how they are interpreted (Chandler, 2004: 78). People choose positions based on what they perceive as important and appropriate in a political process. Due to the fact that such an interest does not exist per se, but rather represents an empty space, political actors can compete to fill that void. Since political processes are, by definition, conflict-ridden, actors must strive to achieve the general interest (Wullweber, 2015: 5).

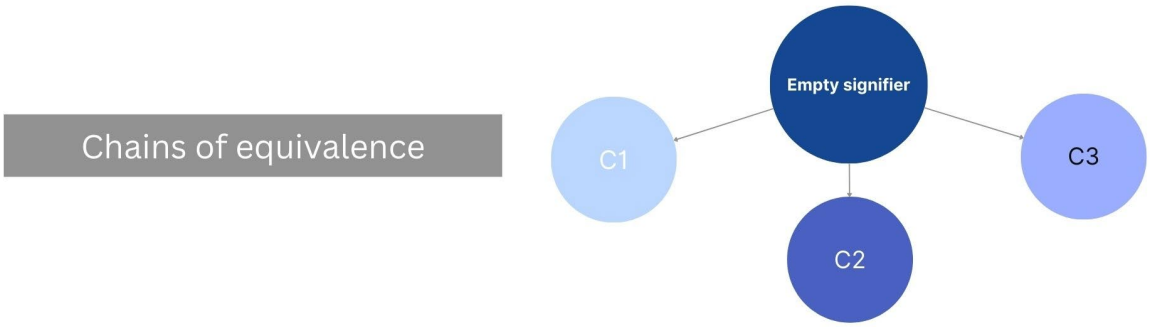


Image 1: Illustration by the thesis' author based on Laclau's chains of equivalence.

As shown in the illustration above, empty signifiers are defined by concepts that give them meaning (in this case, visually depicted as C1, C2, and C3). These concepts create the so-called chain of equivalence. In this case, for Laclau, "equivalent" does not mean "identical". There are distinct links in the chain, but they all work together in meaning formation. The "identity" of an empty signifier is thus created with the help of its nodes - the concepts that form their meaning in the chain of equivalence - through their synecdochal operation (Thomassen, 2016: 11).

Laclau's approach is not hostile to methodologisation but adapting the approach for concrete analyses of data requires further specification of methods where Laclau's principles are used.

In view of the relative reticence of methodology that can be observed in many empirical studies that draw on Laclau, the discourse analyst must be candid about the chosen methodology (Müller, 2010). As discussed earlier, I use the two central CDA concepts – power and ideology – as empty signifiers. I explore how these two concepts are filled with meaning in the context of how the selected American newspaper discourse describes Russia, and vice versa. In doing so, I also investigate whether the meaning is produced using the ideas and perceptions characteristic of the Cold War. At the same time, I examine whether there are new concepts that are used for each side to characterise the other. Finally, I conclude whether the way each side is characterised differs based on the newspaper source and each of the selected time frames- the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine, and the pre-election year and the first year of the presidency of Donald Trump.

6.4 Limitations

Using CDA as a method

The previous paragraphs discussed CDA as a method and explained the chosen approach using Wodak and Meyer's three salient CDA concepts: critique, power, and ideology. In addition, these concepts were examined in the context of the Cold War and the period of recent tensions, often referred to as the New Cold War. Finally, Laclau's concept of "empty signifier" and its use in my thesis was discussed.

Despite the merits of CDA, as with every research approach, its use has its limitations (Rashid, 2023), including:

- Discourse analysis can be a challenging field to study and requires analytical skills at a high level.
- Discourse analysis can be subjective since interpretations of texts or conversations are based on the analyst's perspective. As a result, the same text may be interpreted differently, and it is crucial to consider one's biases and assumptions when conducting CDA.
- Limited generalisability: Language use within a particular context often leads to specific findings in discourse analysis. As a result, the findings may not be generalisable, and it may be difficult to transfer insights between contexts.

- Time-consuming: As a discourse analysis requires a close examination of language use in context and often involves large amounts of data analysis, it can be time-consuming.

Nonetheless, the choice of CDA as a method was deemed the most suitable based on my theoretical commitments and the contribution I sought to make. While using CDA can be a challenging task, detailed contextual analysis can prove to be useful for producing rich data when addressing a research problem. CDA helps to interpret discourse, linking it to the social context. Thus, it defines discourse analysis as the analysis of the links between discourse and wider social and cultural structures (Titscher et al., 2000) In addition, by using CDA, one is able to interpret the ideology transmitted by discursive patterns and detect the relationship between the text, ideologies and power relations (Richardson, 2007: 26). As a result, it allows us to see beyond verbal and written interactions and appreciate the broader political context and material implications.

Traditionally, qualitative text analysis has relied on an interpretive-explanatory approach, which may be extended purposefully to discourse analysis. Interpretative-explanatory research recognises discourses as supersubjective structures that enable and constrain human agency, however, it is often concerned with the agency of individuals in creating meaning, "telling the right kind of stories to the right audiences at the right time" (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000: 1132). In poststructuralism, discourse is first and foremost treated as a systematised collection of statements that follow certain regularities. While it is true that the results of the analysis are not generalisable, they make a scholarly contribution to the research on the New Cold War – a phenomenon that has gained particular prominence since the 2014 Maidan Revolution in Ukraine and continues to draw significant attention, especially after the start of the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022 (see scholarship by e.g., Achcar, 2023; Ford, 2023; Sakwa, 2023). As argued by King et al. (1994: 10), the method of generalisation might work well for ordinary wars, but some wars are "outliers". In some cases, expanding the class of events may be useful, but in other cases, it may not be necessary. Arguably, the New Cold War is an example of a distinctive conflict, with even those scholars comparing it to the Cold War highlighting some differences (see e.g., Ford, 2023). However, even when generalisation is not our goal, we can be able to improve our study if we collect data on as many observable implications of our theory as possible, regardless of how many phenomena we study (King et al., 1994: 12). As such, my thesis covers selected American and Russian newspaper analysis between 2014 and

2017. While being time-consuming, adding many data points helps not to miss useful details while conducting empirical analysis.

Subjectivity and bias in the analysis

Determining the neutrality of a newspaper article and evaluating whether it forms a particular image of a country requires a critical analysis of various elements within the article. This process involved examining the language used, the selection and presentation of facts, the presence of bias or stereotypes, and the overall tone of the article. “Neutral” articles employ unbiased language, avoiding emotional or loaded terms. Such articles aim for objective descriptions of events, avoiding sensationalism or exaggeration. Indeed, researchers like van Dijk (1988) argue that the choice of words and tone can influence readers’ perception of an article.

However, poststructuralism rejects the idea that there is a singular, essential meaning or interpretation of a text or concept. Instead, it emphasises that meaning is constructed through language, discourse, and individual experiences. In the poststructuralist approach, individual analysis and the freedom to form one’s own interpretations are not only acceptable but also encouraged. Poststructuralism challenges the idea of a fixed, objective truth and emphasises the multiplicity of meanings and interpretations. This approach recognises that individuals bring their own subjectivities, perspectives, and lived experiences to the interpretation of texts and discourse.

Poststructuralism highlights the notion of “polysemy”, which suggests that texts have multiple, potentially conflicting meanings that can be understood differently by different individuals or groups. These multiple interpretations arise from the complex interplay of language, power relations, cultural contexts, and discursive practices. By engaging in individual analysis and forming personal interpretations, individuals can explore the diverse ways in which meaning is constructed and negotiated. This process allows for critical engagement with texts, questioning dominant narratives, and uncovering hidden power dynamics. It encourages readers to challenge the authorial authority and to consider alternative readings and perspectives. It also recognises that diverse perspectives and interpretations contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues.

Thus, different interpretations of a text are valid and contribute to a richer understanding of the text, reflecting the multiplicity of meanings inherent in poststructuralist thinking. Poststructuralism recognises the agency of individuals in constructing meaning and the importance of subjective experiences. It acknowledges that readers, viewers, or consumers of media actively engage with texts and have the capacity to interpret and negotiate their own understandings. However, it is important to note that individual analysis within the poststructuralist approach does not imply an abandonment of critical engagement or the rejection of broader social and historical contexts. Rather, it encourages individuals to actively question and challenge dominant discourses while recognising the influence of power structures on interpretations.

Similarly, in the Critical Discourse Analysis approach, individual analysis and personal interpretation are not only acceptable but also essential. CDA aims to uncover power structures, ideologies, and hidden meanings within texts and discourses. It recognises that individuals play an active role in interpreting and challenging these discourses, and their unique perspectives are valuable. CDA seeks to analyse and critique the ideologies embedded in texts and discourses. Individual analysis allows for the exploration of personal beliefs, values, and experiences that influence how individuals interpret and understand these ideologies.

In addition, CDA encourages individuals to actively engage with texts and discourses, fostering critical thinking and reflexivity. Individual analysis allows for the exploration of personal interpretations and the examination of the implications and consequences of these interpretations. In summary, the CDA approach recognises the value of individual analysis and interpretation in uncovering power structures, challenging dominant discourses, and promoting social change. Personal insights, subjectivity, and counter-discourse are essential components of CDA, allowing individuals to actively engage in the critical analysis of texts and discourses. Thus, individual analysis considers one's own contextual knowledge and experiences, enriching the understanding of how discourse functions within specific contexts. By incorporating personal interpretations, CDA deepens the contextual understanding of discursive practices and their socio-political implications. Individual analysis also helps reveal implicit meanings and assumptions that may be overlooked in more traditional approaches. By drawing on personal interpretations, individuals can unveil subtle nuances, hidden agendas, and alternative perspectives within the discourse, contributing to a more comprehensive analysis.

To conclude, neither the principles of poststructuralism nor CDA sees personal interpretation as a limitation. As researchers, we always operated within the framework of our methodology. The conflict between Russia and the United States constitutes a complex and multifaceted geopolitical issue. I hope that the findings and their contextualisation might inspire future research on the topic of the US-Russia conflict that can adapt diverse analytical angles.

6.5 Alternative approaches

Discourse Historical Analysis (DHA)

A Discourse Historical Analysis (DHA) and a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are two research methods that examine language use across different social contexts. They share some similarities, but differ in their approaches and emphases, making them suitable for different research tasks. As previously discussed, CDA aims to uncover power relations, ideologies, and social inequalities embedded in discourse (see e.g., Fairclough, 2013; van Dijk, 2001). It emphasises the role of language in shaping and maintaining social structures and power dynamics, examining how language constructs and reproduces social, political, and cultural ideologies, with a focus on exposing hidden meanings, implicit biases, and underlying power struggles (Fairclough, 2013).

On the other hand, DHA explores historical aspects of discourse by analysing how language use has evolved over time and how it has contributed to societal changes (Reisigl and Wodak, 2017: 90). DHA pays attention to the historical, socio-political, and cultural contexts in which discourse is situated. It aims to understand the discursive construction and transformation of social phenomena across different historical periods (ibid: 93). For newspaper analysis specifically, CDA was decided to be a more suitable approach. Newspapers are influential sources of information and play a significant role in shaping public opinion and social discourse. CDA allows researchers to critically examine the ideologies, power dynamics, and social inequalities (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 448) that are reflected and reinforced through newspaper discourse (Yazgan and Eroğlu Utku, 2017: 147). By analysing the language choices, rhetorical strategies, and framing techniques employed in newspaper texts, CDA enables researchers to understand how power is exercised, how ideologies are constructed, and how social realities are portrayed (Brown, 2019). Thus, it provides an opportunity to investigate

the role of media in reinforcing or challenging dominant discourses, exposing inequalities, and influencing public opinion.

DHA, in contrast, considers the historical context in which texts were produced, examining how language reflects and is influenced by broader historical events, social changes, and cultural shifts. While DHA offers insights into the historical development of discourses, it may not be as effective in capturing the nuanced power relations and ideological dimensions embedded in contemporary newspaper texts. Discourse that relates to politics often concerns immediate power struggles, ideologies, and social inequalities. CDA emphasises the examination of language use in the present, allowing for a more direct analysis of the power relations and ideologies embedded in current political discourse. In contrast, DHA's focus on historical context may not capture the real-time dynamics and nuances of contemporary discourse (Nartey, 2020:179). CDA allows for a deeper examination of the socio-political context in which texts are produced, considering specific issues, events, and actors involved. DHA, while considering historical context, may not offer the same level of specificity and contextual relevance for analysing discourse. Furthermore, DHA's focus on diachronic analysis (Datondji and Amousou, 2019: 71) may lead to a reductionist view of complex issues presented in newspaper texts. Contemporary newspapers often cover multifaceted and evolving topics, necessitating a more nuanced and comprehensive analysis that considers the intricacies and context-specific factors.

Quantitative analysis using software

Quantitative research of newspapers using Natural Language Processing (NLP) software was also considered. However, it was decided that, in this case, qualitative research has the strength of explaining processes and patterns of behaviour that can be challenging to quantify. Conducting a comprehensive analysis of newspaper texts solely through the use of software presents several limitations. While technological advancements have undoubtedly enhanced various aspects of text analysis, there are still certain complexities and nuances inherent in newspaper texts that require human interpretation and contextual understanding, which is particularly important when conducting research using CDA. The complexity and nuances of language make it challenging for software programs to accurately interpret and understand the subtleties of newspaper articles. Language is rich with contextual meanings, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references that can be difficult for software algorithms to comprehend

accurately. In addition, newspapers frequently use rhetorical devices, such as irony or satire, which can be challenging for automated software to discern and interpret accurately. News analysis requires interpreting symbols, decoding conventions, and applying prior knowledge, which automated tools cannot accomplish. Software-based sentiment analysis often struggles to accurately detect the tone and underlying emotions in text. It may fail to identify subtle variations in sentiment expression or capture complex emotional states, leading to oversimplified sentiment analysis results (Repustate, 2021).

It is also crucial to consider the subjectivity of news analysis. When interpreting news articles, it is important to evaluate the underlying biases, perspectives, and agendas of the writers and the publication itself. Software algorithms cannot replicate these elements accurately because they require human judgment and critical thinking. Thus, in general, even though NLP is constantly advancing, human language remains incredibly complex, fluid, and inconsistent. This poses real challenges that NLP has yet to deal with (Roldós, 2020). Furthermore, the dynamic nature of language poses a challenge for software-driven analysis. Words and phrases can have different meanings depending on the context in which they are used, and language is continually evolving. Software algorithms struggle to keep pace with the evolving nuances of language, resulting in limitations in accurately capturing and analysing texts.

Nonetheless, a big advantage of quantitative analysis is its ability to process large amounts of data. As argued by Fairclough (1989: 54) “A single text on its own is quite insignificant: the effects of media power are cumulative, working through the repetition of particular ways of handling causality and agency, particular ways of positioning the reader, and so forth.” A similar argument about repetition is made by Stubbs (2001: 215) who states that “[r]epeated patterns show that evaluative meanings are not merely personal and idiosyncratic, but widely shared in a discourse community. A word, phrase or construction may trigger a cultural stereotype.” An analysis of a large number of news articles is therefore well suited for identifying trends that gradually influence readership. Additionally, quantitative text analysis has the advantage of indicating less common choices that are made visible due to the analysis of a large amount of data.

Chapter 7: Methodology: the data

The first year of my research was dedicated to making myself familiar with relevant types of literature and past scholarship on the following topics: international relations theories, discourse and ways of approaching its analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis as a method, the Cold War, and the New Cold War. Given the focus of my thesis on discourse, two key sources of the Cold War-related literature that were of great significance in thematical development were *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology* (Medhurst et at., 1990) and *The Cold War as Rhetoric: The Beginnings* (Hinds and Windt, 1991). In relation to the New Cold War, while security specialists and academics had published research on this topic before 2014 (see, for example, Korinman and Laughland, 2008; Lucas, 2009; Harasymiw, 2010), interest has increased since the Maidan Revolution and the start of the war in Ukraine in 2022. Thus, my familiarity with the New Cold War was enhanced by a wealth of literature on this subject. Due to the ongoing nature of the conflict, I continued to follow the scholarly and journalistic contributions to this topic throughout my research. Despite having numerous resources, I found the book *A New Cold War? Assessing the Current US-Russia Relationship* (Smith, 2020) particularly useful for building a theoretical understanding of the New Cold War.

The combination of familiarising myself with the research on the Cold War, the New Cold War, international relations theories, and discourse analysis methods allowed me to select the most suitable data analysis approach, using CDA based on the theoretical arguments by Wodak and Meyer (2009). Accordingly, Wodak and Meyer's (2009) scholarship was used in the selection of the main themes for empirical analysis, while Laclau's (2000) poststructuralist approach, in which all themes are viewed as "empty signifiers" with no prior meaning, instead gaining meaning through the social agents that produce it.

For the purpose of the analysis, I used three Russian and three American newspapers[2]. The Russian newspapers were *Izvestiya*, *Argumenti Nedeli*, and *Novaya Gazeta*, while the American newspapers selected were *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal.* In order to achieve a balance and provide a fuller picture of the newspaper discourse, I used two Russian newspapers that are likely to represent the official government

[2] All six newspapers are described in detail before their individual content analysis in the empirical section.

views (*Izvestiya* and *Argumenti Nedeli*) and one newspaper that represents a pro-Western ideology (*Novaya Gazeta*). For the American newspapers, I used two left-leaning newspapers (*The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*) and one newspaper that is believed to have lean conservative bias (*The Wall Street Journal*)[3]. While the aim of my study was not to generalise, the selection of newspapers with different political leanings granted a more balanced outlook.

The reason to include both American and Russian newspapers was twofold: First, this addressed the gap in the existing scholarship due to the lack of a systematic comparative Cold War theme analysis in contemporary American and Russian newspaper discourse. Second, this was motivated by the ability to address my research question: What are the differences and similarities between the Russian and the American newspaper discourse in terms of the ways they describe each other? Finally, I was able to see whether and what new themes emerge in the ways the selected newspapers of both countries frame the Other.

The analysis included articles published in a four-year time period from 2014 to 2017. While the two case studies are discussed in a more detailed way in the theoretical section of the thesis, the motivating reasons can be summarised as the following: the 2014 conflict in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea mark a significant point in the history of the US-Russia relationship, with increasing tensions between the two countries that the European Parliament (2022: 1) described as "rising between the two former Cold War enemies" causing a "definitive rupture" (ibid: 2). Similarly, the American media spoke of this development in the US-Russia relationship as an important turning point. For example, in 2021, Bloomberg described this period as the "tensest standoff between Moscow and the West since the Cold War", arguing that Russia may "covert occupation as a part of its military and security doctrine".

Likewise, the 2014 conflict in Ukraine was also viewed as a critical point by Russian media sources. The Russian parliament TV channel Duma TV (2022) called it "the beginning of the New Cold War", while a Russian daily newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (2014) described the events as "the most serious crisis that has arisen in Russian-American relations since the end of the Cold War", with "propaganda rhetoric reaching the height of the events of 1968 and

[3] The bias of each language is discussed in a detailed way before the analysis of each newspaper in the empirical section. The section also discusses the use of alternative sources.

1979". The Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (2016) even questioned whether the conflict is World War III or New Cold War.

The second case study was the time period between 2016 and 2017, which corresponds to the 58th quadrennial US presidential election pre-election period, the election year, and the first year of Donald Trump's presidency. This time period in the US-Russia relationship was curious and full of controversies. In 2016, the relationship between the US and Russia was considered to be "problematic and acrimonious". Despite this, Trump openly revealed himself to be a pro-Russia presidential candidate and revealed his intentions to improve the US-Russia relationship. At the time, this caused worry in the liberal American media, with VOX characterising Trump as "deeply, weirdly pro-Russian" (Beauchamp, 2016).

7.1 Data access and sorting

In order to conduct the American newspaper analysis, it was necessary to gain access to *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* in the time period between 2014 and 2017. To do this, first, the *Factiva* database was used to gain access to the articles, using the keyword "Russia" to filter them for each newspaper. In this case, I made the decision to consider each newspaper as a whole, rather than focusing on specific article types. Including different types of articles was important to understand the way a particular newspaper frames a certain country as it provides a more comprehensive and nuanced perspective of the newspaper's overall stance and framing. By examining various article types, one can gain insights into the newspaper's overarching constructed narrative. Relying solely on specific article types, while very useful for some research aims, could lead to a limited understanding and potentially overlook crucial aspects. Thus, by examining different article types, I was able to identify patterns, inconsistencies, and variations in the portrayal of the examined country, thereby gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the newspaper's stance.

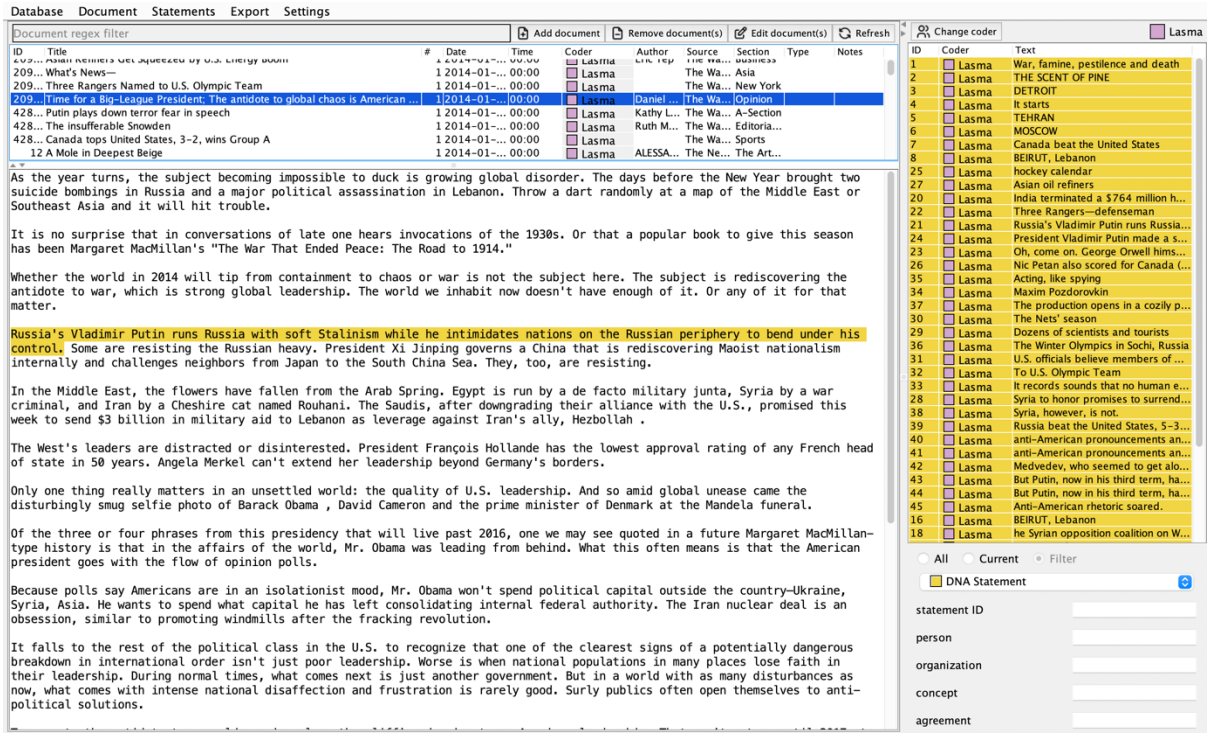
I filtered the results to display 100 articles per page at a time and then saved them as HTML files on my computer. Once all articles were saved, I started the R software and used the R package TM which is designed for text mining. The R TM package has a plugin called the *Factiva* plugin, which can be loaded by using the package tmplugin.factiva. As a result, the package was able to read HTML files imported from *Factiva*. Following this, my task was to transfer the articles to the *Discourse Network Analyzer (DNA)* software, which is a qualitative

content analysis tool. After opening the software, I took the articles and used the rDNA package 2.1.18. and its function dna_addDocument.

The articles were automatically sorted in ascending order (even if the coding order is mixed), and the software displayed each article's date, time, coder (in this case, the author of the thesis), the author of each article (if they are given), and the section of each article it was published in.

The initial number of articles is outlined in the table below.

	Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 2016	Year 2017
The New York Times	2400	1098	1219	1757
The Wall Street Journal	1561	997	916	1273
The Washington Post	2081	1179	1127	1567



Illustrative screenshot by the thesis' author

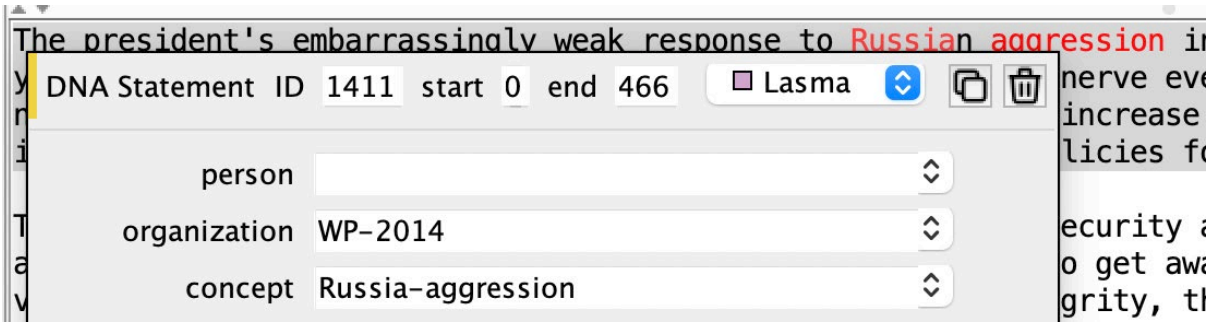
Following this, the articles were ready to code. Many of the articles featuring the word "Russia" were deemed irrelevant to the thesis, such as sports result updates, economics, global financial developments, individual company updates, news articles on non-political public figures,

cultural events, art, music, book reviews, geology, cuisine, among other things that did not concern politics. In such cases, the articles were deemed irrelevant as they went beyond the scope of the thesis aims. In addition, I exclusively examined articles that ascribed a pivotal or primary role to Russia as a nation, eschewing those where Russia had only a marginal presence or was merely mentioned in passing. If the article was deemed relevant, it was then read in full. Hence, this led to the determination of the ultimate count of articles that were considered for my analysis, which is presented in the subsequent table.

	Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 2016	Year 2017
The New York Times	387	167	84	91
The Wall Street Journal	553	226	97	78
The Washington Post	595	200	105	145

Articles that were deemed relevant were divided depending on whether there appeared to be a deliberate attempt to use rhetoric that would form the image of the Other by creating the meaning of the key CDA concepts – "ideology" and "power". If the image formation was detected, the relevant part or parts of the article were highlighted and coded, as illustrated in the image below.

The software offered three sections for coding the statement, as seen in the illustration below:



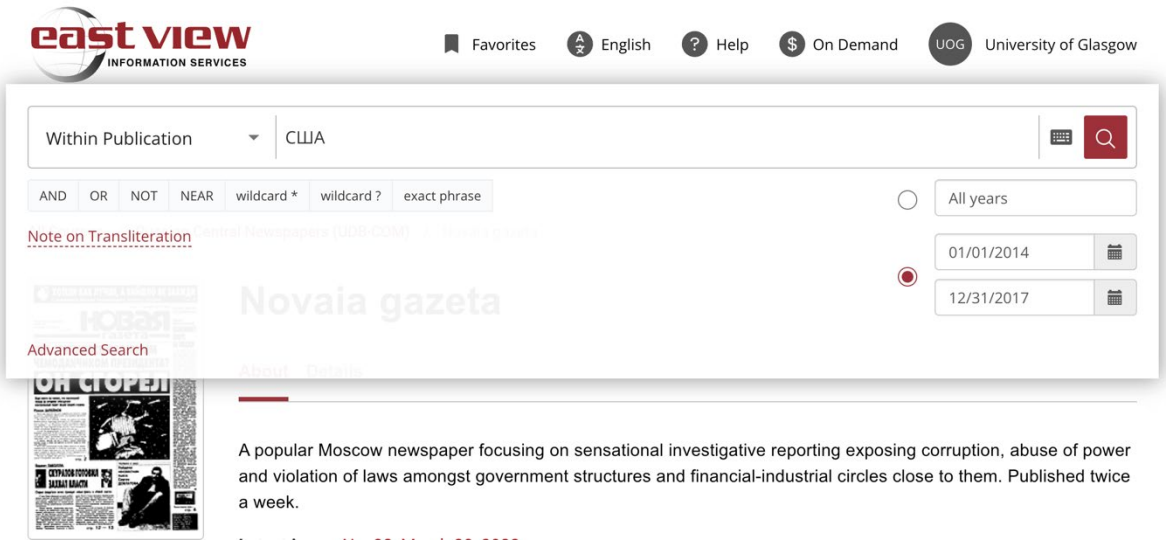
Illustrative screenshot by the thesis' author

First, the Discourse Network Analyzer software features the "person" section. However, given that the aim of the thesis did not include comparing articles based on their authors, this section was not considered. As discussed earlier, my research concerns itself with the general construction of the Other, instead of focusing on differences between specific articles or their

authors. Second, I used the "organization" section to filter the articles by the newspaper name and the year of the article. The *Factiva* database was able to successfully transfer all articles from *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* that featured the word "Russia" between 2014 and 2017. To code the articles, abbreviations were used for newspaper names – WSJ for *The Wall Street Journal*, NYT for the *New York Times*, and WP for *The Washington Times*. Each abbreviation was then followed by a hyphen to indicate the year, for example, WSJ-2014.

The final "concept" section was used to code the text. These "codes" were then used to give meaning to the two CDA salient concepts- "power" and "ideology". Initially, by reading newspaper articles, I had to determine which things give meaning to the CDA concepts. The concepts that kept appearing repeatedly were selected as the final themes. After the articles were coded, I was also able to automatically filter articles using the "organization" and "concept" sections. Therefore, by selecting a category, the Discourse Network Analyzer software automatically displays all articles coded under the respective category. Finally, after the coding process was finished, I was able to carry out the result analysis.

Following this, I moved on to accessing and coding the selected Russian newspapers: *Izvestiya*, *Argumenti Nedeli*, and *Novaya Gazeta* for the time period between 2014 and 2017. Since the articles were not available on the *Factiva* database, access was provided using the *East View* information services online database. Using *East View* allowed me to filter the articles by their publication date while also using keywords. Thus, I set the required dates and entered the Russian keyword "США" (the US or the USA in English). This process was repeated for all three newspapers, as evidenced in the illustration below.



Screenshot by the thesis author

It has to be noted that the articles of the Russian newspapers could not be automatically transferred to the Discourse Network Analyzer software due to the lack of the necessary software plugin, requiring manual transfer. Consequently, following the same considerations as in the case with the selected American newspapers, only the articles that were deemed relevant to the study were transferred to the Discourse Network Analyzer software and coded, following the same process as with the selected American newspapers. Individual articles in each issue were scanned to see if they feature any political themes in relation to Russian politics, US politics, the US-Russia bilateral relationship, or general global geopolitical themes and developments. Those articles that were deemed relevant were read entirely, paying attention to detail and coding them according to the found theme that was deemed to give meaning to the empty signifiers of "ideology" and "power". Abbreviations were used for newspaper names – IZ for *Izvestiya*, AN for *Argumenty Nedeli*, and NG for *Novaya Gazeta*. Each abbreviation was then followed by a hyphen to indicate the year, for example, IZ-2014, NG-2014, and IZ-2014. The "organization" and "concept" sections in Discourse Network Analyzer software were utilised the same way as in the case of the selected American newspapers. Analysis was conducted after coding the statements.

After searching for articles using the keyword "США", the following numbers of articles were found on the EastView newspaper data base:

	Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 2016	Year 2017
Argumenti Nedeli	499	474	493	464
Novaya Gazeta	513	529	486	957
Izvestiya	1246	657	688	656

After sorting the articles based on the principles outlined below, the final number of articles for each newspaper per year are the following:

	Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 2016	Year 2017
Argumenti Nedeli	205	63	56	54
Novaya Gazeta	44	54	40	60
Izvestiya	70	58	62	46

When examining the numerical data, it is imperative to reiterate that *Argumenti Nedeli* is a weekly newspaper, while the Russian version of *Novaya Gazeta* is published three times a week (which was used for the analysis, instead of *Novaya Gazeta* English version that is published on a daily basis). In contrast, *Izvestiya* is a daily newspaper, which explains the higher number of search hits using the keywords. However, the varying numbers of articles published per year by each newspaper should not significantly impact the research quality, as the primary focus of the study pertains to identifying the prevalent themes employed by these newspapers in characterising the US and examining whether Cold War narratives are employed. The analysis is centred on content analysis and thematic categorisation, rather than being influenced by the absolute quantity of articles produced each year. As such, the research aims to assess the recurring patterns and narratives over time, irrespective of the fluctuations in the number of articles published annually.

Chapter 8: American newspapers as a source

Before discussing the features of each individual newspaper, I provide a brief overview discussing the features of the US news media. In the US news media frequently serve as attitude and behaviour models. It reflects on what kinds of views and behaviours are acceptable and which are negative. Media stories indicate what different groups see as important or unimportant, what matches the current standards of justice and morality, and how events relate to each other. News media images are particularly potent when they comprise aspects of life that people encounter only through the media, such as the conduct of politicians and political events beyond one's hometown boundaries (Graber and Dunaway, 2018: 25).

The US ranks among the countries where print and broadcast media and the Internet are essentially free. The First Amendment of the US Constitution defines six basic rights of the people, two of which are free speech and free press (Graber and Dunaway, 2018: 97). US court decisions normally argue that the print media have almost absolute freedom to decide what they will or will not publish and whose views they will present. Indeed, the US media today is often referred to as the Fourth Estate which suggests that the press shares equal stature with the other branches of government in the Constitution. In addition, the "Fourth Estate" plays a crucial role as a guardian of US democracy. That role is guaranteed by the First Amendment to the US Constitution which argues that Congress must not enact any laws abridging the freedom of the press. This also means that a large number of media sources can freely exist (ibid: 106).

Indeed, one evident and unmistakable feature of the current American news media landscape is choice. There is more choice, and there are more American media outlets now than ever. Greater choice in sources of political news is associated with political polarisation because it means that people must decide which sources to use. For the most part, researchers have focused on exploring how more choice limits people's exposure based on their own predispositions. As such, some people might end up selecting news sources that strengthen their existing views, which is associated with "selectivity" and "biased assimilation of information." Selectivity includes exposure to a particular source of political news, attention to what the source states, and biased interpretation when dealing with the content of political news. If one compares the political views given by any media source with the political views of the source's audience, researchers regularly find significant relationships. For instance,

conservatives are more likely to read conservative newspapers, while liberals are more likely to read liberal ones. Consequently, different sources might offer different perspectives and interpretations of the same events (Mutz, 2006: 224-225).

Given these arguments and the research questions set in the thesis, it is useful to establish the extent of ideological bias in American news media. Scholars and experts have long concerned themselves with ways in which partisan media may distort one's political knowledge and, in turn, intensify polarisation. Such bias is believed to be created in two ways: issue filtering (for example, selective coverage of issues) and issue framing (the way issues are presented) (Budak et al., 2016: 1). Indeed, prior research indicates that US news outlets are different ideologically (Patterson, 1993; Sutter, 2001), and can be reliably placed on a liberal-to-conservative spectrum (Groseclose and Milyo, 2005). While few mainstream news sources describe themselves explicitly as Republican or Democratic, some increasingly use words like "progressive" and "traditional" to signal to their audiences what they can expect. Selective exposure requires that people associate particular news media sources with specific stances in politics. As a consequence, the media environment has made being selective easier than in the past by offering more diverse sources. Naturally, this can lead away from pure factuality and shift the focus to interpretations (Mutz, 2006: 227).

In addition, research suggests that the American print media has undergone some changes in the post-2000 period. Kavanagh (2019) argues that "journalism in the US has become more subjective and consists less of the detailed event- or context-based reporting that used to characterise news coverage". Indeed, the findings by Rand Corporation (2019) indicate a gradual and subtle shift over time toward a more subjective form of journalism that is grounded in personal perspective. Additionally, Kavanagh and Rich (2018: 66) speak of two trends in American journalism- increasing disagreement about facts and analytical interpretations, a blurring line between opinions and facts and an increasing relative volume of opinion and personal experience over facts. The authors (ibid) provide the example of *The New York Times'* "News Page Columns" as one manifestation of the blurring line between opinion and fact in today's context. The example is used to illustrate a phenomenon that there is increasing use of stories that combine opinion and fact without clearly distinguishing which is which in the American news media sphere. Kavanagh and Rich (2018: 28) posit that these columns feature "a distinctive point of view" and offer insight and perspective on the news. The columns, which may seem similar to straight news stories to average readers, feature opinions and commentary

about facts or specific issues. Thus, the presentation makes it is difficult to dissect the objective facts from the writer's views and evaluations. This does not suggest that these pieces are not valuable or insightful or that they are not based on fact. Nonetheless, since they feature commentary and interpretation, they are intrinsically different from stories that present just the facts and even from stories that offer a writer's interpretation of a set of facts. This difference is frequently blurred, creating ambiguity about the information presented. In addition, these stories often contain fewer facts and tend to include opinions and anecdotes presented as generalisable facts.

Indeed, Lerner (2020) concludes that there is increasing confusion among readers as to what constitutes facts and opinions in newspapers. The author names the example of *The New York Times*, arguing that it is publishing 120 opinion pieces a week, making opinion stories not look clearly different from news stories. In addition, referring to the online versions of newspapers, Lerner argues that, with many readers visiting news websites following social media links, the readers may not pay attention to the subtle clues that mark a story published by the opinion staff. Furthermore, once again referring to *The New York Times* as an example, the author states that the news sections of the paper increasingly feature stories that contain a level of news analysis that casual readers might not be able to distinguish from what *The New York Times* designates as opinion.

The diversity of media sources and their ideological leanings also lead to disagreements about which sources can be trusted to provide reliable information. For example, 75 percent of conservative Republicans say they trust news from Fox News, while 77 percent of liberal Democrats say they do not trust it (Pew Research Center, 2020). Such divisions have become even deeper as new media technologies have helped to make information more widely and cheaply accessible than ever before. The information age has, paradoxically, produced what has been called a "post-truth" era (Keyes, 2004). Gentzkow et al. (2021: 2) argue that small bias in news media may "lead to substantial and persistent divergence in both trust in information sources and beliefs about facts", with partisans on each side of ideological leanings trusting unreliable ideologically aligned sources more than accurate neutral sources.

Given those arguments, one can expect some differences in the ways issues are discussed in ideologically different news sources. To provide insight into sources from both the left and the right of the political spectrum, I have chosen to analyse the content of three American

newspapers- *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. While *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* are described as having left political bias, *The Wall Street Journal* is generally believed to have a "conservative outlook" (CNN, 2017) and "moderate right bias" (Meylan, 2021). The use of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* as left-leaning American newspapers is partly based on their circulation, with the former having the second-largest circulation and the latter having the fourth-largest circulation (Turnvill, 2021). There were several alternative left-leaning sources to consider from the top ten US newspapers in terms of circulation, including *USA Today, Los Angeles Times, The Star Tribune,* and *The New York Daily News*. In addition to the circulation, my argument to select *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* was based on arguably the most reputable left-leaning newspapers out of the six. While opinions on reputation and quality might differ, *Forbes* magazine ranks *The New York Times* number one in terms of quality, while *The Washington Post* is ranked number three. The evaluation is based on the newspapers' factuality and code of ethics (Glader, 2017).

The choice of *The Wall Street Journal* as a right-leaning newspaper is based on several reasons. *The Wall Street Journal* is the largest newspaper in the US, with an average weekday circulation of nearly 800,000 (Turnvill, 2021). In addition, with *The Wall Street Journal* providing high-quality journalism, it is important to see if a right-leaning newspaper reports news stories and expresses commentary in a different way from the two left-leaning newspapers. While *The Wall Street Journal* was selected for the aforementioned reasons, it should also be noted that there aren't as many major quality right-leaning newspapers in the US as there are left-leaning ones. In the top ten US newspapers by circulation, only two newspapers are believed to be right-leaning- *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Post*. *The Wall Street Journal* ranks number one in the top, while *The New York Post* ranks number five. However, *The New York Post* was deemed unsuitable for the aims of the thesis due to being a tabloid-style paper (Fullintel, n.d.). Another alternative source considered was *The Washington Times*, which is reported to have a right-leaning bias and hold a conservative political stance (Ad Fontes Media, n.d.). However, based on the quality of the newspapers and the circulation, *The Wall Street Journal* was deemed to be a better choice. To compare, in 2019, *The Wall Street Journal*, had a daily circulation of 1005000 in print, and 1829000 digital-only subscriptions, with a total circulation of 2834000 (Watson, 2021). On the other hand, *The Washington Times* has a daily circulation of 52059 (Agility PR, 2019A). As such, the significant difference justified my decision in the choice of the best right-wing newspaper for

the aims of the thesis. The following sections will describe the three selected American newspapers in more detail, giving more insight into their readership, ownership, and ideological leanings.

8.1 The Washington Post

The Washington Post is an American daily newspaper published in Washington, D.C. The paper was founded in 1877 as an organ of the Democratic Party but has become an independent news outlet. It specialises in coverage of politics in Washington, D.C. and is known for its investigative reporting (New World Encyclopedia, n.d.). The newspaper has won 69 Pulitzer Prizes, the second-most of any publication after *The New York Times* (Watson, 2019). It is frequently included in typical discussions of the "elite press" (Bachman, 2017: 471) and is counted as "one of the greatest newspapers" in the US (Augustyn, 2022A).

Data indicates that the majority of *The Washington Post's* audience has leftist political views. A 2014 Pew Research Center survey found most of *The Washington Post's* audience - 61% - has left-of-centre political views. In contrast, just 7% of *The Washington Post* consumers were consistently conservative, while 20% were of mixed political persuasion (AllSides, n.d.). In 2013, Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos bought *The Washington Post* and affiliated publications for $250 million (Augustyn, 2022A). Given the ownership, it is also important to note the political leanings of the owner. Bezos is believed to have libertarian views and has in the past donated money to mostly Democratic candidates, while nonetheless also donating to some Republican candidates (Sullivan, 2013). In 2018, Bezos announced that his ownership of *The Washington Post* helps "support...American democracy."

The Washington Post is known for its criticism of some conservatives, especially Donald Trump, who often called it the "Bezos *Washington Post*" on social media. *The Washington Post* has been generally critical of Trump both during his election campaign and since he took office (Rosoff, 2018). Donald Trump has also accused *The Washington Post* of writing "bad stories even on very positive achievements." (Rucker, 2018), also branding the newspaper "fake news" several times (Moreno, 2020). In addition, the newspaper's endorsements historically tend to support Democratic candidates (Pexton, 2012), including Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 (Ballotpedia, n.d.) and Hillary Clinton in 2016, calling her a "well-qualified, well-prepared candidate" whom they endorse "without hesitation". On the other hand, Trump

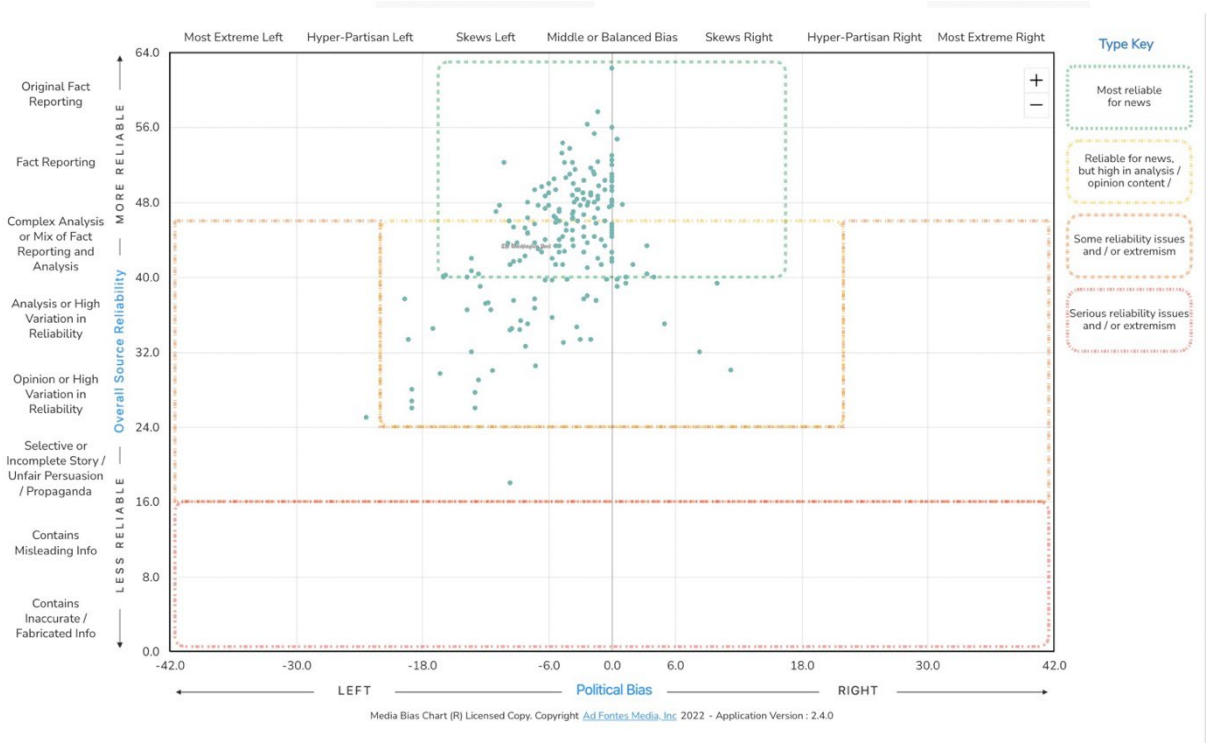
was described as “dreadful” and uniquely “unqualified as a presidential candidate” (*The Washington Post* Editorial Board, 2016). The company Data Face analysed how much the major media sources covered Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump as presidential candidates, analysing articles written in 2015, looking at both their headlines and whether the statements on the candidates were positive or negative using a computer algorithm. The data indicated that *The Washington Post* articles were more favourable to Clinton (Sides, 2016).

To fully understand the potential content bias, it is important to explore the ideological leanings of *The Washington Post.* One of the databases that concern themselves with American newspaper bias is Ad Fontes Media which generates overall news source scores based on scores of individual articles. The company rates each individual article by at least three human analysts with balanced right, left, and centre self-reported political viewpoints. Articles are rated in three-person live panels conducted in shifts. Analysts first read each article and rate them on their own, then immediately compare scores with other analysts. If there are discrepancies in the scores, they discuss and adjust scores if deemed necessary. The three analysts’ ratings are averaged to produce the overall article rating. Sometimes articles are rated by larger panels of analysts for various reasons – e.g., if there are outlier scores, the article may be rated by more than three analysts. The company rates all types of articles, including those labelled as analysis or opinion by the news source. Nonetheless, not all news sources label their content as opinion, and regardless of how it is labelled by the news source, Ad Fontes Media make their own methodology determinations on whether to classify articles as analysis or opinion (Ad Fontes Media, n.d.).

For each news source, Ad Fontes Media picks a sample of articles that are most prominently featured on that source’s website over several news cycles. Ad Fontes Media has over 100 articles each in their sample for the largest sources (such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*). The content rating periods for each rated news source are performed over multiple weeks in order to capture sample articles over several news cycles (Ad Fontes Media, n.d.). The rating methodology is rigorous and rule based. There are many specific factors considered for both reliability and bias because there are many measurable indicators of each. The main ones for reliability are defined metrics called “Expression,” “Veracity,” and “Headline/Graphic,” and the main ones for bias are ones called “Political Position,” “Language,” and “Comparison.” Thus, the ratings are not simply subjective opinion polling,

but rather methodical content analysis. Overall source ratings are composite weighted ratings of the individual article and show scores (Ad Fontes Media, n.d.).

Ad Fontes Media admits that it is impossible to completely eliminate bias in media content evaluation. Nonetheless, the company utilises several ways to mitigate the bias, including acknowledging one's own biases, trying to be fair, using repeatable standards and metrics, and allowing accountability by having others observe the decision-making (Ad Fontes Media, n.d.). By inspecting the visual graph below, it is evident that most of the articles of *The Washington Post* skew left, including fact reporting and complex analysis.



Similar conclusions on the bias of *The Washington Post* are made by AllSides Media, arguing that *The Washington Post* has left bias. In terms of the used methodology, similarly to Ad Fontes Media, the AllSides team includes people from the left, centre, and right, reviewing the works of media outlets and coming to a general consensus on their bias. For the purpose of their analysis, AllSides Media look for the common types of media bias such as slant, spin, sensationalism, and story choice. AllSides Media review the media outlet's homepage, headlines, recent articles, photos, and other content dating as far back as six months. In addition, AllSides Media are using the Blind Bias System, which entails people from all sides of the political spectrum reading headlines and articles from a media outlet and providing an overall bias rating for the source, without knowing what source they are reading. The Blind

Bias System removes all branding and identifying information from the content so that respondents are not influenced by preconceived notions of an outlet's bias. They then look at how every "bias group" rated the source's content on average, calculating an average bias rating across all groups.

Another evaluation of *The Washington Post* is provided by Media Bias Fact Check, an independent website that rates the bias, factual accuracy, and credibility of media sources. Media Bias Check bases its conclusion on several aspects: biased wording/headlines, factual sourcing, story choices (if the report includes news from both sides), and political affiliation. Using this methodology, Media Bias Fact Check (2022) posits that *The Washington Post* has a left-centre bias, arguing that it "publishes factual information that utilizes loaded words (wording that attempts to influence an audience by appeals to emotion or stereotypes) to favour liberal causes". For example, Media Bias Fact Check claims that *The Washington Post* publishes stories with emotionally loaded headlines such as "Trump escalates China trade war, announces plan for tariffs on $200 billion in products" and "The Trump administration created this awful border policy. It doesn't need Congress to fix it." In addition, story selection and editorials tend to favour the left, with *The Washington Post* only endorsing Democratic Presidential candidates since 1976, including Hillary Clinton in 2016 and Joe Biden in 2020.

As discussed in the previous sections, the choice of *The Washington Post* as one of the two left-leaning liberal newspapers is based on several aspects- its large audience, status as an elite newspaper, high-quality reporting, and accessibility. In addition, it is well-known for its political reporting on the White House, Congress, and other aspects of the US government (Augustyn, 2022A). Consequently, these qualities make *The Washington Post* stand out from other liberal left-leaning American newspapers.

8.2 The New York Times

The New York Times is an American daily newspaper published in New York City, considered one of the world's greatest and most prestigious high-profile newspapers in the world with the second-largest circulation in the US (Augustyn, 2022B) and 17th in the world (AllSides Media, n.d.), having 3.5 million subscribers - 2.5 million of them digital-only (Remnick, 2017). Its strength is viewed to be its editorial excellence (Augustyn, 2022B). The newspaper covers international, national, and local news (Fullintel, n.d.). *The New York Times* has won 132 Pulitzer Prizes, the most of any newspaper. The paper is owned by The New York Times Company. It has been governed by the Sulzberger family since 1896, with A.G. Sulzberger serving as its chairman (Dash, 2009) and Dean Baquet serving as its executive editor (Smith, 2005).

The New York Times gets more citations from academic journals than the American Sociological Review, Research Policy, or the Harvard Law Review (Hicks and Wang, 2013: 851). The prestige and influence of *The New York Times* could explain its preference over other newspapers in scholarly referencing. Its prestige is evident across a number of measures: circulation, Pulitzer Prizes, and use by opinion leaders, reaching 58 percent of opinion readers. In addition, 33 percent of opinion leaders visit *The New York Times* website monthly (ibid: 855-856).

In relation to the readership, a 2014 Pew Research study on the political views of media consumers concluded that 65 percent of *The New York Times* readership was politically left-of-centre, while only 12 percent was right-of-centre. In addition, a 2019 Morning Consult poll named *The New York Times* as the fourth-most politically polarised brand in the country, with Democrats 62 points more likely to have a positive view of it than Republicans (Langlois, 2019). In terms of age, 30 percent of *The New York* Times readers are in the 30-49 years age category, 29 percent are in the 18-29 years age category, and 16 percent are aged 50-64 (Kunst, 2022). Approximately 56 percent of *The New York Times* readers are college graduates and 38 percent are high-income earners (Langlois, 2019).

The New York Times discusses issues from a progressive perspective and is considered "liberal" (Huitsing, 2022). This has been confirmed in 2004 when then-*New York Times* public editor

Daniel Okrent answered the question, "Is *The New York Times* a Liberal Newspaper?" with the sentence, "Of course it is." In addition, Okrent explained that, when covering some social issues, such as abortion and same-sex marriage, the paper did have a liberal bias. Indeed, Pew Research Canter's (2016) media polarisation report defines the audience of *The New York Times* as "consistently liberal".

Additionally, the executive editor of *The New York Times* Dean Baquet has arguably accelerated the intrusion of left-leaning bias into its news coverage. The former executive editor Jill Abramson has written that "Though Baquet said publicly he didn't want *The Times* to be the opposition party, his news pages were unmistakably anti-Trump." Furthermore, Abramson has argued that journalistic standards were falling throughout *The New York Times* newsroom after the 2016 election, with, "The more 'woke' staff thinking that urgent times called for urgent measures; the dangers of Trump's presidency obviated the old standards." (Moore, 2019). In 2016, another of the paper's public editors, Liz Spayd, criticised *The New York Times* for its perceived leftward bias and suggested "building a better mix of values into the ranks of the newsroom's urban progressives," arguing that "a paper whose journalism appeals to only half the country has a dangerously severed public mission."

It must also be acknowledged that since 1956, *The New York Times* has not endorsed any Republican nominee for president but has endorsed every other Democratic candidate (AllSides Media, n.d.). Indeed, the analysis of *The New York Times* article titles and sentiments in 2015 by the company Data Face indicates that *The New York Times* articles in 2015 described and referred to Hillary Clinton in a much more positive way than Donald Trump. In addition, the difference in descriptions in *The New York Times* articles of the two candidates was the highest of the eight major media outlets analysed (Sides, 2016). Indeed, in 2016, *The New York Times* writer Jim Rutenberg (2016) argued that "balance has been on vacation" since the launch of Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, calling Trump "a demagogue playing to the nation's worst racist and nationalistic tendencies." In addition, Rutenberg argued in reference to Trump's presidential candidacy that reporters "have to throw out the textbook American journalism has been using for the better part of the past half-century, if not longer, and approach it in a way you've never approached anything in your career. If you view a Trump presidency as something that's potentially dangerous, then your reporting is going to reflect that. You would move closer than you've ever been to being oppositional."

The stance of *The New York* Times has received backlash from Trump who has labelled it as "fake news," and argued that its coverage of him has been "false and angry", calling the newspaper "dishonest" (Morin, 2017). In addition, he has described it as "naïve", "dumb", "weak and ineffective", and "failing" (Lima, 2017). Furthermore, Trump has stated that *The New York Times* "do nothing but write bad stories even on very positive achievements - and they will never change!" (cited in Lander, 2018). A.G. Sulzberger, the chairman of *The New York Times*, has in return been critical of Trump's rhetoric concerning journalists, arguing that his attacks were "putting lives at risk" and "undermining the democratic ideals of our nation."

In terms of ideological bias, AllSides Media (n.d.) rates *The New York Times'* news content as Lean Left, with editorial bias also being rated as Lean Left. Additionally, another media ranting company Ad Fontes Media (n.d.) rates *The New York Times* in the Skews Left category, with several categories of *The New York Times* are also rated Hyper Partisan Left (illustrated in the graph below).

A similar conclusion in relation to bias was reached by a UCLA study by Groseclose and Milyo (2005) which found that *The New York Times* news section has a left-wing bias. Media Bias Fact Check (Huitsing, 2022) rates *The New York Times* as Left-Center biased based on wording and story selection that moderately favours the left.

In addition, the polling company Rasmussen Reports (2007) conducted a U.S. survey which found that 40 percent of respondents believed *The New York Times* had a liberal bias, 20 percent thought it had no bias, and 11 percent believed it to be conservative.

The choice of *The New York Times* as one of the liberal left-leaning newspapers was based on several factors- its popularity, high circulation, prestige, and high-quality journalism. Similarly to arguments on the selection of *The Washington Post*, there were problems with the accessibility of two other liberal left-leaning newspapers, which left me with the choice between *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times*. As in the case of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* was preferred over *The Los Angeles Times* due to its higher prestige, including the number of Pulitzer Prizes.

8.3 The Wall Street Journal

The Wall Street Journal is the largest newspaper in the US, with an average weekday circulation of nearly 800,000 (Turnvill, 2021), reaching an audience of 42 million digital readers per month (Dow Jones, 2017). *The Wall Street Journal* includes coverage of the US and global news, politics, culture, lifestyle, sports, health, and other topics (*The Wall Street Journal*, n.d.). It's a critical resource of curated content in print, online and mobile apps, complete with breaking news streams, interactive features, videos, online columns, and blogs. The newspaper has won 37 Pulitzer Prizes (as per 2019 pulitzer.org data). The newspaper's accuracy and the detail of its contents won respect and success from the start (Britannica, n.d.). *The Wall Street Journal* generally has a strong reputation for journalistic standards (Meylan, 2021).

In terms of the audience of *The Wall Street Journal*, 2021 Statista data indicates that 22% of its audience is in the 18-29-year age group, 21% in the 30–49-year age group, and 13% in the 50-64-year age group (Pew Research Center, 2012). 62% of the readers are male, while 38% are female (Dow Jones, 2017). More than half of the regular readers of *The Wall Street Journal* (56%) are college graduates. In addition, its readership also shows a higher-than-average knowledge of political news and current events. In relation to the partisanship and political ideology of its readership, 32% of its readers identify as Conservatives, 41% as Moderates, while 21% identify themselves as Liberals (Pew Research Center, 2012).

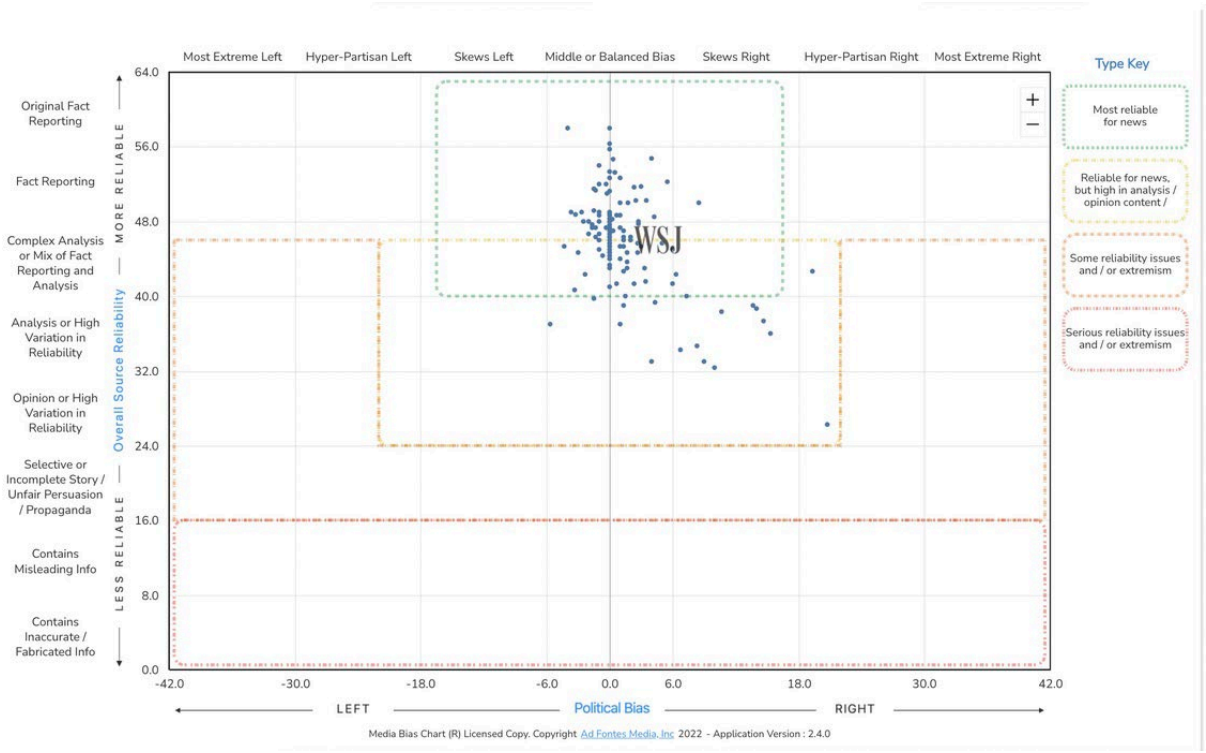
The Wall Street Journal is owned by the family of Rupert Murdoch through the media company News Corp. The company also owns British tabloids such as *The Sun* and *The Times* as well as Fox News. Connections between Rupert Murdoch and former president Trump have in the past created concerns for those worried about right-leaning bias in the paper (Meylan, 2021). This issue is addressed by Wagner and Collins (2014) who analyse if a change in publishers affects a newspaper's editorial page's support for government action on public policy questions, the attention given to the major political parties, and the tone of coverage of the parties. The study compares *The Wall Street Journal's* editorial page before and after Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation purchased the paper with two newspapers that did not change ownership structures over the same time (*The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*). The results indicate that Murdoch's *Wall Street Journal* is far less supportive of government intervention in the economy, much more negative to Democrats, and much more positive to Republicans than the paper's editorial page was under the previous ownership, displaying an ideological shift to the right. In addition, the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism's (2011) analysis of the front-page content of Murdoch's owned *The Wall Street Journal* revealed that it became less focused on business and increasingly focused on foreign affairs and politics than it was under the previous ownership. In addition, Wagner and Collins (2014: 768) argue that, after being purchased by Murdoch, *The Wall Street Journal* has become, and is likely to continue to be, a much more conservative paper on the editorial side than it has been over the past several decades.

However, interestingly, when analysing all articles published in *The Wall Street Journal* in 2015, the analysis by the company Data Face indicates that *The Wall Street Journal's* articles described Hillary Clinton in a slightly more positive way than Donald Trump (Sides, 2016). Despite these findings, *The Wall Street Journal* is not endorsing any US presidential candidates, with the last endorsed being Herbert Hoover, a Republican, in 1928 (Mullin, 2016). It should, however, be added that *The Wall Street Journal* staff were expressing their frustration at how their paper was publishing "too many flattering access stories" on Trump and describing their own coverage of him as "neutral to the point of being absurd" (Graves, 2017). Nonetheless, Donald Trump has been critical of *The Wall Street Journal*, arguing that it is "always so negative" (Roig-Franzia and Ellison, 2020).

In terms of political ideology, *The New York Times* (2017) has characterised *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page as "having a conservative tone" and as having "conservative staff"

(Bowden, 2019), while CNN (2017) describes its board as having a "typically conservative outlook". *The Economist* (2007, cited in Wagner and Collins, 2014: 759) has even called *The Wall Street Journal* "the Bible of American conservatism". Similarly, *Columbia Journalism Review* (2017) posits that *The Wall Street Journal* is "known for a conservative bent on its editorial pages", while *The Washington Post* has described *The Wall Street Journal's* editorial board as "reliably conservative" (2021).

Several sources evaluating media bias come to similar conclusions. AdFontes Media (as of 2021) places *The Wall Street Journal* as generally being in the "Lean Right" category of bias, although some of its contents have been described as Right and Hyper Partisan Right (illustrated below).



Media Bias/Fact Check (n.d.) scores *The Wall Street Journal* as "Right Center." This is due to "low biased news reporting combined with a strong right biased editorial stance." However, they rate The Wall Street Journal's Opinion section as "Lean Right". Finally, AllSides (n.d.) describe *The Wall Street Journal*'s news section as Centrist based on a June 2021 survey of nearly 1,200 voters, as well as over 46,755 community ratings, while their editorial bias was rated as Right.

The choice of *The Wall Street Journal* as a right-leaning daily newspaper was made considering several aspects- its high circulation, prestige, and focus. One must note that left-leaning newspapers in the U.S. outnumber conservative-leaning ones. The considered alternative from the top ten American newspapers with the highest circulation was *The Washington Times* due to being the only right-leaning newspaper in the top ten. However, a decision to select *The Wall Street Journal* was made based on its higher journalistic quality.

Chapter 9: Russian newspapers as a source

Before discussing the features of each individual newspaper, I provide a brief overview discussing the features of the Russian news media. The current state of Russian media shows poor prospects for media freedom in Russia. With Russia's long reputation as a place ridden with censorship, where civil and journalistic liberties are oppressed, and where freedom of the press is non-existent at worst and suppressed at best (Arutunyan, 2009: 57), it is important to examine the media system in Russia and the reasons that have led to such adverse outcomes for media outlets' independence. Russia is known for its state control of media and aggressive pressure on journalists looking to keep their independence. In spite of the fact that the Russian constitution explicitly prohibits censorship, censorship is a continuous factor in the Russian media (Kennan Institute, 2020). The media in Russia are fighting censorship and ideological pressures (Azhgikhina, 2007: 1261), with censorship carried out both "directly and indirectly by state pressure and through self-censorship" by media employees (Kennan Institute, 2020).

The role of the media in advocating Russian foreign policy and strengthening the influence of President Vladimir Putin has become increasingly noticeable since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine and other domestic and global confrontations (CNA, 2018: i). Putin and his key advisors employ media to spread key messages regarding Russia's foreign policy aims, discredit Western institutions, and promote Russia's role in the international system. Putin and his inner circle perceive domestic and global media as primary instruments in promoting state interests (ibid: iii), with the Russian government both directly controlling state media and directly and indirectly influencing private media (ibid: v). Cooper (2015) argues that "the few outlets still publishing bold, independent work are under constant threat", with Vladimir Putin, "systematically dismantling independent media and rolling up press freedoms within his own country".

The Presidential Administration plays a key role in regulating Russia's media strategy and including the Kremlin's foreign policy aims on a daily basis. Putin is known to use personal leadership when Russia's political system, his personal legitimacy, or Russia's national security are concerned. In addition, Putin also often personally conveys important messages, something that can gain significant domestic attention as well as attract big global audiences that extend well beyond those accessible only through Russia's state-controlled foreign media (CNA, 2018: iv).

Consequently, Russia's media has three primary functions in contributing to Russian foreign policy: "mobilising and sustaining domestic political support for its foreign and security policies; presenting official perspectives and policies to foreign audiences and influencing foreign audiences through disinformation and propaganda" (CNA: iii). Since 2012, Russia's government has substantially increased its control over external messaging, with Russia's leadership aiming to have state external media directly supporting national policy objectives (ibid: v).

As a result, there are no electronic media outlets with nationwide significance and politically relevant content that are not influenced directly or indirectly by state agents. Pervyi Kanal and Rossiia, the TV channels with the largest audience share, are controlled by the state. In addition, the other nationwide channels with relevant political content are controlled by people or companies that are loyal to and/or dependent on the government. The main cause of this development seems to be that these media outlets are an overwhelmingly powerful political resource (White, 2008: 168). This statement is echoed by (Guriev and Treisman 2015) who argue that Russian media sources have become the main spreaders of state propaganda and arguably the major staple of the contemporary Russian regime using information manipulation. Based on similar arguments, Becker (2004) concludes that Putin's presidency years have made the Russian media system neo-Soviet, with the Kremlin, adapting "an ultraconservative ideology", portraying Russia as the protector of traditional values and criticising the "amoral West" (Lucas, 2014: 133).

As a consequence, the state strengthened its control of the Russian mass media. The first sign was the approval of an "Information Security Doctrine of the Russian Federation" by the Security Council in September 2000 ('Doktrina' 2000), which was followed by normative acts restricting the operation of the mass media. To name an example, the law "On Counter-Extremism", which came into force in July 2002, prohibits the "dissemination of extremist materials via the mass media and the conduct of extremist activities by the mass media". Articles 4 and 16 of the law "On the mass media" were altered accordingly. Consequently, it was decided that "the activity of a mass media outlet can be terminated" in accordance with the provisions of the law "On Counter-Extremism" (White, 2008: 169). Citing violations of the law "On Counter-Extremism" or of any other law can have serious consequences given that repeated warnings lead to the closure of the media outlet in question. Additional alternative

administrative measures are also in existence: media outlets that are critical of the authorities often experience visits by the tax police and business inspectors. Consequently, such actions lead to increasing media self-censorship (White, 2008: 169).

It should, however, also be noted that the Russian state does not act as a direct censor, but rather indirectly influences coverage through its ownership of leading media outlets. Some media have "curators" within the presidential administration who advise on shaping editorial policy (Arutunyan, 2009: 33). Because of the aforementioned policies, Russia's leading newspapers went from enjoying freedom to becoming media assets of the Russian state. Newspapers in Russia have increasingly come under the control of numerous media holdings acting as conglomerates that are often either state-owned or loyal to the Kremlin (Arutunyan, 2009: 50).

All big media holdings are under the possession of the state or oligarchs from Putin's close circle. As such, it is easy for the authorities to overview their editorial policies and make them transmit particular messages to society. The subject matters for television are dictated directly, while diktat is more indirect in radio, newspapers, and online media, where statements on how to cover events are being relayed through editors and owners. Subsequently, the Russian media faces self-censorship, with journalists trying to guess how to report a story to satisfy the media's editors and owners (Aliaksandrau, 2015: 34).

In addition, in 2014, a series of restrictive laws were introduced controlling the information online in Russia. For instance, a law tackling "harmful information" on the internet allows blocking websites without a court decision, if the authorities see their content as "potentially harmful for children". Other laws forbid "propaganda of homosexuality" or "extremist information" – with definitions and provisions provided so broadly and vaguely that they easily allow arbitrary use (Aliaksandrau, 2015: 34). Specifically, "extremist activities' include a wide scope of information that can be employed to legally shut down a paper. In 2006, President Vladimir Putin signed a bill that widened the definition of extremism to add "public slander directed towards officials fulfilling state duties of the Russian Federation" (Arutunyan, 2009: 74).

Furthermore, The Committee to Protect Journalists refers to Russia as the "third deadliest country in the world for journalists". According to Freedom House, Russia's press has been

“not free” since 2004. In 2007, the US State Department named Russia among the seven worst offenders in terms of press freedom: others were Afghanistan, Venezuela, Pakistan, Egypt, Lebanon, and the Philippines (Arutunyan, 2009: 57). Reporters without Borders currently ranks Russia 150th out of 180 countries in the world press freedom ranking (Statista, 2022).

Indeed, Russia has long had the reputation of being one of the world’s most dangerous countries for journalists. The perception is based on various international press-freedom monitors that continuously find Russia overrepresented among the world's developed nations and even among the Community of Democracies in terms of murdered reporters (Fitzpatrick, 2005). According to a 2022 estimate by the Committee to Protect Journalists, 58 journalists have been killed in Russia since 1992. Impunity is still an important problem. The most famous cases, such as the murders of Anna Politkovskaya in 2006, Natalya Estemirova in 2009, and Akhmednabi Akhmednabiyev in 2013, were never truly investigated and the initiators of their murders were never found (Aliaksandrau, 2015: 33).

However, these limitations were not applied immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Russian media system has changed dramatically over the years (White, 2008: 154). Analyses of media developments in Russia have generally divided the post-Soviet period into three stages: up to 1995; the later Yeltsin period, 1996–1999; and the third period after Putin came to power in 2000 (Pasti, 2008: 109). The changes were already initiated before the collapse of The Soviet Union. In the time of perestroika and glasnost, print media outlets achieved a significant degree of freedom. Despite the state and Communist Party remaining mostly in control of the media sector, censorship was scaled down drastically. Newspapers and magazines gradually began to gain more and more characteristics and functions of what is generally called the “fourth estate”. From the mid-1980s to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the mass media grew in a remarkable way, mainly due to most of them being deeply involved in what one could call to a certain extent “investigative journalism”, letting the public know about crimes committed under communist rule. In addition, they served as a place for debates about the future of the Russian nation and society. This is commonly referred to as the golden age of Soviet/Russian journalism. Nonetheless, things transformed radically shortly after the Russian Federation became an independent state (White, 2008: 154).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, control over the media by the authorities stopped. The state retreated from formerly state-owned media outlets and thus conditions of more and more

newspapers and magazines were changed. However, at the beginning of the 1990s, a continuing economic and social crisis developed in Russia. The called financial of 1998 further worsened Russia's chances for improving social and economic welfare. The crisis resulted in the rouble being devalued, rapid stocks fall, rising inflation, the collapse of many banks, and high unemployment. Although overall the Russian media's independence from state control had not been reversed by restricting laws from the end of 1992 to the resignation of Boris Yeltsin as Russian president at the turn of the millennium, economic and editorial freedom kept being limited since Russian big business took advantage of the continuing economic crisis. Media outlets that were short of money were not in a position to refuse help from "sponsors", given that the Russian economy was not able to support most of the print and electronic media (White, 2008: 155-157). During Yeltsin's presidency, these actors made a massive investment in the Russian mass media market, thereby using media outlets as a political resource (ibid: 161).

Things changed significantly during Putin's work as Prime Minister and his subsequent presidency with him making efforts to strengthen government control of the media (Arutunyan, 2009: 33), creating many challenges for journalists in the current political environment in Russia. Indeed, Becker (2002: 139) argues that "the Putin era has not been a good one for the Russian media", describing the climate as "neo-authoritarian" and "neo-Soviet". This process is believed to be a part of a wider process of Russia becoming "undemocratic and illiberal" under Putin's leadership, which has led scholars to describe it as authoritarian (Shevtsova, 2015: 22-36).

In 1999, during the outbreak of the second Chechen War, the Russian state developed an information policy, with the concealment of negative information combined with specifically constructed positive information (Koltsova, 2006: 64). At the start of the 2000s, the new government of Putin adopted a course of strengthening political authority which has resulted in systematic "purges" of the political, media and drastic changes in the conditions of media freedom and elections in the country (White, 2008: 109-111), "real fear of menace, physical threat, and even death for the journalists (Oates, 2013: 13). Oates (ibid) argues that the current system has "more to do with the Soviet system than any Western model, with mass media "generally echoing a charade of democratic interactions".

In addition, the Russian media was placed in a situation in which most media outlets used a form of self-censorship (White, 2008: 109-110), with journalists being aware of the limits of

what discourse is deemed acceptable on air or in print (Oates, 2013: 14). As a result, the experts on Russian media point to increasing state control over media and a lack of different points of view (White, 2008: 109-110). Russia has been labelled by global media organisations as "particularly bad in terms of treatment of the journalists" (Oates: 2013: 13). Ever since Putin's ascent to power, the Russian government has attacked independent media sources. Journalists in Russia have been beaten, murdered, and imprisoned (Trudolyubov, 2022). The central government has control over all major television stations, while direct censorship over other media has increased after the 2012 elections in Russia (Wilson Center, 2013). Additionally, the current situation in Russia indicates that there is no way to turn back because the majority of transformations are irreversible, with the core of the political culture suffering from the sovietisation of the political and social realms (White, 2008: 109-111) and media becoming "puppets for political leaders (Oates, 2006: 6).

However, interestingly, the Putin era can be characterised by the phenomenon of the duality between knowledge of bias and having trust in state media among ordinary Russians, believing that the strong position of those "in power" should not be fundamentally challenged (White, 2008: 170), with the idea of objectivity not being central for the Russian audience. In fact, Russians seem to be aware of this paradox, arguing that while they "carefully screen out bias", they also do not like to see "strong argumentative views on television" (Oates, 2006: 20). Furthermore, if the media attempts to challenge its audience's views too much, they risk losing its attention and trust (ibid: 5).

Given the major role mass media evidently plays in influencing electoral and considering that the political elite seems to believe in the usefulness of "media engineering", it is evident that the mass media in Russia plays a key role as a political resource (White, 2008: 170). Indeed, in his 2013 annual news conference, Putin told the reporters that "There should be patriotically minded people at the head of state information resources," adding that they should be "people who uphold the interests of the Russian Federation" (Dougherty, 2015). The effects of the restrictions are confirmed by a survey by Rostova (2016) that indicates that 72% of Russia's journalists had "encountered instances of censorship in their work; 87% agreed that it exists in Russia and 92% that the majority of Russian mass media outlets were biased. Eighty-two percent see the post-2012 period as the worst for Russia's media and another 11% see Vladimir Putin's first two terms in the same light".

While Putin's regime has been well known for its media censorship, in 2022, since the start of the war in Ukraine, the situation has gotten significantly worse (Muratova, 2022). All independent Russian journalists have mostly left Russia or were forced to shut down (Schamisso, 2022). Media shutdowns have been started by the Russian government as well as the companies themselves due to the growing sanctions. The press was badly affected, with several new laws introduced to stop the media from publishing anything that contrasts with the official views of Putin's government (Muratova, 2022).

The 2022 war in Ukraine has resulted in a law to ban the spread of "fake news" being passed. Journalists, bloggers, and media creators who, according to the Russian government, issue false information about the conflict and the Russian army risk heavy fines and up to 15 years in prison. In addition, words such as "invasion", "attack", "war" or "declaration of war" must no longer be used, with Moscow calling the war "a military special operation. Moreover, the Russian media regulator is blocking an increasing number of websites of international media, including the website of Deutsche Welle and the BBC, along with Facebook and Twitter (Breyer, 2022). In addition, the Russian Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media has warned that "violations" may result in a fine of up to 5 million rubles (Human Rights Watch, 2022). In short, in Putin's era, the space for independent journalism has shrunk, limiting news media, and leaving little critical reporting on Putin (Plotnikova and Gorbachev, 2020). Although the Russian constitution guarantees freedom of speech, the authorities are able to "crack down on any speech, organisation, or activity that lacks official support" (Freedom House, 2022). The situation has worsened since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, with Russian leaders and state-backed media creating a joint narrative around the reasons for the invasion (Abbruzzese, 2022).

9.1 Newspapers in Russia

Russian printed Russian journalism declared its existence in 1702 after the publication of *Vedomosti*, the first Russian printed newspaper, which included information on military operations, the country's economic potential, diplomatic relations of the Russian state, and cultural information among other things. It should be noted that this was already an example of the Russian newspaper being a conductor of certain policies, a propagandist, and at times an organiser of public opinion in favour of state reform and the protection of national

independence. Despite the newspaper's informative nature, its ideological nature was also undeniable and obvious (Ivanova, 2008).

In the Soviet Union all types of mass media, including newspapers, were a means of propaganda. Considering the one-party system and the lack of transparency, private newspapers could not exist with all published newspapers undergoing a rigorous check by censors. With the development, some central newspapers of the Soviet Union became organs of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to strengthen the party leadership and "educate" the youth. However, in 1991, both the Soviet Union and the one-party system collapsed (Ivanova, 2008). Significant typological changes have taken place in the Russian newspaper world in the post-Soviet period. Instead of monotonous party publications, quality and mass publications started to appear, with both publications subsidised by the government and commercial publications becoming available to the masses. Consequently, people gained access to newspapers that both reflected the point of view of the government and power structures and publications criticising the existing regime (Ivanova, 2008).

For most of the 1990s, newspaper ownership in Russia was dominated by oligarchs, who gained controlling interests in a high number of the leading titles. However, more recently, several of the most influential papers have been acquired by companies with close links to the Kremlin, one of them being the state-owned energy company Gazprom (BBC Monitoring, 2008). Presently any true commercial independence of any newspaper is dubious. The most popular papers are supportive of the Kremlin, with several influential daily newspapers owned by companies with close links to the Kremlin (TASS, 2016). Newspapers that could be identified as "quality" tend to either express oppositionist views or at least express criticism (for example, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, *Novaya Gazeta*), while mass-circulation newspapers, tend to have a loyalist position (for example, *Moskovsky Komsomolets* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*). The leading "serious" nationwide newspaper, *Izvestiya*, could be placed in between the two categories, increasingly receiving accusations of sensationalism and catering to the government (Arutunyan, 2019: 84). The five most popular newspapers in Russia as per 2022 data are *Izvestiya*, *Kommersant*, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Vedomosti*, and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Medialogia, 2022).

Print newspapers still play an important role in the Russian media system despite the general circulation of the print media dramatically decreasing from 1990 to – the 2010s. There were

16000 registered newspapers in Russia in 2021, out of which 22 can be described as national titles. Local newspapers are more popular than national newspapers, with 27% of Russians reading local newspapers routinely and 40% reading them occasionally. For national newspapers, the corresponding numbers are 18% and 38%, respectively (Oates, 2010). Major newspaper publishers have dealt with a decrease in print circulation by also publishing online (BBC, 2021A). Nonetheless, out of the total number of media outlets, newspapers are the second-largest category, accounting for 28%, right after magazines which account for 37% (TASS, 2016).

9.2 Izvestiya

Currently, with a circulation of over 234,500 as per 2021 data, *Izvestiya* (alternative spelling in English being *Izvestia*) is one of the oldest running and most popular national newspapers in Russia (Arutunyan, 2009: 53) and one of the largest daily newspapers with "a clear pro-Kremlin line", also being described as "one of Moscow's most Kremlin-friendly dailies" and "an official state newspaper in its orientation". It describes itself as "one of the most authoritative and influential publications", providing primary source documents like press briefings and official speeches (Malykhina, 2014:30) and covering Russian politics (Kaustubha et al., 2021: 228).

The history of *Izvestiya* illustrates how newspapers with an established past faced both advantages and disadvantages in terms of their relationship with the government. The paper's history goes back to 1917 when it was serving as an official organ of the Soviet government. After 1990, *Izvestiya* faced the same problems as the national press - papers were used to high incomes from subscription which went directly to the party, labour union or communist youth league which controlled it, but this stopped in 1991. For long-running newspapers like *Izvestiya*, the "shock treatment" of the early 1990s was severe. During the economic crisis in 1992, the then President of Russia Boris Yeltsin signed a decree subsidising the costs of some of the more high-circulation papers and fixing the price of paper. This also allowed for the privatisation of distribution networks. *Izvestiya* accepted help from the government, arguing that government subsidies would not undermine the paper's independence. Nonetheless, dependence on cash from the government was not enough for financial independence. Therefore, by 1996, two companies, Lukoil and Vladimir Potanin's Oneksimbank attained control of a majority of the paper's stock. During the Putin years, Potanin was an oligarch who was favoured by the government and kept close ties with the administration (Arutunyan, 2009: 53-54).

This led to clear trends of expressing pro-government views. A study by Voltmer (2000) confirms an evident lack of balance and objectivity, with *Izvestiya's* coverage being heavily biased in favour of Putin. Similar conclusions are made by Jones (2002) who argues that *Izvestiya* is highly influenced by the Kremlin and serves as a tribune of the government. In 2005, a controlling stake in *Izvestiya* was bought by state-owned Gazprom, with the newspaper included in the Gazprom Media holding (Bigg, 2005). Gazprom is known for being loyal to

Putin and “connected with the Kremlin and its administration”, with its former editor Raf Shakirov stating that “undoubtedly, I think in this case Gazprom is carrying out a task set forth in the Kremlin” (Kishkovsky, 2005). Similarly, RadioFreeEurope called the purchase “Kremlin's campaign to silence news organizations critical of its policy” (Bigg, 2005).

Indeed, following the purchase by Gazprom, despite expressing moderate criticism of the government in the past, the paper took a visibly more loyalist stance. Eventually, it began rebranding itself as a “serious” paper with a “tabloid” twist (Arutunyan, 2009: 54). In 2008, Gazprom Media sold *Izvestiya* to National Media Group (National Media Group, n.d.), a private media holding in Russia founded in 2008 (Bloomberg, n.d.), with the news owners pronouncing it a “state-controlled competitor of *Komersant* and *Vedomosti* (Kaustubha et al., 2021: 228). Similarly to the period of the Gazprom ownership, after the purchase from National Media Group, the newspaper continued to have a strong pro-Kremlin bias (Malykhina, 2014: 30). It must be noted that National Media Group is owned by Yuri Kovalchuk, a close ally of Putin who is also considered Putin’s friend, trusted adviser (Zyger, 2022) and personal banker (Wood, 2022). Zyger (2022) argues that Kovalchuk and Putin have become “almost inseparable”, making plans to rebuild Russia’s greatness. Kynev (cited in Balmforth, 2011) argues that this has resulted in *Izvestiya* becoming “essentially a pure propaganda tool, a wallpaper newspaper for United Russia, publishing material that is strange, clearly politically slanted, and that at times reeks of politics".

It must be noted that the current Chairman of the Board of Directors of National Media Group is Alina Kabaeva, the rumoured partner of Vladimir Putin (Samuelson, 2021). Additionally, from 2007 to 2014, Kabaeva was a State Duma Deputy from United Russia (Connolly, 2016), the majority party in the State Duma, having 74.66% of the seats as per 2021 data. United Russia is a supporter of Putin and has seen its popularity rise since the early 2000s, with Putin operating as its *de facto* leader. Importantly, United Russia can be viewed as a conservative party that supports “traditional Russian values” (Purves, 2021).

In addition, one of *Izvestiya’s* owners and former editor-in-chief Aram Gabrelyanov has stated that *Izvestiya* has three forbidden topics: the president, the prime minister, and the patriarch. Gabrelyanov is known for publicly expressing his support of Putin, calling him “the father of the nation”, arguing that Putin is “this country [Russia], the Russian nation” who “cannot be blamed for anything” (Kashin, 2011). Amos (2017) describes Gabrelyanov’s pro-Putin bias as

resulting in *Izvestiya* becoming a pro-Putin news website, sensationalist, and extremist. Shakirov (cited in Amos, 2017) echoes these statements, calling *Izvestiya's* support of Putin "the rollback of democracy". This indicates that *Izvestiya* is open about having pro-government bias. Called a "pro-Putin propaganda publication" (Ianovskaia, 2022), *Izvestiya* is likely to be representative of the official government stances on political matters.

9.3 Argumenti Nedeli

Argumenti Nedeli (alternative spelling in English being *Argumenti Nedely,* formerly called *Argumenty i Vremya*) is a weekly socio-analytical newspaper that is published in Russia, CIS countries, and abroad, also having an electronic version of the newspaper. The newspaper has been published since May 2006. The audience size of *Argumenti Nedeli* is 1.1 million, with a total audience including a foreign readership of 1.3 million (Rossiyskaya Gosudartsvennaya Biblioteka, n.d.). In the category of socio-political publications, *Argumenti Nedeli* has the fourth place in terms of audience size, being significantly ahead of a high number of well-known Russian newspapers in this indicator - for instance, the audience of *Argumenti Nedeli* in Russia exceeds the audience of *Izvestiya* by 3 times and *Kommersant* by 4.5 times. The journalistic team of *Argumenti Nedeli* is based on experienced journalists and managers who have had leading positions in Russian media holdings (*Argumenty i Fakty*, *Izvestiya*, *Moskovskij Komsomolets*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, and *Trud*) for many years. (Rossiyskaya Gosudartsvennaya Biblioteka, n.d.).

The idea of creating *Argumenti Nedeli* belongs to the journalistic team of *Argumenty i Fakty*, headed by Deputy Editor-in-Chief Andrey Uglanov, who left *Argumenty i Fakty* because of disagreements with shareholders. Then still called *Argumenti i Vremya*, Uglanov was open about the fact that *Argumenti Nedeli* aims to take over the brand of *Argumenti i Fakty* and gain part of its audience (Voronov, 2006). The self-identified main focus of the newspaper is solving social problems. The newspaper prides itself on sharp comments, analytical materials, journalistic investigations, and unexpected and sensational news. The most common themes in the articles are politics, society, business forecasts, social issues, regional news, investigations, and national security. However, article themes also include sports, culture, health, and free legal consultations (Rossiyskaya Gosudartsvennaya Biblioteka, n.d.)., suggesting a generally similar profile to *Izvestiya.*

Many of *Argumenti Nedeli's* publications have become resonant, having a high citation index on TV, radio and on the Internet. Each issue of *Argumenti Nedeli* is delivered to all deputies of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, members of the Federation Council, the Presidential Administration, the Government of Russia, and many state institutions in Moscow and Russia's regions (Rossiyskaya Gosudartsvennaya Biblioteka, n.d.).

53% of its audience have a high school diploma, while 46% have a university degree. Only 1% of the newspaper's audience does not have a high school diploma. 56% of the newspaper's audience are women, while 44 are men. The newspaper is most popular in the over-50 years age group, with 26% of its readers being in the 55–64-year age group, and 22% of its readers being in the over-65 age group. Most of its readers fall into the average income categories. In terms of employment, the two largest categories are "retired" (26%) and a broad category of people who self-identify as "employees" (Atlas Smi, n.d.)

In terms of potential bias, *Argumenti Nedeli* does not officially reveal a particular ideological position. Nonetheless, its Deputy Editor-in-Chief Andrey Uglanov is known to express strong political opinions.[4] Uglanov is known to have publicly expressed critical opinions of Ukraine, describing it as "a weird place that has no friends". Furthermore, Uglanov argues that "everything done in Ukraine is done either to harm itself or to harm others". Uglanov also speaks highly of the Soviet Union, describing it as "a fair system". Uglanov has also expressed the view that the use of force is "wonderful" to stop Georgia and Ukraine from joining NATO. The prospect of Ukraine joining NATO is called "the biggest nightmare for both Putin and most of the Russian citizens".

A big theme in Uglanov's rhetoric is Russia's relationship with the United States. Uglanov has expressed the view that the US and other anglophone countries always humiliate, hate, and describe Russia in negative terms, calling these actions "anti-Russian propaganda". Additionally, Uglanov blames the American criticism of Russia as its way to shift the focus away from its domestic problems. The US is described as constantly threatening Russia and mentioning that it will have to face serious consequences for its actions. At the same time, the US sanctions against Russia over the years have been described as "ridiculous" and "disgusting".

[4] The following information is sourced from Uglanov's YouTube channel

Interestingly, one of the broadcasts on his channel tackles the issue of Russia being "the Other" of the United States, speaking of the world as "bipolar". Furthermore, Uglanov has spoken critically about the "fake news" in the United States, especially the liberal media channels such as CNN that were "trying to destroy and silence Donald Trump".

This illustrates that the views of the owner are representative of the official stances of the Russian government. Indeed, Shimotomai, (2015:81) argues that *Argumenti Nedeli* "provides a hint of the Kremlin voice". It should be noted that, despite having the fourth place in terms of audience size in socio-political publications, there are no papers or books focusing on the discourse of *Argumenti Nedeli*. As such, among other goals, this thesis aims to contribute to the existing scholarship of Russian newspapers by providing a New Cold War focused discourse analysis of *Argumenti Nedeli*.

9.4 Novaya Gazeta

Novaya Gazeta, which is published two times per week, is well-known for its investigative journalism (BBC Monitoring, 2008), being "one of the very few newspapers in the [Russian] market that produces high-quality investigative journalism" (Kaustubha et al., 2021: 228). *Novaya Gazeta* has a staff of 60 journalists. It is considered to be one of Russia's most important independent publications (Roth, 2022). After its establishment, the main aims of the newspapers were to "achieve political and business honesty and integrity, and independence from power", emphasising that its position would be one of "non-alignment" (Rostova, cited in Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 68).

A group of former journalists from *Komsomolskaya Pravda* founded *Novaya Gazeta* in 1993, with its first name being *Ezhednevnaya Novaya Gazeta* (Demchenko and Filipenok, 2019). The former *Komsomolskaya Pravda* journalists "aimed to create a different newspaper… for everyone and without orientation toward any political party" (Klimentov, cited in Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 67). The newspaper aimed to accomplish "political and business honesty and integrity and independence from power" (Rostova, cited in Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 67). *Novaya Gazeta* journalists also elected their editor, Sergei Kozheurov (Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 68).

Most of the newspaper's shares were owned by its editorial staff. The other major shareholder was Alexander Lebedev (Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 19), a leading critic of Russian authorities (*Forbes*, 2022), oligarch, and businessman (Harding, 2009). Finally, 10% of the shares were owned by Mikhail Gorbachev (Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 19) To help establish the newspaper, Gorbachev used the money from his 1990 Nobel Peace Prize (MosNews, 2006). The first edition of the newspaper was financed from the contributions of its journalists and some of its supporters. In addition, for an extended period, the journalists did not receive any salaries (Kashin, cited in Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 67).

The newspaper's history included facing a period of financial difficulties. Its editor Dmitry Muratov explained that the newspaper's founders initially "did not seriously consider the financial costs and implications" due to the financial aspect not being a problem during their work at *Komsomolskaia Pravda* (Kashin, cited in Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 69). In addition, its editor Kozheurov who served as the editor-of-chief of *Novaya Gazeta* until 1994

(Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 68), had to give up his position due to his co-workers hoping that another colleague might solve their financial problems. Following these events, Vladimir Lepekhin, a State Duma deputy, joined the newspaper. Nonetheless, his time at the newspaper was short due to two possible reasons. First, Lepekhin had presumably promised financial support that he did not deliver. Second, as claimed by Lepekhin himself, he left the newspaper due to disagreements over the newspaper's editorial policy on Chechnya. This was followed by a challenging time for *Novaya Gazeta* due to its big debt which also caused it to stop printing the newspaper in Moscow. This hardship led to the resignation of several of its newspapers (Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 70).

In 2015, Lebedev voiced his intention to stop "bankrolling" *Novaya Gazeta*, naming expense, strain, and years of pressure from the Russian authorities as his reasons (Greenslade, 2015). This was followed by concerns of its editor-in-chief Dmitry Muratov about the possibility of the newspaper being forced to stop its print circulation. The reasons named were not being able to compete with state-sponsored rivals due to the political system that has scared off advertisers, shareholders, and investors (*The Moscow Times*, 2015). Nonetheless, Muratov managed to acquire some funding, thus allowing the paper to resume printing in August 1995 (Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 70).

Despite its financial struggles, the newspaper managed to hire several prominent journalists. This included the army Mayor Vyacheslav Izmailov, who became the newspaper's columnist, also having had experience fighting in Chechnya. According to Muratov, one of the biggest accomplishments of *Novaya Gazeta* was the freeing of 171 soldiers and hostages in Chechnya. (Kashin, cited in Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 70). Indeed, frequently being critical of the government, it has been an opponent of Russian policy in Chechnya and the North Caucasus (BBC Monitoring, 2008) with Chechnya being one of the main topics of *Novaya Gazeta* (Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 70-71).

In addition, it also publishes articles uncovering corruption and abuse of power in Russia's armed forces. *Novaya Gazeta* is also one of the few newspapers providing detailed writing on the liberal opposition (BBC Monitoring, 2008). In 2014, while covering Russia's involvement in Ukraine, the newspaper was warned by the Russian media watchdog over "signs of extremism" (*The Moscow Times*, 2014). Its journalists have often suffered from threats and violence for their work (Nikkanen, 2022). In October 2006, the paper's most distinguished

reporter, Anna Politkovskaya, was killed outside her Moscow home (BBC Monitoring, 2008). As per 2021 data, six journalists from *Novaya Gazeta* have been murdered since 2000 (*The Economist*, 2021A). In spite of the killings and threats, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has said that *Novaya Gazeta* “has refused to abandon the newspaper’s independent policy" and has “consistently defended the right of journalists to write anything they want about whatever they want, as long as they comply with the professional and ethical standards of journalism." (Radio Free Europe, 2021).

Dmitry Muratov, who has long served as editor-in-chief of *Novaya Gazeta*, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2021. In 2022, *Novaya Gazeta* made the decision to stop operations until the end of the war in Ukraine after it got a second warning from the state censor for supposedly violating the country’s “foreign agent law”. The decision was based on the concern that the newspaper could have its licence revoked since it had received two warnings from Roskomnadzor, The Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roth, 2022).

Chapter 10: Empirical analysis: American newspapers

The first half of my empirical study encompasses a comprehensive analysis of three prominent American newspapers, namely *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, during the timeframe spanning from 2014 to 2017. By adopting Laclau's poststructuralist principles of empty signifiers, one of the objectives of the research was to discern how these newspapers ascribe meaning to the key Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) themes of "ideology" and "power". In addition, the investigation explores whether the newspapers employ themes reminiscent of Cold War narratives or directly reference the Cold War while characterising Russia, thereby also adding meaning to the CDA concepts of "ideology" and "power". Furthermore, the research looks for differences between the years 2014-2015, marked by events such as the Euromaidan, Russian separatist conflicts in East Ukraine, and the Western response to Russia's annexation of Crimea, and the years 2016-2017, characterised by Donald Trump's pre-election campaign and early presidency, during which he was widely perceived as a pro-Russia candidate.

During the process of conducting a newspaper analysis, notable similarities were identified in the discourses of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. These narrative parallels led to the observation that the themes of "ideology" and "power" can be explicated using comparable attributes across all three newspapers. This particular finding constituted a noteworthy discovery in itself and addressed one of the pertinent research questions. Consequently, when referring to the denoted aspects in the subsequent discussions, the terms "the newspapers" or "the American newspapers" are used. It is important to emphasise that this plural reference was exclusively employed in instances where recurring commonalities manifested across all three newspapers. Nonetheless, this plural designation does *not* imply that these newspapers should be regarded as indistinguishable entities. Instead, it denotes their shared attributes that surfaced during the analytical process. Furthermore, the plural referencing does not suggest that their similarities inevitably extend to other contexts, settings, or subject matters.

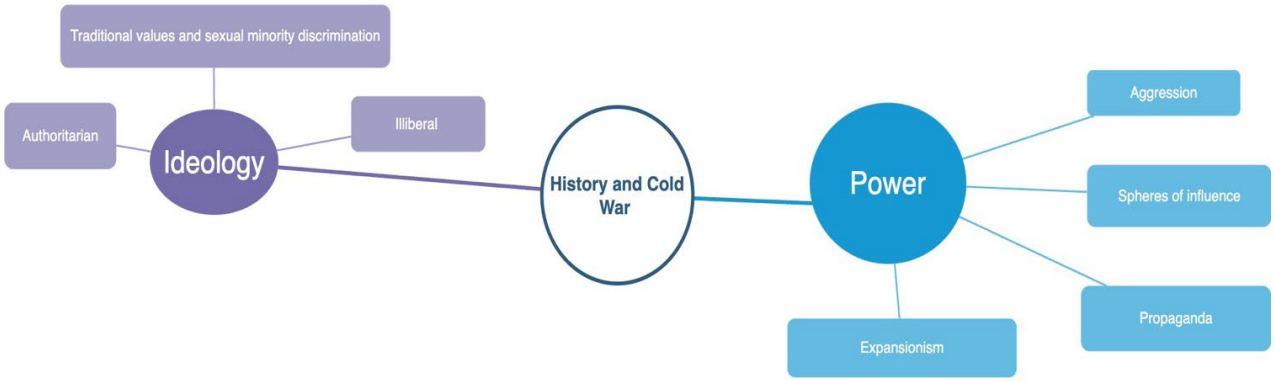
It is imperative to acknowledge that the designations of the so-called signifieds are not predetermined within the articles. Rather, they are derived from the specific phrasing and descriptors employed in the articles, as substantiated through the provided quotations and corresponding explanations. Thus, in this context, the process of operationalising these

concepts through explicit definitions may inadvertently deviate from the intended interpretations as conveyed in the articles. Thus, in this instance, their signification is elucidated through the discourse itself rather than relying on an established definition.

Upon examination, it was discovered that the empty signifier of "ideology" was enriched with signifieds "authoritarianism", illiberalism", and "traditional values and sexual minority discrimination". The empty signifier of "power" was given substance through signifieds "aggression", "spheres of influence", "expansionism", and "propaganda". A noteworthy trend that surfaced during the analysis pertains to the inseparability of the empty signifiers "ideology" and "power". For instance, characterising a country as "authoritarian" often led to the association of its actions with expansionism. Moreover, the signifieds that endowed meaning to the empty signifiers "ideology" and "power" were intrinsically interconnected. For example, labelling a nation as "illiberal" frequently intertwined with the notion of employing propaganda as a means of influencing public opinion. Similarly, the allegation of expansionist tendencies and the aim to establish spheres of influence were frequently linked to aggressive actions or endeavours to justify these actions.

Furthermore, a remarkable and significant finding that emerged from the analysis pertains to the filling of both empty signifiers, "ideology" and "power", through historical and Cold War references. As evident in the visual illustration below, the theme of "History and Cold War" effectively links the two empty signifiers together. While not all historical references were explicitly tied to the Cold War, such references were commonly observed. Notably, historical allusions, particularly those involving the Cold War and several historical figures, exhibited a recurring trait: they often referred to authoritarian and illiberal political leaders with expansionist tendencies. This further underscored the close association between the concepts of "ideology" and "power".

In light of these findings, this analysis endeavoured to examine the findings in a unified narrative, employing CDA to uncover the underlying constructed power relations and social realities embedded in the discourse of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* during the specified timeframe: 2014-2017. The research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the newspapers' discursive representations of Russia.



Visualisation created by the thesis author using the DrawIo software

The visualisation presented above effectively illustrates the signifieds that imbue meaning into the empty signifiers of "ideology" and "power". A discussion of these signifieds, accompanied by examples the newspaper articles, substantiates my analysis. The discussion first focuses on the exploration of the empty signifier "ideology", followed by a subsequent examination of the empty signifier "power". Lastly, the discussion focuses on references to history and the Cold War, which proves relevant to both "ideology" and "power".

10.1 Ideology

Traditional values and sexual minority discrimination

The prioritisation of the theme "traditional values and sexual minority discrimination" as the first one discussed in giving meaning to the empty signifier "ideology" is not coincidental, stemming from the theme's frequent and prominent presence in the discourse of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. While discussing these themes, the newspaper discourse during 2014 and 2015 seems to be particularly influenced by two significant events: the 2014 Olympic Games taking place in Russia, and the 2014 events in Ukraine – the Euromaidan protests, the annexation of Crimea, and the conflicts with pro-Russia separatists in Eastern Ukraine. The first event – the 2014 Olympic Games held in Russia – was associated with considerable attention and scrutiny from the international community largely due to its timing. During this period, Russia's attitudes towards human rights, particularly regarding the rights of sexual minorities, were widely discussed in the context of the country's approval of the "Purpose of Protecting Children from Information Advocating a

Denial of Traditional Family Values" law in 2013. This law, commonly known as the "gay propaganda law" or "anti-gay law" in the anglosphere media, was unanimously approved by the Russian State Duma. The legislation restricted the promotion of non-traditional sexual relationships to minors, effectively limiting discussions about LGBTQ+ rights and relationships in public spaces (Martirosyan, 2022). The implementation of this law raised concerns about its implications on the rights and freedoms of the LGBTQ+ community, leading to criticism from various quarters, with *The Washington Post, The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* being no exception. As such, the event of the Olympic Games, and the associated international exposure were used to draw attention to the law and its effects on sexual minorities.

Consequently, the three newspapers extensively covered Russia's approach to human rights, portraying the country as restrictive, discriminatory, and illiberal. The negative connotations associated with Russia's views, particularly its stance on human rights issues, became a prominent theme within the discourse of the three newspapers. This portrayal also reflected the newspapers' general perception of Russia's dominating ideology as being at odds with liberal principles and international human rights norms. Thus, the discussion was largely framed as a part of a broader conversation about sexual minority rights and human rights issues in Russia. They portrayed Russia as a country facing a more extensive problem resulting from the oppressive regime led by President Vladimir Putin. This framing encompassed a range of concerns related to democratic backsliding, authoritarianism, human rights violations, and geopolitical aggression. The newspapers highlighted how Putin's regime has gradually eroded democratic institutions, consolidating control in his hands, as illustrated in the quotation below:

> The host country's president, Vladimir Putin, runs a notoriously despotic regime whose victims include not only independent journalists and political opponents but also gay men and lesbians, who have recently been targeted by a law prohibiting "propaganda of nontraditional sexual practices" among minors. (*The Washington Post*, 21/01/2014)

The newspaper narratives unveiled a pervasive tone of critique, denouncing the law's restrictive nature and its potential infringement upon fundamental principles of freedom of expression and human rights. The Russian government's strong opposition to sexual minority rights is depicted as an example of discriminatory practices. Thus, the discourse framed Russia as the Other of the West - one that is antagonistic to Western values. In other words, while the

newspapers subjected Russia's anti-homosexual attitudes to a lot of criticism, the views can be seen as a part of a larger set of incompatible attitudes. In *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* these actions are seen as being indicative of a broader atmosphere that restricts and acts against core liberal Western democratic values, as evident in the following quotes:

> The rapid increase in living standards in the 2000s that persuaded Russians to ignore their lack of liberty is apparently a thing of the past. At the same time, Mr. Putin's attempt to treat Russia as a moral alternative to the West based on Russian Orthodoxy and homophobia is unlikely to succeed. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 14/01/2014)

> Putin is saying that Russia is no longer answerable to the West on issues ranging from gay rights to religious tolerance to the rule of law to democracy itself. (*The Washington Post*, 03/01/2014)

These examples serve as a demonstrative instance of the newspapers using Othering to emphasise the distinction between Us and Them, rendering Russia's attitudes as distant and incompatible. Additionally, Russia is portrayed not only as one rejecting Western tolerance but actively acting against the West by trying to silence the Western rhetoric on the sexual minority issue, as well as taking aggressive stances against those who support them. Akser and Baybars (2022) explain such strategies by arguing that, as illiberal leaders and increasing polarisation become stronger, the provocation of anxiety, resentment, and fear becomes more popular, including in very democratic and liberal states. As the West has seen increasing opinion polarisation within their own countries in combination with authoritarian states gaining more power globally, it is possible that the newspapers are building an image of Russia as not only antagonistic but also threatening. For example, when discussing the Winter Olympics in Russia in the context of the anti-homosexual attitudes in Russia, the following article describes Russia as a place that is a threat:

> One is left with the distinct impression this is a dangerous, repressive place. That, in turn, brings us to the inexplicable decision to let the Russians host the Games. (*The Washington Post*, 28/01/2014)

Indeed, in the newspaper discourse, Russia takes the role of the aggressor, while the US acts as the defender of progressive attitudes. This is supported by the theoretical claims of Kelman (cited in Myshlovska, 2023) who describes societies in conflict as having parallel images of the Self and the Other where each action of the enemy is interpreted as offensive, while one's own actions are considered defensive. As a result, identities become the key arenas of conflict. During conflicts, groups come to view the identity, national community, and culture of the Other as a threat to their own existence, which results in the negation of the Other. This dichotomous representation of the Other as an aggressor and the Self as the defender in the three American newspapers creates a narrative that reinforces a sense of superiority and righteous victimhood. By doing so, the newspapers' portrayal reflects a constructed narrative that aligns with the interests, values, and identity of the US, while simultaneously positioning Russia as the antithesis. This follows the theoretical assumptions of Okolie (2003) who posits that the Other can also be seen as a foundation for the self, self-image, and identity. The author states that identity has little meaning on its own, being acquired and claimed by defining the Other. We can observe an example of Othering in the following quote from *The New York Times*:

> Through the past 25 years, the Western world and Russia have been drifting in opposite directions, their hopes and social visions increasingly at cross purposes. Russia today is a country where many people find solace in traditional values that many in the West reject. (*The New York Times*, 08/02/2014)

There may be several additional potential reasons behind this framing. Media outlets, driven by public sentiment, may frame stories in a way that resonates with their audiences. In the case of sexual minority discrimination, the media in the US may prioritise narratives that reinforce a sense of victimhood and highlight the contrast between the US and Russia. The progress in sexual minority rights and acceptance in the US over the past few decades has shaped the national identity of the United States, creating a narrative of inclusivity and tolerance. By contrasting its own achievements with Russia's perceived shortcomings, the newspapers reinforce the self-image of the US as a defender of human rights, including the rights of sexual minorities.

In addition, constructing the discourse in this manner may help the newspapers reinforce the image of the US as an example of progressiveness and human rights protection, thus increasing

its soft power and influence on the global stage. Furthermore, by presenting Russia as an aggressor regarding sexual minority discrimination, the newspapers may aid the US to leverage the issue to assert moral superiority, enhance its international image, and potentially gain political leverage over Russia. Thus, this depiction can be considered within the framework of geopolitical competition and power struggles. Indeed, by highlighting the issues in Russia regarding sexual minority rights, the American newspapers also emphasise the flawed Russian political system as a whole:

> What about Putin's new model of authoritarian government based on "traditional values," such as homophobia? (*The Washington Post*, 03/02/2014)

The quotation above signifies another tendency in the newspapers – the concepts of "traditionalism" and "traditional values" concerning Russia are repeatedly employed to illustrate the country's discriminative and regressive attitudes. These terms are utilised to highlight Russia's adherence to conservative social norms, which can be perceived as restrictive and regressive, particularly in the context of human rights and social equality. Thus, Russia's alleged systematic dismantling of democratic norms is associated with its "traditional values" and portrayed as evidence of an oppressive and hostile regime. The divergence in views on this issue contributes to a negative portrayal of Russia's political traditionalism.

The term "traditionalism" was also linked to Russia's support for conservative values and national identity, often presenting a dichotomy between "traditional" Russia and the perceived "liberal" West. Instead of being framed as neutral or simply different from the West, the framing indicated a perceived Russia's opposition to progressive social attitudes, with Russia positioning them as foreign influences that threaten traditional values:

> You can hear echoes of this moralistic strain in Putin's own speeches, especially when he defends his regime's attitude toward gays and the role of women. Citing Berdyaev, he talks about defending traditional values to ward off moral chaos. He says he is defending the distinction between good and evil, which has been lost in the outside world. (*The New York Times*, 04/03/2014)

As evident in the *New York Times* quotation, Russia's stance on gender roles and women's rights is also subjected to scrutiny within the newspapers' discourse. The country's conservative approach to gender norms visible in its policies that reinforce traditional gender roles, is portrayed as limiting women's equality. For instance, there are discussions surrounding Russia's controversial decriminalisation of domestic violence, which is perceived as regressive and harmful to gender equality efforts. A *Washington Post* editorial critiques the decision in the following way:

> What's most objectionable about the law is the broader message it sends: that a domestic assault that doesn't break bones or result in a concussion — a beating that could be humiliating, painful and cause deep emotional damage to the victim — should bring little or no penalty from the state. It is hard to see how a healthy society and healthy families benefit when the most vulnerable are left exposed. (*The Washington Post*, 28/01/2017)

Furthermore, Russia's traditionalism is associated with nationalism, with Putin portrayed as leveraging cultural, historical, and ideological elements to strengthen the sense of a unified Russian identity. This connection between traditionalism and nationalism is constructed as a potent tool in Putin's political strategy to bolster national unity, consolidate power, assert Russia's position on the global stage, and differentiate or even alienate Russia from the US:

> Perhaps it was some inkling about a moment of American weakness. Perhaps it really was the ouster through a popular uprising of the grossly corrupt Yanukovych in Ukraine. Perhaps it was simply his inner K.G.B. officer rising to the surface, a yearning for the empire lost. In the end the reasons are secondary to the reality, which is that Putin has opted to ignite Russian nationalism by cultivating the myth of Western encirclement of the largest nation on earth by far. The G-7 will convene in a few days without him. Of course it will. The Russian president is no longer interested in the rules of that club. Controlled antagonism to it suits him better. (*The New York Times*, 05/06/2015)

This quotation also brings about the other setting in which Russia's traditional values are discussed and critiqued. The newspapers discussed Putin's use of Russia's traditional values as a pretext used to justify his involvement in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. The newspapers also depicted Putin's strategic use of traditionalism, including nationalism, to provide a rationale for providing support to pro-Russia rebels in eastern Ukraine. The

discussion of Russia's disregard for the territorial integrity of Ukraine and its use of pretexts to annex Crimea persisted in the newspapers in 2015.

Finally, the discourse brings about another aspect closely intertwined with Russia's traditionalism, and, in turn, nationalism - the Orthodox Church. Putin's closeness to Russian Orthodoxy is portrayed as having a symbiotic relationship between Russia's national identity, heritage, and geopolitical ambitions. However, this connection is discussed critically, arguing that both nationalism and religion serve as powerful tools for Russia to consolidate power, legitimise its policies, and foster a sense of unity among its citizens, while also distracting them from domestic issues. Putin's mixture of traditionalism, including nationalism and his closeness as a political leader to Russian Orthodoxy, is a typical example of Othering of Russia in the three American newspapers, exemplified in this quote from *The New York Times*:

> The danger is that Russia is now involved in a dispute in Ukraine that touches and activates the very core of this touchy messianism. The tiger of quasi-religious nationalism, which Putin has been riding, may now take control. (*The New York Times*, 04/03/2014)

In other words, the newspapers discuss how Putin has strategically used religion and the Orthodox Church to bolster nationalism and reinforce the perception of Russia as a unique and distinct civilization. In the newspaper discourse, Putin's alliance with the Orthodox Church serves as a powerful instrument for the Russian government to legitimise its policies. In particular, the newspapers emphasise that Putin has established his political image by embracing religious nationalism, with a focus on the Russian Orthodox Church, which has become a significant foundation of the Russian nation-state following the Soviet era. Thus, the discussion focuses on the role of the Orthodox Church in disseminating Putin's propaganda, thereby promoting patriotism and traditional values, including discrimination against sexual minorities.

For example, while talking about Putin's illiberal attitudes and Pussy Riot's opposition to Putin's regime, a *Washington Post* opinion piece, describes Putin's motivation in the following way:

> Instead, it speaks to how easily threatened the Russian establishment is, and to how Putin's consolidation of power is tied up in traditional ideas of Russian greatness, particularly the conservative social ideals of the Orthodox Church. (*The Washington Post*, 25/07/2016).

Thus, the closeness to the Orthodox Church is constructed as a convenient way for Putin to stay in power. Simultaneously, Putin is accused of using the Russian Orthodox Church to Other the West and portray Russia as morally superior. By presenting himself as a defender of the Orthodox Church and its values, Putin positions himself as a champion of traditional Russian culture, setting himself apart from the perceived moral decline in the West. For example, we evidence this in the slightly ironic *The New York Times* quotation below:

> Recently, President Putin asserted that Western Christianity had lost its moral compass by supporting L.G.B.T. rights and that the Russian Orthodox Church was the true guardian of Christian values. (*The New York Times*, 27/01/2014)

To summarise, through my analysis, I observed a discernible trend across *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, which demonstrated a critical perspective regarding Russia's purported "traditional values". This critical stance included a scrutiny of Russia's treatment of sexual minorities, and furthermore, an assertion that President Putin uses nationalist ideologies and Russian Orthodoxy to advance his political objectives. The underlying factors contributing to this portrayal were explored, yet it is essential to also note that all three newspapers seemed critical of the aforementioned things, which invites the question of the potential reasons behind it. To understand this portrayal, one must also consider the leanings of the newspapers and the profile of their readership. As known, media coverage stems from many sources, including the inevitable biases of newspapers themselves (see e.g., Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2010), as well as their readers' demands (Mullainathan and Shleifer, 2005). Being viewed as leftist, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* are highly likely to include discourse discussing sexual minority concerns in Russia. While having a more centrist leaning, *The Wall Street Journal* was also critical of Russia's attitudes, with its discourse aligning with the liberal cultural norms. Nonetheless, echoing the statements by Wodak and Meyer (2009: 18), it is not uncommon for people from diverse backgrounds and interests to have startlingly similar thoughts in certain areas, with dominant ideologies holding on to assumptions that are largely unchallenged. The negative depiction of Russia's attitudes might relate to and reflect the US public opinion. For example, Gallup poll results (cited in

Newport, 2021) indicate that 69 percent of Americans believe that homosexual relations are morally acceptable. Thus, by reinforcing readers' existing beliefs and perspectives, newspapers can strengthen their connection with their audience and foster a sense of validation and trust. Additionally, since US law guarantees equal treatment of sexual minorities (U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, 2016), by criticising Russia's lack of adherence to these standards, the newspapers adhere to the dominant democratic principles in the US.

In addition, as will be evident in the following sections, the newspapers' critique of Russia aligns with a broader narrative of Russia as the Other of the US. More specifically, the discourse surrounding traditionalism in Russia resonates with a broader context of discussions related to the country's anti-liberalist policies. By situating traditionalism within this wider discussion, it becomes apparent that its portrayal in *The Washington Post, The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* relates to general concerns over the erosion of liberal values in the country.

Authoritarian and illiberal

As one would anticipate, in the same way as with the theme of "traditionalism values and sexual minority discrimination", the Olympic Games in Sochi, and Russia's involvement in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea emerge as the key situational contexts for portraying Russia as authoritarian and illiberal in 2014-2015, with those themes persisting to appear in the discourse of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* throughout 2016-2017. In addition, in 2015, Russia was portrayed as authoritarian and illiberal related to the killing of Putin's oppositionary Boris Nemtsov, which became a theme that kept getting referenced throughout the two following years. Finally, in 2016-2017, Russia's illiberalism was also closely linked to Russia's attempts to affect the outcome of the US 2016 Presidential election, as well as Putin's relationship with Trump. This chapter will provide more detail on Russia's portrayal within these contexts.

First, while considering the concept of being "liberal" or "illiberal" in the context of the case of Crimea, one should emphasise that the Maidan Revolution represents a significant moment in Ukraine's modern history, symbolising popular demands for democratic reforms and European integration. Consequently, it is not surprising that *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* argue that the risk of Ukraine embracing liberal values

is a threat to Putin's anti-liberal attitudes. For example, an opinion piece describes the situation in the following way:

> The crisis in Ukraine revives one of the oldest clashes in the heart of Europe—the "bloodlands," to use Timothy Snyder's phrase—between autocracy and liberalism. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 25/08/2014)

Indeed, all three selected American newspapers discuss the anti-liberalism of Russia and Putin from various angles, emphasising Putin's suppression of civil society, his attempts to restrict free speech, and his efforts to silence critical journalism. The newspapers emphasise that Putin's regime actively undermines the principles of liberalism by limiting freedom of speech and undermining the independence of civil society. They also stress the consequences of these illiberal practices on the broader state of democratic values in Russia, arguing that the oppression of civil society, restrictions on free speech, and the silencing of critical journalism in Russia undermine democratic values. Thus, this portrayal presents Putin's regime as potentially creating an environment that is conducive to authoritarianism – another major theme that I identified in the discourse of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. This is exemplified in the quotation below, with Putin's attitudes being compared to those of the Soviet authorities:

> Putin is unreconciled to the "tragedy," as he calls it, of the Soviet Union's demise. It was within the Soviet apparatus of oppression that he honed the skills by which he governs — censorship, corruption, brutality, oppression, assassination. (*The Washington Post*, 20/02/2014)

This portrayal of Russia as anti-liberal in *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* largely echoes a general Western consensus on the state of democratic values, human rights, and freedoms in Russia. Western countries, including governments, civil society organisations, and media outlets, often criticise Russia for its perceived violations of human rights, restrictions on democratic practices, and deviations from liberal values. Western actors often highlight issues in Russia such as limitations on civil liberties, the suppression of dissent, and the targeting of minority rights, especially the rights of sexual minorities (see, for example, Human Rights Watch, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2020; United Nations, 2022). In

addition, it should be noted that anti-liberalism, or at least harsh criticism of it has been expressed by Putin himself. For example, in a 2019 interview, Putin (cited by Barber et al., 2019) stated the following:

> "[Liberals] cannot simply dictate anything to anyone just like they have been attempting to do over the recent decades."

Consequently, Putin's public criticisms of Western liberalism offer a discursive resource for American newspapers to reinforce the narrative of Russia as an antagonist to liberal values, which may directly or indirectly affect the authors of newspaper articles. The public discourse may potentially increase the probability of authors interpreting certain events and behaviours as anti-liberal, resulting in Othering. As discussed, Othering can unintentionally influence how people interpret information by creating cognitive biases and preconceived notions that shape their perception and understanding of the subject being Othered. When individuals or groups are consistently portrayed as different, inferior, or outside the norm, it can lead to a process of cognitive categorisation.

In addition, from a CDA perspective, the portrayal of Russia as illiberal can be understood as a discursive construction influenced by power dynamics and dominant ideologies. The newspapers, through their language choices and framing, construct Russia as the adversary, positioning it in opposition to the liberal values upheld by the West. This positioning of Russia as illiberal creates a binary distinction that reinforces the perceived moral superiority of the West and justifies certain actions or policies towards Russia. For example, an article from *The New York Times* speaks of the dangers of Putin's perceived actions against liberalism:

> If Putin the Thug gets away with crushing Ukraine's new democratic experiment and unilaterally redrawing the borders of Europe, every pro-Western country around Russia will be in danger. (*The New York Times*, 28/01/2015).

Indeed, the portrayal of Russia is of a country actively acting against Western liberal values, rather than merely having different values from the West. In other words, the newspaper portrayal highlights the contention that Russia is not simply a passive holder of alternative ideological perspectives, but actively engages in actions and policies that challenge and undermine Western liberal principles. For example, a *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece warns of the perceived dangers of Russia's ideology to the West:

> We are confronted by forces of oppression that reject our liberal democracy and our liberal, rules-based international order. While their agendas and ideologies are different, they are virulently against the West and what we represent. They will grasp every opportunity to undermine our values of individual liberty, freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 15/09/2014)

These themes continue to appear in all three American newspapers throughout the four inspected years. However, in addition to the aforementioned contexts, the 2016-2017 period brings up the topic of Donald Trump and how his positive opinions of Putin might pose a threat to the US. We notice the trope of Putin as being against Western democracy and his alleged attempts to undermine it. As a consequence, Trump's connection to Putin is regarded in the light of Trump potentially endangering the liberal values of the US, fuelling suspicions that Trump might align with Putin's illiberal and authoritarian tendencies.

Indeed, as mentioned, the portrayal of Russia and Putin as illiberal is strongly linked to the concept of "authoritarian". *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times,* and *The Wall Street Journal* frequently characterise Russia and Putin as exhibiting authoritarian tendencies, often employing direct references to this term. While considering the term's meaning, it must be acknowledged that we cannot fully separate its essence from other terms, such as "illiberal" or "anti-democratic". The Merriam-Webster dictionary offers two meanings for the term: 1) of, relating to, or favouring blind submission to authority; and 2) of, relating to, or favouring a concentration of power in a leader or an elite not constitutionally responsible to the people. This is also evident in the articles of the three American newspapers – while describing Putin or Russia as "authoritarian", we note references to other oppressive and anti-democratic actions.

For example, the portrayal suggests that Putin seeks to exercise tight control over the dissemination of information and expression of dissent within his regime. Furthermore, these narratives imply that various groups in Russia, including journalists, political opponents, and sexual minorities, face limitations on their freedom of speech and suffer under Putin's authoritarian rule. The portrayal of Putin as authoritarian persists in the discourse of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* throughout the examined four years – 2014 to 2017. When examining the newspaper discourse specifically between 2016

and 2017, discussions concerning Putin's authoritarianism began to incorporate Donald Trump as a prominent figure. These discussions highlight a narrative asserting that Trump had expressed support for authoritarian leaders on previous occasions. Thus, the process of Othering Russia was also done by bringing about Trump's actions and attitudes, linking him to Putin's perceived authoritarian tendencies.

In addition, Putin is viewed as seeking to control information flow and discourse within his regime, which reflects concerns in the three American newspapers about media censorship and restrictions on the freedom of speech. The newspapers mention Putin's use of various means, such as state control over media outlets, legal restrictions, and targeted actions against journalists critical of the government to suppress dissenting voices and limit the space for independent journalism. This portrayal implies that Putin's authoritarian rule curtails the ability of journalists to operate freely and limits their abilities to hold the Russian government accountable. For example:

> "But the sustained effort of Vladimir Putin's Kremlin to control what is written, said or thought about the regime is a revealing moment in a broad struggle for power in a rapidly changing world." (*The Washington Post*, 18/01/2014)

Interestingly, in cases when an interpretation or cause of Putin's behaviour is offered, it is regularly linked to the Soviet Union. We note the idea that Putin has maintained an authoritarian style of governance reminiscent of the Soviet times. This argument aligns with the newspapers' analysis of Putin's consolidation of power, restrictions on civil liberties, and the concentration of authority within the state. Such an interpretation emphasises the continuity of Putin's repressive measures, suggesting that Putin's governance maintains aspects of the authoritarian tradition established in the Soviet era. We see an example of this in the following quotation:

> For Ukraine, as well as for Russia and much of the former U.S.S.R., the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 was only a partial revolution. The U.S.S.R. vanished, but the old nomenklatura, and its venal, authoritarian style of governance remained (*The New York Times*, 09/03/2014)

In addition to Putin's authoritarian style of governance, the newspapers also discuss authoritarian tendencies in regard to Russia's involvement in Ukraine, including Russia's

annexation of Crimea and its involvement in Donbas and Luhansk. In this case, Putin's governance serves as a crucial explanatory factor behind his alleged expansionist tendencies and actions abroad. Given Putin's top-down approach, the newspapers argue that this concentration of power allows Putin to pursue aggressive foreign policy actions without substantial domestic dissent or accountability. In fact, while critiquing this phenomenon, a *Wall Street Journal* article mentions that Putin's actions in Ukraine even helped him achieve his domestic goals:

> No longer able to play Putin the Modernizer, in 2014 he became Putin the War President. All of Crimea and half Ukraine's eastern Donbas region end the year under Russian occupation. The desire of Ukrainians for their country to become a Western democracy was a direct threat to the Russian president's model of kleptocratic authoritarianism. This new assertiveness abroad, coupled with the domestic triumph of the Sochi Winter Olympics, seems to have boosted his approval at home, to the extent anyone can measure that accurately in an authoritarian state. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 30/12/2014)

When examining the newspaper discourse, articles focusing on Putin's perceived authoritarian approach coalesce into a common narrative that merges several of his actions under a joint framework. This narrative identifies recurring patterns of behaviour within Putin's governance, such as the detention of Russian citizens, censorship, US election meddling, and active involvement in the conflict in Ukraine, including the annexation of Crimea. By discussing these interconnected actions collectively, the newspapers create a broader picture of Putin's consolidation of power and his methods of exerting control over various facets of Russian society. For example, a 2015 *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece harshly critiques several things:

> Since Russia annexed Crimea and invaded eastern Ukraine last year, Russia's president has consistently shown that he views human life to be expendable. He has deployed Russian soldiers into the region to fight alongside pro-Russian rebels and covered up the burials of those who have died. He has imprisoned his own citizens for protesting against a war he denies is happening. And he has armed the rebels with SA-11 missiles, which were used to shoot down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 (*The Wall Street Journal*, 08/02/2015)

In addition, the 2015 assassination of Boris Nemtsov, a prominent Russian opposition politician, a vocal critic of President Vladimir Putin's government, and a proponent of democratic reforms, reinforced such narratives. Remarkably, Nemtsov was shot and killed by an unknown assailant, with the assassination taking place just two days before a planned anti-government protest that Nemtsov was supposed to lead, raising suspicions of political motivations behind the murder (Withnall, 2015). While looking at the American newspaper discourse, we observe a discussion about the fact that Nemtsov was not the first opponent of Putin to be assassinated. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the newspapers' discourse revolves around Nemtsov's endeavour to transition Russia's political system to liberal democracy. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that, while discussing Nemtsov's killing, American newspapers refer to Russia's repressive political system:

> In the gangster state that is Vladimir Putin's Russia, we may never learn who shot dead Boris Nemtsov in Moscow late Friday night, much less why. The longtime opposition leader had once been Russia's deputy prime minister under Boris Yeltsin, and he might have steered Russia toward a decent future had he been given a chance. Instead, he was fated to become a courageous voice for democracy and human rights who risked his life to alert an indifferent West to the dangers of doing business with the man in the Kremlin (*The Wall Street Journal*, 27/02/2015).

Furthermore, similarly to before, in their coverage of Putin's authoritarian actions abroad, the newspapers underscore the imperative for the West to take decisive measures to stop and counter such actions. In their articles, they repeatedly criticise what they perceive as a historical lack of action from Western governments in response to Putin's behaviour. These critiques emphasise the urgency for the West to adopt a more proactive and cohesive approach in dealing with Putin's authoritarian behaviour. For example, while discussing Putin's annexation of Crimea, a *Wall Street Journal* article critiques Western lack of action in the past:

> In recent years, he has turned his authoritarian eyes on the "near-abroad." In 2008, the West did little as he invaded Georgia, and Russian troops still occupy the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. He has forced Armenia to break off its agreements with the European Union, and Moldova is under similar pressure. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 26/03/2014)

From a CDA perspective, the portrayal of Russia as illiberal and authoritarian in the three newspapers can be understood as a product of ideological and power relations inherent in media discourse. As known, CDA emphasises the examination of language use to uncover hidden ideologies and power structures. In the case of Russia, the framing of the country as illiberal and authoritarian shows certain discursive strategies that shape public perception and can reinforce dominant narratives. The newspapers, as part of the mainstream media, are unavoidably influenced by dominant ideologies and power structures. Thus, the portrayal of Russia as illiberal and authoritarian aligns with the prevailing ideological stance in Western liberal democracies that promote liberal values and democratic governance. The framing of Russia may, therefore, serve to strengthen the perception of Western liberal democratic values as superior, thus subsequently constructing Russia as the Other.

In addition, by using selective language such as the terms "illiberal", "authoritarian", or "autocratic" to describe Russia's political system and leadership, the newspapers may reinforce the perceived contrast between the liberal democratic West and Russia's repressive governance. Finally, media discourse may be influenced by their country's political interests and foreign policy objectives. Thus, the portrayal of Russia as illiberal and authoritarian aligns with certain foreign policy goals, such as, in the case of Russia, justifying sanctions and US diplomatic pressure on Russia. However, while CDA and poststructuralism encourage individual interpretation, we must treat potential explanatory factors with caution, recognising that they are subjects to scholars' interpretation.

Admittedly, "ideology" is also multifaceted and complex as a theme. By giving meaning to the empty signifier "ideology", I used the repeatedly mentioned themes of signifieds. As established by Hall (1996: 22), ideologies help social groups understand how society functions, which includes discussing how things are constructed in everyday life. There are certain ideas that come up more often than others in daily discussions – in this case – the discourse of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Consequently, when considering the audience of the newspapers, certain themes become "normalised". This can contribute to the construction of a specific narrative that reinforces the perception of Russia as fundamentally at odds with the liberal values and democratic styles of governance adopted by the US and the West. As stated by Fairclough (1995: 14), ideology involves (re)producing one's relations to the Other through the construction of reality, with the meanings seen as working ideologically if they produce relations of domination. By Othering Russia, portraying

it as an antagonist, and repeatedly attributing certain qualities to the country, we note the emergence of a dominant discourse that fills the meaning of the empty signifier "ideology". Based on the theoretical principles of poststructuralism and CDA, "ideology" gains its meaning through its association with other concepts and ideas and their usage in specific discourses. As an empty signifier, the term "ideology" does not have a universally agreed-upon definition or fixed meaning. Rather, its meaning is subject to interpretation and re(negotiation) within different social, political, and cultural contexts. While considering the construction of Russia within the context of "ideology" in *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* between 2014 and 2017, one should thus consider that such framing is always subject to change, as well as how the newspapers' readership interprets the articles.

10.2 Power

Exploring how the concept of power gains its meaning in the three American newspaper discourses is crucial to shed light on how power is distributed, exercised, and contested within the newspaper articles when constructing the image of Russia. By looking at the way "power" is filled with meaning, we can discover the ways newspapers introduce, frame, amplify, and maintain certain narratives. Examining this is essential to reveal constructed and embedded meanings in the newspaper discourse. The evidence suggested that the concept of power in *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* manifested in three main signifieds: aggression, expansionism, and spheres of influence.

The themes of expansionism, aggression, and spheres of influence in relation to Russia were used in *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* articles all throughout the inspected four years of analysis – between years 2014 and 2017. In 2014 and 2015, they were used in the context of the Maidan Revolution, the clashes between Euromaidan protesters and the Ukrainian state forces, the actions of pro-Russian separatists in Luhansk and Donetsk, and the Russian control and subsequent annexation of Crimea. In 2015, the articles continued to portray Russia as an aggressor, referencing the annexation of Crimea and Russia's support of pro-Russian rebels in Eastern Ukraine. In 2016-2017, in light of those events, the newspapers emphasised the need to counter Russian aggression. Furthermore, Russian interference in the US presidential election is seen as another example of its aggression against the US. The following two sections will elaborate on these themes, revealing and analysing their use in the newspapers.

Expansionism and aggression

The portrayal of Russia as having expansionist ambitions by *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* was largely based on the implication that Putin seeks to restore the Soviet Union and regain territories lost during its collapse. This portrayal relies on discursive strategies and historical narratives to build the image of Russia as a revisionist power seeking to expand its influence. One way in which American newspapers present Russia as expansionist is by highlighting Putin's statements and actions that emphasise a sense of nostalgia or regret for the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The three newspapers suggest that Putin has a desire to revive the Soviet Union's geopolitical strength and regain lost territories. This is often done by referring to Putin's statement regarding the collapse of the Soviet Union being the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century in his annual address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on April 25, 2005. In the speech, Putin expressed his regret over the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its consequences, particularly the fragmentation of its territories and the challenges faced by its former republics. This reference, as well as its interpretations and the associated newspaper narrative, reinforces the idea of Russia's ambitions to expand its sphere of influence beyond its current borders:

> Like the formidable Bolshevik Vladimir Lenin, Mr. Putin seems determined to reconstitute the Russian empire. In an April 2005 speech in Russia, Mr. Putin said that "the demise of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century"—a century, it bears noting, rife with catastrophe, especially for the Soviets. Mr. Putin added that the U.S.S.R.'s disintegration was a "genuine tragedy" for the Russian people in that "tens of millions of our fellow citizens and countrymen found themselves beyond the fringes of Russian territory." (*The Wall Street Journal*, 04/03/2014)

In addition, the newspapers imply that Putin should be stopped due to his perceived expansionist ambitions. This portrayal is further explained in the articles and seems to be based on the belief that Putin seeks to increase Russia's influence and challenge the existing global order, potentially posing a threat to the interests of the US. Thus, the articles create a narrative that frames Putin's actions as part of a broader pattern of Russian expansionism, thus amplifying concerns about his hegemonic intentions. The portrayal of Russia in the narratives suggests that it is the primary instigator of conflicts, while the West is reluctant to engage.

However, the alleged expansionist ambitions of Putin are posited as a potential catalyst that might compel the West to intervene. This portrayal is shaped by discursive strategies that emphasise Russia's assertive behaviour:

> The West celebrated the end of the Cold War, looking forward to peaceful coexistence with its former Soviet adversaries. Unfortunately, Mr. Putin seems committed to putting the Soviet Empire back together and does not care whether that provokes another Cold War. This leaves the West few choices. The West must take tough action to ensure Mr. Putin's containment. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 06/03/2014)

In addition, the newspapers repeatedly present contrasting perspectives on the goals of the US and Russia, emphasising Russia's unwillingness to maintain Western democratic standards. Instead, Russia is depicted as motivated by its alleged desire to regain the territories of the former Soviet Union. Thus, Russia's actions in Ukraine are described as driven by a quest for (re)establishing its regional dominance and strategic influence and asserting control over areas that were once integral parts of the Soviet Union:

> When the Cold War ended and the Soviet empire dissolved, the United States and its allies sought to build a Europe whole, free and at peace - one with which Russia would find its peaceful place. Europeans increasingly, and rightly, took the lead. Putin now appears to have had a different agenda: to reconstruct what he could of the former empire but on a Russian model rather than Soviet. (*The Washington Post*, 04/03/2014)

It is important to note that this depiction echoes the public discourse of several key political figures. For example, in 2016, the former US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta (cited by Mills, 2016), stated the following:

> "Let's not kid anybody, Putin's main interest is to try to restore the old Soviet Union. I mean that's what drives him. It's pretty obvious that his intent is to try to spread Russian influence, particularly over the former Soviet Union."

Curiously, the idea of Putin's expansionism persists throughout 2014-2017. The portrayal of Russia as an adversary is still driven, among other things, by accusations of Putin's alleged expansionist ambitions. This notion resurfaced on several occasions in 2017, especially in the context of critiquing Donald Trump's favourable stance towards Putin. For example:

> The evil empire Putin admires says much about the tyrant our new president defends. Burning with resentments carried over from a fallen empire, Comrade Putin hopes to rebuild the U.S.S.R. one invasion at a time. And while Putin pursues that delusional dream, Trump should be reminded exactly what kind of world his new friend wants to create. (*The Washington Post*, 08/02/2017)

However, while such an explanation was prominent in all three newspapers, Putin himself denied the accusations, blaming the violence and political instability in Ukraine on the West and stating that the idea of Russia trying to restore the Soviet Union does not correspond to reality (Ingrassia, 2017). This invites the question of the reasoning behind American newspapers' employment of specific framing techniques to present Putin's actions in a way that supports the narrative of his wanting to restore the Soviet Union. As known, by selectively highlighting certain events or statements and downplaying others, the newspapers can construct a specific portrayal of Putin that aligns with pre-existing assumptions about his intentions. In the context of Russia and Putin, the generally dominant discourses within the newspapers appeared to be of Russia as inherently expansionist and aggressive. These discourses, potentially informed by historical and geopolitical factors, could shape the newspapers' interpretation of Putin's actions as expansionist.

Furthermore, the newspapers may also rely on official narratives, such as the statements from the US government and Ukrainian officials, who assert that Putin has the aim of restoring the Soviet Union. Such narratives are influential and thus may have a risk of being adopted without interrogation. Finally, the historical context of Russia's past during the Cold War and its territorial influence in the Soviet era can also play a role in interpreting Putin's actions. In other words, the memory of the Soviet Union's territorial reach might potentially affect how the newspapers interpret contemporary Russian foreign policy.

Indeed, the three American newspapers not only portray Putin as having ambitions to restore the Soviet Union but also depict his behaviour as equivalent to that of the Soviet Union, arguing that Putin is mirroring the tendencies observed during the Soviet era. This argument aligns with the newspapers' depiction of Putin's style of governance as authoritarian. For example, *The Wall Street Journal* offers such an interpretation while attempting to explain Russia's annexation of Crimea:

> Russia evoked land grabs of the analog Soviet era by invading Crimea after Ukrainians forced out Vladimir Putin's ally as president (*The Wall Street Journal*, 09/03/2014)

Thus, evidently, the American newspapers' narrative of Russia's actions in Ukraine as being motivated by Putin's wish to restore the Soviet Union may potentially be seen in the context of relying on historical perspectives to explain contemporary developments. This approach appears to be based on the belief that Russia's past history of expansionism and territorial ambitions can serve as an explanatory factor for understanding its present behaviour. As such, by using historical analogies and narratives, the newspapers create a coherent and comprehensible interpretation of Russia's behaviour.

Interestingly, the theme of expansionism and Putin's imperialist ambitions continues throughout the four inspected years, with a continuous narrative stating that Putin's goal is to regain the former Soviet territories. The newspapers posit that Putin's expansionism contrasts with the liberal attitudes of the US. We can observe statements positing that Putin's ambitions and strategies play a significant role in driving Russia's aggressive expansionist actions, emphasising his wish to reclaim Russia's stature as an imperial power and assert its influence on the global stage. For example:

> On the other hand, concentrating power solely in the Kremlin and its strong leader means continuing an imperial tradition of keeping the country together through what the Soviet-era human rights leader Andrei Sakharov derided as a "messianic expansionism." So defining Russia in opposition to the outside world, the West, in particular, has become the standard Kremlin default position. (*The New York Times*, 19/05/2017)

Curiously, in addition to references to the Soviet Union to explain Russia's more recent foreign policy course, the articles also discuss Putin's aims by making references to Greater Russia. To contextualise, the term "Greater Russia" refers to an idea or concept that has historical and geopolitical connotations. It typically represents a vision of a territorially expanded and politically unified Russia, encompassing regions beyond its current borders. Historically, the term was associated with the expansion of the Russian Empire, which grew through territorial conquests, colonisation, and the assimilation of neighbouring regions and ethnic groups

(McIlhagga, 2022). As such, the references essentially refer to the same idea: Russia's ambitions to restore its former territories:

> Mr. Putin's agenda in Ukraine is part of his larger plans to solidify his own authoritarian control and revive Greater Russia. Without Ukraine, the most important of the former Soviet satellites, a new Russian empire is impossible. With Ukraine, Greater Russia sits on the border of the EU. If Ukraine moves toward Europe with a president who isn't a Russian satrap, it also sets a democratic example for Russians. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 21/02/2014)

The newspapers also employ references to Putin's ambitions to restore Greater Russia to elucidate Ukraine's strategic importance to Russia and explain Putin's resistance to allowing Ukraine to be influenced by the West. This might approach relate to Putin's perception that Ukraine holds historical, cultural, and geopolitical significance for Russia, making it a critical component of Putin's alleged vision of a politically unified and expanded Russia (Rexhepi, 2017). However, Putin's claims of shared history are largely dismissed. For example, this opinion piece published in *The New York Times* uses irony to talk about Russia's and Ukraine's shared history:

> Under Moscow's direction, millions of Ukrainian peasants were starved to death during the Holodomor in 1932-33, the Ukrainian Orthodox and then the Ukrainian Catholic Churches were destroyed and Ukrainian elites were eradicated in multiple Katyn-like executions or in the Gulag. Does not this extraordinary "shared" history require some acknowledgement in discussing today's relationship between Ukraine and Russia? (*The New York Times*, 10/03/2014)

One must, however, note that this portrayal is not unique to *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, or *The Wall Street Journal*. In the Western media, (see e.g., Giles, 2022; Figes; 2022), it is often discussed that Putin has consistently used specific imperial tropes to assert historical claims about Russia's identity, thus justifying his involvement in countries that he perceives as being historically related to Russia. These tropes, including concepts like "the triune Russian people", which posits the East Slavic population as integral to Russia, as well as the notions of the "all-Russian nation" and the "Russkiy Mir" (Russian World), have been recurrent throughout his tenure as president and prime minister since 2000. Essentially, the Western media states that these concepts serve the aim of negating the Belarusian and

Ukrainian people's distinct identities, subsuming them under the Russian imperial project. In addition, it is argued that these tropes imply that Putin's foreign policy and Russia's future trajectory are driven by an imperial vision (McIlhagga, 2022). Indeed, it is evident that Putin's alleged expansionist efforts are illustrated by enumerating what are perceived as ways for Putin to regain Russia's past territories:

> In the last decade, Mr. Putin tried to find a path toward restoring Russia's imperial identity through a number of ill-fated projects: the Eurasian Commonwealth, the Russian World and the Russian Civilization -- all in opposition to the West and its liberal political ideals. (*The New York Times*, May 19, 2017)

Furthermore, while gaining way less attention than the conflict in Ukraine, Russia's aggression is discussed within the context of Russia's involvement in Syria where it officially intervened in the Syrian civil war by launching a military campaign to support the government of President Bashar al-Assad. While Russia's intervention came at Assad's request, the way Russia's role is depicted at times involves Othering. While American newspapers may present various perspectives on Russia's involvement in Syria, with most articles simply relaying the developments of the events, there is also an evident attempt to Other Russia, arguing that Putin's help to Assad is solely aimed at hurting the US and humiliating the then-US President Obama and undermine democracy. For example, a 2015 *New York Times* opinion piece describes Russia's motivations as follows:

> What Russia is doing in Syria is not an effort to fight the Islamic State; it is not old-fashioned realpolitik. It is not even a cynical attempt to make us forget about Ukraine. Putin simply wants to hurt us. (*The New York Times*, 08/10/2015).

Therefore, this narrative contributes to the construction of Russia as a threat or adversary. As with other newspaper article narratives, the references to Russia's past to explain contemporary events and actions, may offer a limited or oversimplified perspective. Despite Putin's own references to Russia's "shared history" with other countries, by reducing the explanations of Russia's behaviour to its alleged wish to regain its former territories, the narrative neglects to mention a range of other potential explanations of Russia's behaviour, such as the importance of Ukraine's military infrastructure for Russia's self-defence (Toucas, 2017). This warrants attention especially due to the persistence of the image of Russia's expansionist ambitions in the three American newspapers over a four-year period as an undisrupted narrative. In addition,

simplified explanations are also evidenced in explaining Russia's motivations in Syria. The idea that Russia's goal is to simply harm the US presents a typical case of Othering where the actions of the Other are seen as a threat.

This intriguing phenomenon could be attributed to several factors within the context of media representation and international relations, although, as always, the possible explanatory factors should be treated with caution. CDA would encourage us to examine power relations that shape the newspaper discourse. As established earlier, media outlets operate within broader power structures that influence their agenda-setting and framing processes. Political pressures, among other factors, can constrain and shape the narrative presented by newspapers, potentially leading to oversimplifications that align with the interests of powerful actors. As mentioned before, in this case, the discourse of the newspapers echoes the statements of the US political elites and its allies. Thus, by looking at the discourse, it is evident that the explanations for Russia's behaviour fit a wider narrative. In this case, through repetition, dominant perceptions of Russia might shape societal understandings, which in turn might lead to oversimplifications that align with these dominant ideologies. In turn, this may reinforce existing power structures.

Similar tendencies can be observed in relation to a theme closely related to expansionism - aggression. It was observed that the examined newspaper discourse repeatedly highlights Russia's and Putin's aggression by drawing on references to Russia's Soviet past to contextualise and explain this behaviour. The newspapers contend that Russia's aggression, as manifested in actions such as the annexation of Crimea and military interventions in Georgia and Ukraine, reflects a continuation of the historical tendencies of the Soviet Union. By referencing Russia's Soviet past, the newspapers provide a historical interpretive framework for understanding Russia's recent actions.

> Why does Putin continue to show aggression toward Ukraine after his conquest of Crimea? We argue that the Russian leader fears Ukrainian citizens' political orientation toward the West, which threatens the political system he built in Russia (*The Washington Post*, 15/04/2014)

Nonetheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that while the majority of articles seemed to interpret Russia's behaviour as aggressive, some offered contrasting perspectives. For example, a *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece critiques Russia's portrayal as an aggressor:

> The current popularly accepted narrative that Russia is the aggressor and President Putin the villain has been carefully crafted by the West and its state-controlled media, and shamefully, there is nothing further from the truth. Instead of ratcheting up the rhetoric against a great nation that could have been our stalwart ally against Islamist hegemony, the U.S., NATO and the EU should cease their actions against Russia and re-establish the good relations that had been developing. Contrary to what Mr. Rasmussen implies, Russia has been an emerging democracy of its own style, where its citizens have been enjoying previously unknown (under the old Soviet Union) freedoms, and its children are growing up in a society that is very much like that of our own in almost every way. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 22/09/2014)

As is apparent in the quotation, the Western media is criticised for its interpretation of Russia's behaviour, particularly relating to its alleged lack of democracy. Indeed, at times, the newspapers provided contrasting perspectives and presented multiple views, interpretations, and narratives about Russia's behaviour. Individual pieces offered a differing interpretation against the more common perception of Russia being an aggressor with expansionist goals, arguing that this perspective distorts reality. This is exemplified in a *Washington Post* opinion piece discussing the conflict in Ukraine:

> Although there is no question that Russia has contributed to the tensions in the region, what has unfolded was predictable and preventable. As experts such as Princeton University and New York University professor emeritus Stephen F. Cohen have argued, the West should have understood that an attempt to bring Ukraine into an exclusive arrangement with the E.U. would spark deep, historical divisions within the country and itself and provoke a Russian reaction. (*The Washington Post*, 25/11/2014)

This perspective draws attention to geopolitical dynamics and power struggles in the post-Soviet space, where Ukraine has emerged as a crucial place of competition between Russia and the West. In addition, these articles highlight that Russia considers Ukraine an integral part of its historical and cultural identity, which further intensifies Russia's concern over Western involvement. Some of the articles emphasise that Putin's actions in Ukraine can be considered a response to the alleged threats to Russia's interests. Consequently, Putin's reaction is

portrayed as his attempt to dampen Western efforts to integrate Ukraine into its sphere of influence. For example:

> Our problem is that we do not fully understand Putin's calculus, just as he does not understand ours. In Putin's view, the United States, the European Union and NATO have launched an economic and proxy war in Ukraine to weaken Russia and push it into a corner. As Valery Gerasimov, chief of staff of the Russian armed forces, has underscored, this is a hybrid, 21st-century conflict, in which financial sanctions, support for oppositional political movements and propaganda have all been transformed from diplomatic tools to instruments of war. Putin likely believes that any concession or compromise he makes will encourage the West to push further. (*The Washington Post*, 06/02/2015)

While not being the dominant perspective in the articles, it sheds light on the geopolitical complexities and power dynamics at play in Ukraine, depicting Ukraine as a contested arena of competition between Russia and the US. Thus, the articles also illustrate the significance of considering the multifaceted nature of the conflict in Ukraine. In addition, it shows various perspectives on the issues of power and power balance in the US-Russia relationship. Using CDA, we could interpret these articles as challenging the dominant discourse. In addition, the varying opinions in the articles serve as an example of the principles of poststructuralism, which posit that "truth" is constructed.

Indeed, individual articles go against the more common narrative of Russia being an enemy, instead encouraging cooperation and condemning those who portray Russia as an adversary. Advocates of cooperation argue that maintaining a dialogue with Russia is crucial for effectively addressing global challenges. One can note the examples of alleged mutual interests, such as terrorism and regional conflicts. For example, a 2016 *New York Times* opinion piece defends this argument:

> By identifying Russia as the top national security threat to the United States, Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter is blatantly provoking a country that should be the chief ally of the United States in the fight against Islamic extremism. (*The New York Times*, 12/02/2016)

Thus, while analysing individual articles in American newspapers, it becomes evident that some frame Putin's actions in Ukraine as a response to Western involvement in the country,

particularly in the context of the West's attempts to bring Ukraine under its sphere of influence. Furthermore, the general attitude of the West is critiqued, with critics pointing out that there have been missed opportunities for the West to engage in constructive dialogue with Russia. Therefore, such themes disrupt the dominant discourse and propose alternative ways of thinking and perceiving social issues and contribute to a more nuanced understanding.

Finally, in the years 2016-2017, the idea of Russia as an aggressor manifested in the articles relating to its attempts to affect the result of the US presidential election and the hacking scandal, which involved various cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns aimed at influencing the election's outcome and undermining the democratic process. Russia's behaviour is portrayed as a direct act of aggression and an attack on American values. Thus, Russian meddling casts Russia in the role of an adversary or antagonist. For example:

> What Putin and Russian hackers allegedly did shatters this pattern. Their hacking - as interpreted by both the CIA and the FBI - qualifies as state-sponsored aggression. It does jeopardize our way of life. It undermines the integrity of our political institutions and popular faith in them. (*The Washington Post*, 26/12/2016)

Such portrayal can be interpreted as a form of Othering. By portraying Russia as an antagonist, newspapers reinforce the idea that this interference is a challenge to American sovereignty and democratic principles. The narrative of aggression emerges as a response to a perceived attack on the very foundations of American democracy. Depicting Russia's involvement as "aggression" serves to heighten the perceived threat and may evoke emotional reactions. Such depictions can be seen as Othering as they involve the process of categorising Russia as fundamentally different and inherently threatening.

Spheres of influence

A theme closely linked to expansionism and aggression is "spheres of influence". When using the term, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* largely contend that Russia is actively seeking to establish its spheres of influence, particularly in the post-Soviet countries. The 2014 events in Ukraine, particularly the annexation of Crimea and the conflict with pro-Russia separatists in Ukraine, served as a common theme when discussing the concept of "spheres of influence" in newspaper discourse. Most articles on the topic argued

that Russia was attempting to establish or preserve its traditional spheres of influence in the region, asserting its dominance over neighbouring countries like Ukraine. This argument aligns with academic perspectives on geopolitical dynamics and power politics, emphasising Russia's pursuit of regional dominance and influence over neighbouring states. The newspapers suggest that Russia perceives the post-Soviet countries as belonging to its traditional sphere of influence due to historical, cultural, economic, and political linkages. In addition, they state that Russia seeks to keep close ties with these countries, exerting influence over their foreign policies, and preventing their alignment with Western powers. The narrative of Russia's quest for spheres of influence is reinforced by its actions and policies towards the post-Soviet countries. Examples include Russia's military interventions in Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014), its support for separatist movements in Ukraine, and its use of economic and energy leverage to assert control over neighbouring states. The following quotations from *The Wall Street Journal* provide excellent examples of this tendency:

> Mr. Putin has fought bitterly to defend what the Kremlin calls its "sphere of privileged interests" in former Soviet countries. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia has inserted itself into ethnic conflicts with neighboring states to assert its influence. In 2008 it invaded the former Soviet republic of Georgia to defend the breakaway region of South Ossetia. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 03/02/2014)

> Mr. Putin aspires to restore Russia's global power and influence and to bring the now-independent states that were once part of the Soviet Union back into Moscow's orbit. He is determined to create a Russian sphere of influence -- political, economic and security -- and dominance. There is no grand plan or strategy to do this, just opportunistic and ruthless aspiration. And patience. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 26/03/2014)

The newspapers' audience is encouraged to interpret Russia's actions in a certain way – as Russia's attempts to assert control over territories it once held as part of its sphere of influence during the Soviet era. Thus, this historical continuity frames Russia's contemporary actions as a strategy to regain and maintain influence over its neighbouring countries. Furthermore, in addition to explanations related to the Soviet Union, we can also note the use of the term "Novorossiya" to describe territories that Putin considers Russia's sphere of influence. Novorossiya, which translates to "New Russia" historically encompassed a vast area of contemporary Ukraine, spanning from Luhansk and Donetsk in the east to Odesa in the west,

situated north of the Black Sea. This region was under the control of Russia and later the USSR from the 18th century until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. It is essential to note that during the Soviet era, Novorossiya was part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, rather than being directly integrated into Russia. In 2014, Putin referred to the historical significance of Novorossiya and questioned the reasons behind Russia's decision to cede this region to Ukraine in 1922, stating that only "God knows" the explanation for that decision (Basora and Fisher, 2014). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the newspapers use Putin's arguments to critique his behaviour:

> The United States should not affirm Vladimir Putin's claim to exclusive influence throughout "Novorossiya," a territory that includes not just Crimea but much of southeastern Ukraine. We should, however, recognize the existence of this claim and the fact that Putin's Russia is more willing to fight for it than we are (*The Washington Post*, 26/08/2014).

Indeed, American newspapers refer to Novorossiya in the context of Russia's present-day expansionism as a way to contextualise and justify their interpretation of Russia's actions. Similarly to the case of the Soviet Union, by referring to Novorossiya, newspapers can frame the current events in a broader historical narrative and emphasise Russia's geopolitical ambitions and the continuity of its expansionist tendencies. In that way, the newspapers may argue that Russia's claims and actions in certain regions are not isolated incidents but rather a part of a larger pattern of expansionism. This is exemplified in the following quotes:

> First, there's the use of the word "Novorossiya," a historical region of the Russia Empire that is now part of Ukraine. The Russian president has referred to Novorossiya in passing before, but the use of it now in official statements seems to be new. These references are important. Putin has often appealed to history when justifying his present day actions. His world view is clearly affected by nostalgia for the Russian Empire of Peter the Great and the horrors suffered by Russians in the 20th century resonate with him (*The Washington Post*, 29/08/2014)

In addition, we observe a narrative arguing that Russia utilises other countries' energy dependency on Russia as a strategic tool to maintain its sphere of influence in those nations. This narrative is underpinned by the concept of energy geopolitics, whereby Russia's significant energy reserves and role as a major energy exporter enable it to exert leverage over countries heavily reliant on its energy supplies. American newspapers often highlight how

certain countries, particularly in Europe, heavily depend on Russian energy exports, especially natural gas. This interdependence creates a complex web of energy relations in the discourse, where Russia becomes a critical supplier, and recipient countries become dependent on Russia's energy flows. Such dependence is perceived as enabling Russia to assert influence by leveraging the threat of cutting off or manipulating energy supplies in response to political disagreements or actions that may challenge its interests. For example:

> Mr. Putin's Russia also continues to exploit Ukraine and Europe's dependence on Russian energy, undermining support within the European Union for the tougher sanctions needed to deter further aggression (*The Wall Street Journal*, 28/07/2014)

Furthermore, the narrative repeatedly emphasises how energy dependency can affect recipient countries' foreign policy decisions. For example, energy-dependent countries might be forced to align their interests with Russia to keep a stable energy supply, leading to caution in taking actions that may challenge Russia's behaviour. In general, the articles posit that by leveraging its significant energy resources, Russia can exert strategic influence over energy-dependent countries, affecting their foreign policy decisions. From the CDA perspective, we can interpret this portrayal as depicting Russia's actions as solely aggressive or manipulative, thus engaging in Othering, which presents Russia as a threat, reinforcing a sense of "Us" versus "Them" in the bilateral relationship with the US. In addition, the newspapers repeatedly highlight instances where Russia exerts pressure or political leverage while downplaying or not discussing other factors that contribute to energy dependency, such as market dynamics or economic considerations. From the perspective of poststructuralism, and, more specifically, a Foucauldian analysis, we note that certain knowledge about Russia's actions and energy influence is privileged while other perspectives may be marginalised or silenced, creating a certain image construction and power dynamic of Russia as the aggressor. Furthermore, the newspapers, in their analysis, cast doubt on whether Putin prioritises Russia's economy over establishing a Russian sphere of influence abroad.

> It is uncertain whether Mr. Putin values Russia's economy more than his influence over Ukraine (*The Wall Street Journal*, 30/07/2014)

This argument is grounded in the examination of Putin's foreign policy actions and economic decisions, which allegedly indicate a strong emphasis on expanding Russia's influence in the international arena, even if it comes at the expense of economic considerations. For example, the newspapers point to Russia's assertive actions in regions like Crimea, Georgia, and eastern Ukraine as evidence of Putin's determination to expand its sphere of influence. Despite the potential economic consequences of international sanctions and isolation resulting from such actions, Putin's pursuit of geopolitical goals is argued to take precedence.

The portrayal also largely echoes the opinion of the American political discourse, which can potentially influence how Russia's energy influence is framed. Consequently, the event coverage by *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* may be influenced by geopolitical interests and foreign policy priorities of the country in which the newspaper is based. Specifically, the portrayal of Russia may be influenced by broader geopolitical rivalries and tensions between Russia and the United States. In particular, geopolitical competition with the US and conflicting interests between the two countries may have an influence on how Russia's actions are interpreted. This may lead to a tendency to emphasise Russia's intentions to maintain its influence as a way to assert its geopolitical interests and counterbalance Western influence in the region (see e.g., Götz, 2017), largely echoing the dominant discourse among the US and its allies.

However, it must be noted some individual articles took a different perspective, suggesting that the West also played a role in the conflict by attempting to establish its own sphere of influence in Ukraine. These analyses argued that the European Union's and NATO's eastward expansion, including the possibility of Ukraine's integration into these institutions, was perceived by Russia as a challenge to its own security and interests. From this viewpoint, the West's actions were seen as contributing to the escalation of tensions in the region, increasing Russia's determination to protect its perceived sphere of influence. For example:

> Any attempt by either wing of this country to impose its will is destabilizing. The effort last November by the West to expand its economic and military sphere of influence to include Ukraine, forcing the Ukrainian government to choose between Europe and Moscow, triggered the current crisis. (*The Washington Post,* 24/07/2014)

Thus, it is essential to recognise that interpretations of the events and the concept of spheres of influence are at times subject to differing viewpoints and historical context. The situation is multifaceted, involving complex geopolitical dynamics and competing narratives. While most articles tended to emphasise Russia's assertive and aggressive actions, some individual analyses offered a more nuanced perspective, acknowledging the West's role in contributing to the conflict. From a CDA viewpoint, these alternative viewpoints presented in the individual articles that acknowledge the West's role in the conflict would be seen as important in challenging dominant discourses.

Propaganda

The final element of filling the meaning of "power" as an empty signifier is "propaganda". As previously discussed, "power" is a complex and multidimensional concept that lacks a fixed, universally agreed-upon meaning. Instead, it is open to multiple interpretations and laden with ideological implications. In the context of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, "propaganda" plays a significant role in shaping and giving meaning to the concept of "power". As highlighted earlier, "power" and "ideology" are deeply intertwined, with attempts to fully separate them proving to be challenging. "Propaganda", as a form of ideological communication, serves as a powerful tool in constructing and disseminating particular narratives. Through the strategic use of information, persuasion, and symbolic representations, propaganda influences public perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes, thereby shaping the understanding of "power" (Cuncic, 2022).

Thus, the symbiotic relationship between "power" and "propaganda" underscores the intricate dynamics between language, ideology, and authority (see, e.g., Khoo and Sterken, 2021). Propaganda functions as a mechanism for the symbolic assertion and legitimation of power, effectively giving meaning to the abstract and contested concept of "power". In this sense, propaganda becomes a crucial element in filling the void of the empty signifier, as it shapes and guides the interpretation and understanding of power in society. In the American newspaper discourse, the term "propaganda" is often used to refer to specific *actions* attributed to Russia. Thus, my choice to fit the use of propaganda in the "power" section and as giving meaning to "power" is not coincidental. Indeed, the newspapers often describe the use of propaganda as a key instrument wielded by Putin to achieve his domestic aims and counter the goals of the West. In the newspaper discourse, Putin's use of propaganda is depicted as

strategic, calculated, and directed towards consolidating his authority within Russia, as well as advancing the country's interests globally. For example:

> Among the main pillars that support Russian President Vladimir Putin's power and outlook on the world — graft, cronyism, paranoia and resentment at Moscow's diminished post-Soviet stature — it's hard to overstate the importance he attaches to propaganda. To the Kremlin leader, who cut his teeth as a KGB apparatchik, information is an important instrument of control, influence and intimidation; Western-style journalism and the free flow of news are anathema. As his war of aggression in Ukraine continues, Mr. Putin has moved to silence the already muffled voices of domestic dissent and amplify the Kremlin's anti-Western views at home and abroad (*The Washington Post*, 14/11/2014)

Putin's use of propaganda is also a recurrent topic of discussion within the context of his control over the Russian media and the suppression of voices critical of both his behaviour and Russia's foreign policy course. American newspapers repeatedly highlight how propaganda serves as a way for Putin to manipulate information, shape public opinion, and reinforce his grip on power. In the newspaper discourse, Putin's control of the Russian media is often portrayed as a way of fostering a narrative that aligns with his political agenda. American newspapers emphasise how media outlets that are controlled by Putin act as mouthpieces for the Kremlin, disseminating Putin's preferred narratives. Meanwhile, the other ones are oppressed:

> The autocrat's success in walling off Russians from alternative sources of news and information, culminating now in his campaign against the country's last independent television channel, provides a case in point. The channel TV Dozhd (meaning "rain") was founded five years ago, when state television had become so soporifically subservient that "most people we knew had stopped watching," as Mikhail Zygar, Dozhd's 33-year-old editor in chief, recalled during a recent visit to The Post. Dozhd offered real news and balanced commentary. "Give TV one more chance" was its pitch. It soon built an audience of 20 million (in a nation of 142 million). (*The Washington Post*, 27/11/2014)

In addition, the newspapers assert that Putin's use of propaganda extends beyond gaining domestic support, also serving as a deliberate effort to counter the views propagated by the Western media. Thus, Putin's use of propaganda is depicted as part of a broader information war aimed at creating and spreading narratives and perceptions both domestically and globally. Notably, Putin's propaganda strategies are characterised as his efforts to create a competing

narrative that seeks to refute or cast doubt on Western media representations of Russia's foreign policy:

> In recent days, officials announced an initiative aimed at blasting Moscow's spin to the world via radio and the Internet. Thousands of propagandists on Mr. Putin's payroll are to fan out to 25 major cities around the world, in an effort to counter what the Kremlin regards as the pro-American bias of Western news outlets. The network, with a budget of tens of millions of dollars, is to be known as Sputnik, after the Soviet space satellite launched in 1957 — an unmistakable reflection of Moscow's reversion to a Cold War mentality. The effort, which is to include Web sites and radio broadcasts in 30 languages, will be directed by Dmitry Kiselyov, a virulent nationalist and homophobe who is Mr. Putin's favorite propagandist. (*The Washington Post*, 14/11/2014)

In 2016, the discussion involved shifts to Russia's use of social media and propaganda to influence the 2016 US presidential election. The articles discuss Russia's strategic use of social media platforms and their ability to disseminate false information, manipulate mainstream media, and amplify existing societal divisions. In addition, the newspapers condemn Russian troll farms that engaged in narrative laundering, hacking and leaking strategies to sow discord and undermine the integrity of the election process in the US.

To summarise, American newspapers repeatedly assert that Putin's use of propaganda goes beyond domestic messaging, instead also playing a strategic role in countering the views propagated by the West. Such portrayal of Putin's strategies underscores their allegedly calculated nature. Thus, evidently, this approach fits the wider narrative of depicting Russia as the Other of the US. However, it must be considered that the criticisms of the use of propaganda at times lack additional context, neglecting to discuss Russia's perspective and its perceived security concerns. Failing to fully contextualise propaganda efforts within Russia's broader geopolitical context can result in a somewhat limited understanding of the motivations behind such actions. In addition, while being critical of Russia, similar actions by other countries are often overlooked. Thus, such approaches could lead to an imbalanced representation of information warfare dynamics.

It is possible that such selective focus is employed to emphasise the gravity of Russia's undemocratic approach that goes against the fundamental values of Western countries. As

advocates of democratic principles, these newspapers could have a personal interest in defending media freedom. Furthermore, the critique of Russia could reinforce newspapers' own authority and legitimacy. Indeed, the newspapers' critique of Putin's propaganda and media practices may be analysed through the lens where Russia is constructed as the "Other" - a country with different norms and practices, which reinforces Western exceptionalism and superiority.

History

As discussed earlier, the signified "history", especially the references to the Cold War, plays a significant role in holding together the two key CDA concepts of "power" and "ideology" when examining Russia's contemporary behaviour. The connection is rooted in the complex dynamics between ideology and power in the American newspaper discourse when discussing the role of history in explaining Russia's actions and agendas. While examining the newspaper discourse, we observe that past ideology provides the conceptual framework and justification for exercising power. At the same time, the references to history and historical figures also relate to particular ideological agendas.

The analysis of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* articles indicates that they often utilise historical figures to elucidate and contextualise contemporary Russia's and Putin's behaviour. In particular, they contend that Russia's goals and justifications for its conduct are influenced by a historical prism that evokes the spectres of authoritarian or despotic figures. Furthermore, these arguments posit that Putin's behaviour should not be viewed as surprising, given Russia's enduring expansionist historical legacy. Indeed, historical analogies are a recognised tool within the realms of political analysis and international relations scholarship, serving as lenses through which complex contemporary phenomena can be comprehended and interpreted. The newspapers in question employ this approach by drawing parallels between Russia's actions and the actions of czars (alternative spelling-tsars), Hitler, and Stalin, thereby inviting readers to reflect upon the potential continuities and parallels between past and present.

The use of historical figures such as czars, Hitler, and Stalin in the American newspaper discourse can achieve several aims. Firstly, it allows for the characterisation of Russia's

behaviour as an extension of a longstanding tradition of strongman rule and authoritarian governance. By making references to such figures, the newspapers implicitly suggest that Putin's centralised power and disregard for democratic norms have their roots in the historical legacy of Russia's past. Secondly, the comparison of Putin to Hitler, Stalin, and czars offers the newspaper readership a deeper understanding of the aggressive and assertive nature of Russia's foreign policy. While, naturally, such explanations are based on the newspapers' interpretation of Russia's motivation, the use of these figures represents not only the embodiment of authoritarianism but also the pursuit of expansionist and revisionist ambitions. Thus, by referring to Hitler, Stalin, and Russian czars, the newspapers imply that Putin's actions, such as the annexation of Crimea, can be seen as part of a broader pattern of territorial expansion and power projection. Consequently, the underlying implication conveyed by these newspapers is that Russia's behaviour is deeply rooted in its historical context, with Putin embodying characteristics reminiscent of past authoritarian leaders. Thus, my analysis of the articles suggests that Russia's actions are often understood within the framework of its historical legacy. By employing such historical analogies, the newspapers may seek to provide readers with a lens through which they can interpret and anticipate Russia's behaviour.

Analysing things more specifically, the comparison between Putin and Hitler, the former dictator of Nazi Germany, within the newspaper articles may be viewed as an analytical framework used to highlight alleged similarities or parallels in their leadership styles, policies, or geopolitical behaviour. As previously explained, such a comparison, although controversial, draws upon historical analogies. The comparison between Putin and Hitler may be rooted in an analysis of their respective approaches to governance, drawing on the alleged similarities in their consolidation of power, authoritarian tendencies, or tendencies toward aggressive and expansionist foreign policies.

Such comparisons may stem from an examination of specific Russian policies or actions that elicit concerns or draw parallels with historical events. For instance, perceived abuse of civil liberties, suppression of political opposition, or the annexation of Crimea are used as examples where similarities with historical precedents are drawn, thereby emphasising potential implications and raising awareness of perceived threats to the US and the West. Indeed, the use of historical analogies has long been used as a way to evoke strong emotions and make complex political situations more relatable to the general public (see., e.g., Ghilani et al., 2017). Thus, drawing parallels between Putin and Hitler may serve as a rhetorical strategy to emphasise

Russia's perceived authoritarian tendencies or explain its aggressive foreign policies. By referring to Hitler, a universally recognised figure associated with totalitarianism and expansionism, journalists may seek to emphasise the gravity of their concerns about Putin's leadership, explaining them within the framework of past atrocities and warning against potential dangers. To provide examples, this can be noted in the following quotations from *The Washington Post*:

> Russia's Vladimir Putin runs Russia with soft Stalinism while he intimidates nations on the Russian periphery to bend under his control. (*The Washington Post*, 01/01/2014).

> Having attained power in their respective societies, Hitler and Putin both set their sights on economic and military renewal and on reversing their respective nations' unjust humiliation, by force if necessary. (*The Washington Post*, 06/03/2014).

The second quotation from *The Washington Post* also indicated another aspect appearing in the three American newspapers – Putin's behaviour explained as a consequence of Russia's past humiliation. Indeed, Hitler and Putin shared a common desire to address what they perceived as past injustices and humiliation suffered by their respective nations. Hitler's exploitation of Germany's grievances which imposed severe economic and territorial restrictions resonated with the German public's sense of national pride (Ziegler, 2022). Likewise, Putin's emphasis on reasserting Russian influence and countering perceived encroachments on its sovereignty can be interpreted as a response to the perceived humiliations of the post-Soviet era, as exemplified in the quote below:

> But to Putin, the ultimate revisionist, Russia has spent more than 20 years being insulted, unable to project its power, to persuade others or to stop others from projecting their power. He tells Russians not of their potential to join the world but that they are victims and have enemies (*The Washington Post*, 22/03/2014)

However, it is important to recognise that the specific historical contexts in which Hitler and Putin operated differ significantly. Hitler's ambitions for expansionism and dominance in Europe were driven by a deeply ideological and racially motivated vision (Bergen, 2022). In contrast, Putin's geopolitical objectives have focused on consolidating Russia's position as a global power and safeguarding its strategic interests, although, admittedly, representing

ideological views that are in some ways incompatible with those of the West. Using CDA, we could view such comparisons of Putin to Hitler by examining the underlying power relations, ideologies, and discursive strategies at play. CDA posits that language is a site of power and that discourse reflects and reproduces social, political, and ideological structures (Elsharkawy, 2011). Therefore, the comparison of Putin to Hitler can potentially be viewed as a discursive practice that serves specific socio-political purposes and promotes particular ideologies. One possible reason for such comparisons to appear in American newspapers may be the wish to delegitimise Putin's leadership.

By associating Putin with Hitler, newspapers may seek to evoke historical images of a ruthless dictator responsible for atrocities, thus positioning Putin as a dangerous and authoritarian figure. This portrayal could be motivated by various factors, such as geopolitical rivalries, ideological differences, or concerns about Putin's policies, actions, or perceived threats to Western values and interests. In addition, the act of comparing Putin to Hitler could be seen as a form of Othering, where Putin is portrayed as a dangerous and authoritarian figure who represents a threat to Western values and interests. Additionally, the comparison may promote a binary understanding of political leaders, framing them solely in terms of being "good" or "evil", rather than recognising the nuanced realities of their leadership and policies. Thus, it risks oversimplifying complex historical and political phenomena by reducing them to simplistic analogies, obscuring the specificities of each leader's historical context. As stated, while Putin's behaviour might exhibit similarities to that of Hitler in some respects, the contextual information is often dismissed.

The comparison may also serve to reinforce a specific ideological perspective. For instance, it could align with a liberal-democratic worldview that values individual rights, freedom of the press, and democratic governance. By likening Putin to Hitler and Stalin, newspapers may seek to emphasise the authoritarian tendencies of Putin's regime, contrasting it with Western democratic principles. This strategy can generate additional support for policies aimed at countering perceived threats and justifying the US interventions against Russia. Using collective memory, newspapers may seek to evoke strong emotional responses and moral condemnation. This, in turn, suggests continuity in the newspapers' interpretations of Putin's actions. This argument is supported by the newspapers' analysis of Putin's leadership style, consolidation of power, and perceived authoritarian tendencies. For example, we clearly note this in the following quotation from *The Washington Post's* editorial:

> While Vladimir Putin, Stalin's spawn, ponders what to do with what remains of Ukraine, remember: Nine years before the January 1942 Wannsee Conference, at which the Nazis embarked on industrialized genocide, Stalin deliberately inflicted genocidal starvation on Ukraine. (*The Washington Post*, 20/03/2014)

In addition, we note the use of comparisons to Stalin to critique Putin's actions domestically, which is used as a rhetorical device to highlight concerns about the state of civil liberties, human rights, and political freedoms in Russia. By drawing parallels between the actions of Putin and those of Stalin, the comparisons underscore the perceived erosion of democratic values and the potential dangers of authoritarian tendencies in the Russian government. For example, this manifests in a 2015 *New York Times* opinion piece:

> "How bad are things, really?" This is a question that those of us who write about Russia — or live in Russia, or think about Russia — are asked often, and ask just as frequently. It has its variants: "Is it as bad as it was before perestroika?" "Is Putin as bad as Stalin?" And the rhetorical king of them all: "Is it 1937 yet?" The reference is to the year widely considered the beginning of Stalin's Great Terror, or the most frightening year in Russian memory (*The New York Times*, 06/05/2015)

The CDA approach could view the comparison of Putin to Hitler and Stalin in American newspapers as reflecting the exercise of power, the promotion of specific ideologies, and the use of persuasive strategies. The comparisons can be interpreted as a discursive practice that aims to delegitimise Putin's leadership. However, it is important to critically evaluate the implications and limitations of such comparisons in terms of their potential to oversimplify complex political realities. Indeed, the adapted philosophical research approach of the thesis – poststructuralism - would critique the essentialist assumptions that underlie such comparisons. It argues against reducing complex historical and political phenomena to simple equivalences and oversimplifying the intricacies of power dynamics, historical contexts, and individual agency (see, e.g., Çalkıvik, 2017). Moreover, poststructuralism would be concerned with the power effects of these comparisons. It would explore how such discursive practices reinforce certain power structures and ideologies. For example, the comparison of Putin to Hitler or Stalin may serve to justify certain political actions, foster a particular geopolitical narrative, or

reinforce a specific understanding of democracy and authoritarianism. In essence, poststructuralism would challenge the stability, universality, and fixed meanings associated with comparing Putin to figures like Hitler and Stalin, inviting a more nuanced understanding of the discursive construction of these identities, the power dynamics at play, and the potential consequences of these comparisons in shaping political discourse and public opinion.

Indeed, we observe the same recurring patterns of comparing Putin's actions to czars. This tendency once again reflects a discursive strategy that draws on historical analogies to frame Putin's behaviour in the context of past authoritarian rulers. Thus, these comparisons serve as rhetorical devices to evoke specific historical connotations and potentially evoke emotional responses, shaping newspapers' readerships' perceptions of Russia's foreign policy. For example:

> Vladimir Putin wants Russia to exist in the Great Power era of czars and monarchs, dominating its neighbors by force and undisturbed by elections and rights complaints. The post-Communist autocracies, led by Mr. Putin's closest dictator allies in Belarus and Kazakhstan, exploit ideology only as a means of hanging on to power at any cost. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 21/01/2015)

In addition, an intriguing pattern observed in articles discussing Putin's leadership is the characterisation of him as tsarist not only in his behaviour and ambitions but also in relation to his personality. This narrative suggests that Putin shows traits reminiscent of historical Russian tsars, including an alleged inability to accept societal changes and adapt to new social realities. The newspapers' narrative suggests that Putin clings to traditional values and power structures, resisting progressive reforms and modernisation. Furthermore, these articles critique Putin's alleged false belief in his own superiority. For example:

> Vladimir V. Putin himself is much more like another czar, Nicholas I, who stumbled into military conflict with the British and French and rejected calls for the basic reforms needed to enable Russia to compete with the world powers of the day. Nicholas had a cramped perspective and arrogant personality. (*The New York Times*, 07/04/2014)

In summary, the use of history creates a certain narrative, explaining Putin's actions and Russia's ambitions in their alleged continuity. This narrative, which appeared in all three

American newspapers, however, risks ignoring the potential effects of the present realities on Russia's motivations. Filling the empty signifier "power" with meaning by referring to past political leaders can lead to oversimplification and distortion of complex political realities. Thus, presenting Putin as a replica of past leaders neglects the distinctiveness of contemporary geopolitical dynamics and can undermine readers' accurate understanding of Russia's actions and policies.

Direct Cold War references

The Cold War era was a key historical point in the development of the US-Russia relationship, characterised by the dichotomy of the East and the West, the concept of "Us versus Them", and the ideological struggle for supremacy (Romijn et al., 2012). The past Cold War ideological rivalry between the US and Russia has evolved into a complex relationship marked by tensions and strategic competition, with *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* discourse frequently reflecting these dynamics. References to the Cold War were of particular relevance to the aims of my thesis to fulfil my goal of examining whether Cold War themes and references are used in the discourse of the selected newspapers to form the image of the Other.

Based on the selected American newspaper discourse, it is clear that global events continue to be interpreted and perceived based on these cultural frames of reference. While conducting the analysis, it became evident that to explain international affairs to the public, journalists draw upon these cultural references in their reporting. The political ideologies and divisions in the discourse seemed to have been partly shaped by the legacy of the Cold War. The theme of ideological opposition clearly continues to exist, although the contrasting ideologies seem to have changed from capitalism versus Communism to liberalism versus traditionalism and authoritarianism.

While looking at how *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* utilise the term "Cold War", several trends emerged. First, there was a prevalent tendency to describe the contemporary foreign affairs between Russia, the United States, and the Western world as existing in the post-Cold War era. In those cases, while the articles did not directly discuss the Cold War, the term seemed to encourage the readers to view the situation through

the prism of the Cold War events. The term "post-Cold War" is used to highlight the perceived damage or erosion of the post-Cold War order by Russia in contemporary politics. Through the lens of the newspapers, a consensus emerges that Russia's actions pose a threat to the established international order that emerged following the end of the Cold War. It is evident that the post-Cold War order represents a set of norms, institutions, and power dynamics that have been significantly influenced by the geopolitical landscape of the past few decades. The newspapers' coverage indicates that Russia's actions are seen as undermining the principles and norms that underpin the post-Cold War order. These principles include various aspects, including respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, the promotion of democracy, and human rights. For example:

> Putin ordered the invasion of Georgia in 2008, the invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014, and now the destabilization of eastern Ukraine. In so doing, he has shredded the post-Cold War settlement in Europe embraced by all European nations (including Russia) after the collapse of communism and the end of the Soviet Union: acceptance of existing borders, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, and the right of all states to choose their affiliations free from the threat or use of force. (*The Washington Post*, 27/03/2014)

This is reinforced in the 2015 newspaper discourse, with the three newspapers continuing to discuss how Russia's actions undermined Western efforts to end the Cold War. While doing so, the newspapers simultaneously reflect on Russia's failure to embrace Western ideals, as evident, among other things, through its aggression in Eastern Europe. As an illustration, a *Washington Post* article focused on Russia's support for separatists in Ukraine while asserting that the relations between the United States and Russia are the worst since the Cold War, posits the following viewpoint:

> For Washington, the conflict between the West and Russia has become much more than a conflict over Ukraine's territorial integrity. It has become a provocation to the Western liberal international order that the United States worked hard to create at the end of the Cold War: An order based on democracy, the rule of law and free markets. Russia has not gone down this road. Instead, it is now challenging the European security order and most particularly the Eastern European states. (*The Washington Post*, 24/02/2015)

Indeed, notably, Russia's military actions in Georgia and, more frequently, Ukraine, as well as the annexation of Crimea in 2014 are used as an example of Russia challenging the stability and integrity of the post-Cold War order. In other words, the newspapers posit that if Russia's behaviour is not challenged and altered, the post-Cold War order is threatened. When discussing the events in Ukraine, Putin is portrayed as seeking to undermine and dismantle the post-Cold War order, while his actions and policies are argued to reflect a deliberate effort to challenge the established international norms and institutions that emerged after the Cold War. Consequently, in the newspaper discourse, Putin repeatedly becomes the Other of the US. Thus, Western leaders assume the role of those who would have an obligation to intervene:

> With or without a resolution of the Ukrainian crisis, this new Russian military model will continue to exist. It is a destabilizing military strategy, with serious ramifications for Europe's political and military equilibrium unless Russia returns to the military and policy norms of the post-Cold War period (*The Wall Street Journal*, 16/07/2014)

In other words, the term "post-Cold War" serves as a historical reference point to delineate a distinct period in international relations after the Cold War's conclusion. The notion of a "post-Cold War" world order illustrates a change of strategies and approaches in foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. However, Russia, with its expansionist ambitions and aggression in the post-Soviet space, is depicted as stuck in the Cold War mentality, thus being unwilling to accept the "new" order. Consequently, such descriptions illustrate the newspapers' tendency to compare Russia's foreign policy strategies to those of the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

A second prevalent trend when using references to the Cold War was the description of the tensions between Russia and the West as the worst since the Cold War, thus emphasising the gravity and intensity of the geopolitical situation. This perspective suggested that contemporary events display similarities to the Cold War, both in terms of severity and ideological conflict. In other words, the use of this comparative framework serves to underscore the seriousness of the situation and convey the notion that the tensions between Russia, the US, and the West were reaching a level not witnessed since the Cold War. This approach was particularly prominent after the annexation of Crimea. For example:

> Russia's intervention in Ukraine has plunged relations between the West and Moscow to their lowest ebb since the Cold War. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 01/08/2014)

However, this idea repeatedly appears over the examined four years, with a prevalent notion that Russia has reignited the Cold War. The narrative consistently references Russia's actions in Georgia and Ukraine to support the argument that the ongoing conflict between Russia and the US resembles the Cold War era. Moreover, it posits that Russia's mentality has remained unchanged since that historical period. For example, this perception is embodied in the following 2016 *Wall Street Journal* quotation:

> There it is, the Obama syllogism: The Cold War is over, and therefore Russia cannot be our principal geopolitical foe. This is faulty logic and even worse empirical analysis. What was evident in 2012 is even clearer today: Because Vladimir Putin believes that the collapse of the Soviet Union was, as he said in 2005, the greatest geopolitical disaster of the 20th century, he is determined to reverse it by all means necessary. His incursion into Georgia, his seizure of Crimea, his role in the "frozen conflict" in eastern Ukraine -- all these are part of a ruthlessly consistent strategy.

While, as discussed, the need for the West to get involved is emphasised, within this discourse, the portrayal of the US commonly entails a depiction of unwillingness to engage or being coerced into involvement in the conflict. In essence, Russia is often presented as the impelling force driving the US towards such a conflict. We note an example of this phenomenon in the quotation below:

> Western leaders have insisted for years that the Cold War is over and that they have no interest in reviving it. Mr. Putin demurs. Leon Trotsky, another formidable Bolshevik, is said to have warned that, while you may not be interested in war, war is interested in you. President Putin seems to be telling us that the Cold War isn't over, despite our lack of interest. He may succeed in cracking Ukraine, or taking control over it altogether. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 04/03/2014)

This aligns with the discourse that insists that the recent tensions are the resurgence of the Cold War or The New Cold War. The assumption that the Cold War is back, and the term "New Cold War" are frequently used interchangeably to characterise the re-emergence of geopolitical tensions reminiscent of the Cold War. Specifically, the portrayal of Putin's leadership and Russia's actions signifies a perception of a return to Cold War dynamics. The discourse emphasises his centralised control and limited political pluralism. In addition, Putin's KGB

background is portrayed as influencing his governing approach. Moreover, Russia's expansionist activities, especially in Ukraine, are viewed as indicative of a broader geopolitical struggle similar to regional proxy conflicts during the Cold War:

> The Cold War is back. Russia's occupation of Crimea and preparations for a possible annexation of the southern Ukrainian province have revived fears, calculations and reflexes that had been rusting away since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. (*The New York Times*, 18/03/2014)

In addition to the aforementioned contexts, in 2016, the case of Alexander Litvinenko, a former Russian spy who defected to the UK in 2000 and was poisoned with polonium-210 in 2006, also became a point of discussion in the discourse. Litvinenko's poisoning and subsequent death led to a high-profile public inquiry in the UK, which concluded that the assassination was "probably approved" by Putin. Within this context, when discussing the return of the Cold War, a narrative emerged, with the American newspapers highlighting similarities between Putin's methods to those of the Cold War and depicting Putin as engaging in covert and aggressive tactics reminiscent of the Cold War period.

Similarly, in 2016, references to the Cold War were used in relation to Russia's interference in the US presidential election. We can note references to Russian intelligence agencies gaining unauthorised access to the computer systems of the Democratic National Committee and other political organisations, stealing sensitive and confidential information, including emails and documents. It is evident that Russia's election interference is depicted as geopolitical manoeuvring resembling the Cold War.

Furthermore, the notions of the alleged continuation of the Cold War and the emergence of the New Cold War are employed to depict Russia as the Other of the US. This portrayal emphasises Russia's anti-democratic and authoritarian governing approach, seeking to draw stark contrasts between Russia and Western liberal democracies. The context of Ukraine plays a pivotal role in framing the idea of a New Cold War, discussing Russia's alleged expansionist ambitions and its actions that challenge the international order. The annexation of Crimea and Russia's involvement in the conflict in Ukraine are positioned as challenges to the existing global order and as indicators of Russia's desire to reassert influence in neighbouring territories. The discussion on the New Cold War is also closely linked to the context of Moscow-backed

separatists in the eastern part of Ukraine. This idea manifests itself in the following quotation from *The Washington Post*:

> To some, Ukraine has become the geopolitical faultline between the liberal democratic West and authoritarian, neo-imperial Russia under President Vladimir Putin. Foreign policy luminaries in Washington openly discuss the current state of affairs as a new Cold War. (*The Washington Post*, 10/03/2015)

However, amidst these prevailing references to the Cold War and the post-Cold War world, an alternative perspective emerges, positing that the new conflict, although severe, should not be regarded as a direct extension or rekindling of the Cold War. This viewpoint emphasises the differences between the recent tensions between the US and Russia and the Cold War era, suggesting that the geopolitical dynamics, actors' motivations, and global context have undergone changes. Mostly, such portrayals advocated for a nuanced understanding of the unique dynamics at play in the bilateral relationship. For example, a 2014 *Washington Post* editorial encourages readers to consider the alleged lack of ideological differences between the US and Russia:

> It is tempting to talk, as the *Financial Times* has, of a "second Cold War." This is nonsense. The current crisis is neither an ideological battle nor even a tug of war between two competing empires. It is, instead, a revival of the old European game of jostling nationalisms. In Ukraine, Russian speakers do not want to take orders from Ukrainian speakers. In Europe, these matters have usually been settled by ethnic cleansing or population transfers. Here, Putin's preferred method would be to effectively annex the Russian-speaking Crimea to Russia itself — welcome home, Yalta. It is, after all, where the czars and Stalin summered. (*The Washington Post*, 04/03/2014)

To summarise, in general, we observe varying perspectives regarding whether the recent tensions between Russia and the US should be interpreted as a return of the Cold War or a New Cold War. Despite this divergence in views, a commonality exists in the consistent use of comparisons to the Cold War when portraying current events. This phenomenon indicates that the Cold War has retained its significance in shaping the newspaper narrative and analysis of contemporary geopolitical developments. In particular, while some articles argue against characterising the current tensions as a continuation of the Cold War, the prevalence of

references to the Cold War in discussing the present conflict creates specific associations in the readership. Thus, the use of Cold War references continues to shape the interpretation and perception of current events through the lens of the Cold War prism.

This suggests that the legacy of the Cold War - including its ideology, geopolitical rivalry, and power struggles - continues to affect how events are analysed and understood within the three American newspapers. By drawing parallels to the Cold War, newspapers are able to construct a frame of reference that readers can easily comprehend, allowing them to make sense of complex current geopolitical dynamics and relationships. As a consequence, this framing reinforces the enduring salience of the Cold War in the American newspaper discourse and its role in affecting public understanding of current events.

However, understanding current conflicts between the US and Russia through the lens of the Cold War can be problematic. This approach tends to essentialise and oversimplify complex geopolitical dynamics, which can lead to a reductive interpretation of contemporary events. The methodological approach of my thesis, CDA, emphasises the role of language and discourse in shaping power relations and ideology. When newspapers repeatedly draw upon Cold War references to explain current conflicts, they perpetuate a discourse that may overlook the nuances of the present geopolitical landscape. Consequently, such a discursive framing can reinforce the division of "Us versus Them", thereby reproducing the ideological divide of the original Cold War.

Indeed, from the poststructuralist perspective, which encourages us to challenge fixed meanings, by relying on Cold War references, newspapers risk reproducing historical narratives and power structures, which may not fully capture the evolving dynamics of contemporary international relations. Using Cold War references may lead to a simplistic and one-sided understanding of history, limiting our ability to fully grasp the complexities of the current situation.

10.3 Conclusion

Understanding the precise motivations and intentions behind the portrayal of a country or its leader by the three American newspapers – *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* - is an intricate and multifaceted task, rendering definitive conclusions elusive. It is important for me to acknowledge the inherent complexity involved in journalistic practices, which encompass a multitude of factors that shape the depiction of nations and their leaders. Consequently, asserting the reasons behind a particular portrayal is an endeavour fraught with challenges and uncertainties. The motivations behind such portrayals can be both overt and covert, overtly driven by journalistic values and ideals, or covertly influenced by external pressures, biases, or even strategic considerations. Thus, using the research philosophy of poststructuralism, I try to uncover the layers that make a country's portrayal, rather than claiming the existence of a "correct" interpretation.

The analysis of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* between 2014 and 2017 offered valuable insights into the constructed meaning of the concept of "ideology" in relation to Russia. Within the joint discourse of these American newspapers, the portrayal of Russia's ideology is consistently framed with predominantly negative connotations, encompassing signifieds of authoritarianism and illiberalism. Furthermore, we evidence the emergence of the theme of "traditionalism", which, in the case of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, relates to Russian Orthodoxy, sexual minority discrimination, nationalism, and, less often, discriminating women.

Throughout the analysed period, the newspapers tended to fill the notion of "ideology" with unfavourable meanings, suggesting a prevailing perception that Russia's ideological stance is problematic and detrimental, impacting both its domestic and international conduct. Furthermore, the analysis revealed a significant emphasis on the association of Russia's ideology with discrimination, notably towards sexual minorities. The newspapers consistently spotlight instances of human rights abuses and limitations on civil liberties, painting a picture of an ideology intertwined with oppressive practices. Moreover, their discourse portrayed Russia as an authoritarian state, with Putin's leadership consistently depicted as authoritative and domineering. This characterisation extended to Russia's foreign policy, particularly in relation to the annexation of Crimea and support for pro-Russian rebels in Eastern Ukraine, reinforcing the notion of an ideological framework steeped in authoritarianism.

Notably, the oppression of individual rights, illiberalism, and authoritarian attitudes are all attitudes reminiscent of those of the Soviet Union. The concept of "illiberal" in the context of the Soviet Union refers to a governing system that operated under the facade of formal democracy while suppressing individual rights and freedoms. This term has been used to describe regimes that bypassed constitutional limits on their power and manipulated elections to consolidate their authority rather than genuinely representing the will of the people. The Soviet government suppressed freedom of speech, media, and expression. Any dissent against the Communist Party or its policies was punished, and political opposition was not tolerated (Library of Congress, 2022). Importantly, similar tropes were evidenced in all three American newspapers when discussing Vladimir Putin's ruling style in Russia.

Similarly, the term "authoritarian" is commonly associated with the political system that prevailed in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was characterised by a highly centralised and repressive regime, where power was concentrated in the hands of the Communist Party and its leaders. The political structure was authoritarian, with limited political freedoms, a lack of pluralism, and suppression of opposition (Zimmerman, 2014). In the newspaper texts, we noted similar accusations regarding Russia.

Regarding the theme of traditionalism, the common thing with the Cold War was ideological binarity. Russian traditionalism became the Other of the US, with the discourse indicating and discussing clear ideological incompatibility with the US. In essence, the notion of traditionalism was depicted as a direct opposition to Western liberalism. However, it is clear that, while ideological binarity exists, the ideas have changed, no longer involving the Cold War battle between Communism and capitalism. Rather, it is suggested that traditionalism includes Putin's links to Russian Orthodoxy, which he uses for his own political agenda. In addition, Putin is accused of fostering nationalism and using it to gain domestic support. Finally, the notion of traditionalism is critically linked to the discrimination of sexual minorities and regressive perspectives regarding women. This is depicted as clearly incompatible with Western liberalism.

Regarding the empty signifier "power", the discourse prevalent in the three newspapers associates it with several key aspects related to Russia. Notably, the concept is linked to Russia's aggression, expansionism, assertion of spheres of influence, and use of propaganda. Within this framework, the notion of aggression plays a pivotal role in characterising Putin's

behaviour both on the domestic front and in the international arena. Predictably, the discourse extensively references Putin's involvement in Georgia and, more significantly, the events in Ukraine during 2014, which encompassed the annexation of Crimea. In addition, Russia's meddling in the 2016 US Presidential election is portrayed as Russia's direct aggression towards the US. These occurrences serve as crucial points of reference in portraying Russia and its leader as aggressive actors. At the same time, on the domestic landscape, Putin's aggression is predominantly depicted as directed towards his opponents, especially those individuals who are perceived as potential threats by the Russian leader.

Notably, the idea of spheres of influence is directly related to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union sought to establish and expand its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and other regions. Following World War II, the Soviet Union imposed its influence over several Eastern European countries, leading to the establishment of the Eastern Bloc, with these countries effectively becoming satellite states of the Soviet Union, aligning their political, economic, and military policies with Russia (Roberts, 1999). The newspaper articles examined in 2014-2017 not only reference the idea of Russia's spheres of influence, or its wish to establish or keep them but also directly refer to the Soviet period, with the spheres of influence relating mostly to the post-Soviet countries. Essentially, Russia's behaviour is portrayed as an extension to what we witnessed during the existence of the Soviet Union. The notion of "expansionism" is used in a similar way. As known, Soviet expansionism refers to the actions and policies pursued by the Soviet Union during the Cold War era to increase its political, economic, and military influence in other countries and regions (see e.g., Singh, 2023). In the Cold War context, the term relates to the Soviet Union's efforts to extend its sphere of influence and establish control over territories beyond its borders. The same pattern is visible when the *Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* discuss Russia's alleged territorial ambitions. The term "aggression" largely interrelates with "expansionism" and "spheres of influence", as it is repeatedly used to describe expansionist or imperialist ambitions or aggressive behaviour abroad. However, it also concerns Putin's domestic policies, which, in turn, also relate to illiberalism.

Finally, the theme use of the theme "propaganda" in the articles also brought to mind the manner in which the term is comprehended in connection with the Soviet Union. Propaganda in the Soviet Union took various forms and was used as a powerful tool by the Communist Party to promote class conflict, internationalism, and the goals of the party itself. In the Soviet

Union, propaganda was a pervasive tool used to shape public opinion and control information. In the 2014-2017 discourse related to Russia, the theme of propaganda was discussed through the lens of the government's efforts to alter, affect, or manipulate public opinion, and gain support for the Russian government.

Thus, the analysis of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* between 2014 and 2017 indicated that their discourse continues to be influenced by the themes and legacy of the Cold War. Despite the fact that there is no certainty regarding why the chosen newspaper discourse was shaped in the way it was, the Cold War's lasting impact can potentially be attributed to several factors, including historical context, geopolitical context, and cultural factors. The Cold War was a defining period in American history and a deeply ingrained sense of Cold War themes and narratives permeates American culture. A lasting impression was left on the nation's collective memory through its influence on political, social, and cultural landscapes. Russia's actions in recent years, such as the annexation of Crimea, alleged interference in foreign elections, and disinformation campaigns, have raised concerns in the United States. These actions are often perceived as challenging the existing international order and democratic norms. Although this approach can arguably be flawed and simplistic, drawing on Cold War themes allows newspapers to highlight these perceived threats and emphasise the potential dangers associated with Russia's behaviour.

Apart from using themes that are associated with the Cold War, American newspapers also employed direct references to the term. My discourse analysis reveals an intriguing trend where the concept of the Cold War continues to be employed in discussions concerning contemporary political events, even when the authors assert that the Cold War has effectively ceased to exist. Additionally, a concept termed "post-Cold War" emerges within the discourse and is frequently used to depict a positive, liberal, and democratic order that is now perceived as being threatened by Russia's actions. Furthermore, the newspapers consistently employ the Cold War reference to depict more recent conflicts with Russia as "the worst since the Cold War", indicating the severity of the situation at hand.

Regarding whether there is a continuation of the Cold War or the emergence of a New Cold War, the discourse appears to lack a definitive consensus. However, one notable observation is the enduring influence of evaluating contemporary issues through the lens of the Cold War, with authors continuing to view political events and developments through the prism of the

Cold War framework. The persistence of Cold War references in analysing and evaluating political occurrences signifies a lasting impact on the way such events are comprehended and contextualised. Despite claims that the Cold War era has ended, the discourse showcases the lasting relevance of Cold War symbolism and its application to contemporary geopolitical dynamics. This implies that the Cold War legacy continues to shape the understanding of current events, leading to its recurring use as a reference point in assessing and interpreting political realities.

Furthermore, the three American newspapers consistently drew comparisons between Putin and historical authoritarian leaders, such as Stalin, Hitler, and Russian czars. This recurring comparison centred around the commonality shared among these figures - their disregard for the rights of others, including the territorial integrity of other countries and the rights of individuals. By likening Putin to figures like Stalin and Hitler, the newspapers sought to underscore the perceived autocratic tendencies of the Russian leader and highlight the potential threats posed by his actions on the global stage. These historical references seem to serve as a rhetorical device to emphasise the gravity of the situation and evoke historical parallels that evoke feelings of concern and caution. Thus, historical comparisons might reflect a particular ideological stance, such as a critique of authoritarianism or an attempt to underscore the perceived risks of Russia's actions. The choice of historical analogies and the language used to describe Putin's behaviour could potentially be influenced by the political orientation of the newspapers or the broader geopolitical context between the US and Russia.

The use of such historical analogies can shape public opinion by framing how readers perceive Putin's behaviour. By associating him with authoritarian leaders from the past, the newspapers influence how readers interpret current events and the policies pursued by the Russian government. Furthermore, by framing Putin's behaviour through historical comparisons, the newspapers contribute to broader geopolitical narratives on the role of Russia in world affairs. Thus, the portrayal of Russia through the lens of past authoritarian leaders could align with broader discourses about the superiority of liberal democratic values over other political systems.

From the perspective of poststructuralism, historical references are part of wider discourses that have been historically established and embedded within society. Thus, these discourses may shape how Russia is represented, and the historical analogies draw upon past narratives

and tropes to construct a particular image of Russia. Poststructuralism would consider how the repetition of historical references in newspapers may serve to (re)produce particular meanings and representations of Russia. Over time, these representations can become naturalised, shaping how readers perceive and understand Russia in relation to historical figures.

However, by relying on historical comparisons, newspapers may simplify and essentialise the identity of Russia, reducing it to a familiar and easily graspable concept. Furthermore, the use of historical references may reinforce dichotomous thinking, such as portraying Russia as an authoritarian threat in contrast to the democratic West. Such binary oppositions simplify complex geopolitical realities and perpetuate a simplified worldview. Referring to historical authoritarian and oppressive leaders or the Cold War in newspaper discourse creates a web of meanings, references, and associations that may resonate with their audiences. This can be interpreted as a form of Othering where references to historical figures and the Cold War serve as a way to create a sense of difference and distance between "Us" (the American readers) and "Them" (Russia and Putin). This fits the Othering process where a group is portrayed as fundamentally different or inferior, reinforcing an "Us versus Them" mentality. In this context, negative historical references may serve to marginalise Russia, positioning it as a foreign, threatening, and undesirable "Other" of the US.

According to poststructuralism, language is a system of signification that influences how events are understood and interpreted, constructing meaning rather than reflecting objective truths. By drawing historical parallels, certain narratives and interpretations are emphasised, influencing how audiences perceive the significance and implications of current political events. In this case, the analysis of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* indicated that historical references continue to be commonly used to make sense of current affairs. Curiously, the narratives in *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* were very similar. As such, the references to history seem to be used to assert a particular national, cultural, or political identity. Thus, newspapers may play a role in shaping public perception and understanding of international affairs. By using historical references to portray Russia as similar to past authoritarian leaders, they frame how readers perceive and interpret Russia's current actions and intentions. As a consequence, this framing may influence public opinion and attitudes towards Russia. However, when evaluating historical analogies, the readership needs to consider that reducing Russia solely to historical analogies may overlook critical nuances and complexities.

In addition, it is also crucial to note that the analysis of the three American newspapers reveals a consistent narrative of Russia being depicted as an aggressor and an expansionist power throughout all four years examined. Despite the shift in time, the portrayal of Russia's actions remains consistent, emphasising its assertive behaviour on the international stage. However, during the later period, there was an additional dimension to the discourse, highlighting Russia's illiberal practices and its involvement in meddling with the US elections. The interference in the 2016 US presidential election became a significant topic of discussion, with accusations of Russia engaging in cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns to influence the electoral process, thus depicting Russia's use of undemocratic practices. In addition, the focus remains on Russia's alleged efforts to expand its sphere of influence, with particular attention paid to its actions in neighbouring regions, such as Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet states. This portrayal reinforces the image of Russia as a revisionist power seeking to regain its past imperial glory and influence.

Thus, the consistent portrayal of Russia in American newspapers over the years, with descriptions remaining largely unchanged, indicates the presence of strongly ingrained perceptions that manifest themselves in newspaper reporting. This enduring depiction suggests that certain narratives and beliefs about Russia have become deeply rooted in the collective mindset of journalists, editors, and readers, shaping the way information about Russia is presented and interpreted.

Chapter 11: Empirical analysis: Russian newspapers

The analysis of the three Russian newspapers – *Argumenti Nedeli*, *Izvestiya*, and *Novaya Gazeta* followed the same principles as with the American newspapers. The investigation focused on the use of signifieds to give meaning to empty signifiers "ideology" and "power" while characterising the US in *Argumenti Nedeli*, *Izvestiya*, and *Novaya Gazeta*. While carrying out the analysis, we could observe notable disparities in the portrayal of the US across *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, as opposed to *Novaya Gazeta*. As such, the following sections examine the differences in more detail.

The investigation unveiled that *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* exhibited similar depictions of the US in their discourse, displaying no significant variations over the examined four-year time period. However, when discussing the two newspapers displaying similar tendencies, I maintain the acknowledgement that this does not suggest intrinsic identity between *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* or uniformity in their perspectives across all subjects or temporal intervals. Rather, this may suggest that the newspapers may have followed the same approach to interpreting key events, such as the conflict in Ukraine. As discussed in more detail in the following section, a potential explanatory factor might be that both newspapers are believed to be following the official position of the Russian government.

Finally, the section encompassing the temporal analysis, particularly in reference to Donald Trump, is presented, considering his recurrent presence in the newspapers during the examined period concerning discussions about the US. Dedicating a separate section to this was inspired by the phenomenon that all three newspapers appeared to be discussing Trump more frequently than other aspects associated with US politics. Furthermore, this was motivated by the fact that one of the goals of my research was to observe whether Trump's candidacy and subsequent election make any changes to the way the US is portrayed. While the three US newspapers appeared to follow are largely undisrupted narrative featuring similar themes, the case of the Russian newspapers was more complex.

Upon thorough scrutiny of the newspapers, it was ascertained that, concerning *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, the signifieds "imperialist" and "pseudo-democratic" explicate the concept of "ideology", while the signified "aggression" elucidates the concept of "power".

However, similarly to the case with the American newspapers, a complete dissociation between "power" and "ideology" remains elusive. Notably, the construct of being "imperialist" can encompass both the endorsement or inclination toward imperialist ideology and the practical enactment of such ideologies, which may also be associated with manifestations of "aggression". Therefore, it is imperative to acknowledge that emergent concepts should invariably be considered within their contextual framework to attain a comprehensive understanding of their intrinsic nature.

11.1 Power

During the analysis of Russian newspaper discourse, a noteworthy observation emerged regarding their apparent reluctance to engage in discussions about power concerning the US. However, discourse analysis indicated that *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* may have followed this approach for different reasons than *Novaya Gazeta*. When examining the discourse within *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, the prevailing narrative seemed to revolve around accentuating Russia's own "power" and grandeur, with certain articles in both publications suggesting Russia's superiority over the US. It appeared that engaging in conversations that might imply significant power on the part of the US could potentially conflict with the overarching message of Russia (re)claiming its dominance on the global stage.

Nonetheless, throughout the analysis, a prominent recurring theme emerged, highlighting the US allegedly displaying aggression and hostility towards Russia. This prevalent narrative predominantly centred on the US's involvement in Ukraine, a region that occupied a significant focus within the discourse of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*. In these publications, the actions of the US in relation to Ukraine were consistently depicted as aggressive acts directed at Russia. This portrayal of the US as an antagonistic actor seemed to reinforce the notion of Russia as a victim of unwarranted hostility, further influencing the newspapers' characterisation of the broader geopolitical dynamics between the two nations. Indeed, the observed consensus was primarily centred around attributing blame for the conflict in Ukraine to the US. The portrayal presented Russia as a blameless entity, coerced into the conflict as a result of the actions of a belligerent aggressor – the US. The depiction demonstrated an alleged sense of reluctance for Russia to engage in the conflict while suggesting that it was ultimately compelled to participate due to the perceived infeasibility of refraining from interference. For example, this is exemplified in the following *Izvestiya* quotation:

> Moscow used a rich set of diplomatic, political and psychological levers to encourage Kyiv to have a dialogue. Kyiv remained insane, to which it was strongly pushed and continues to be pushed by the United States. As a result, Russia faces a dilemma - intervention with all the risks of international isolation - or non-interference with all the associated risks of moral bankruptcy inside and outside the country while feeling that the blood of Donbas is on our hands. (*Izvestiya*, 25/04/2014)

This depiction may serve to absolve Russia of agency and responsibility, suggesting that its actions are driven by external forces rather than internal motives or decisions. Furthermore, the portrayal highlights the perceived moral superiority of Russia by presenting it as reluctantly entering the conflict only to counter the aggression of the US. In contrast, the US is implicitly depicted as the aggressor. Such characterisation can perpetuate an "Us versus Them" mentality, fuelling animosity. At the same time, as discovered earlier, the theoretical assumptions behind Othering would suggest that such an approach may also reinforce a sense of national identity and solidarity within Russia. Furthermore, by framing the conflict in this manner, the portrayal may also justify actions taken in response to perceived external threats.

It is evident that putting the blame on the conflict solely on the US offers quite a limited perspective which raises the question of potential reasons behind it. The portrayal of the conflict as entirely the fault of the US demonstrates a potential hegemonic bias in the discourse. By assigning blame solely to the US, the newspapers may be downplaying or overlooking other contributing factors and actions taken by other actors involved in the conflict, including Russia. This one-sided perspective may serve to reinforce and legitimise Russia's position while delegitimising the actions and intentions of other parties involved, such as the US and Ukraine. In addition, by presenting a narrative that places blame solely on the US, the newspapers may be promoting a nationalistic agenda. This approach can foster a sense of unity and pride among the Russian population, positioning Russia as a righteous defender against external aggression. Such nationalistic sentiments may serve to rally public support for the government's policies and actions.

Undoubtedly, the notion of attributing responsibility for the conflict in Ukraine to the US echoes the sentiments expressed by President Putin. According to Putin's arguments, the US exerted pressure on Ukraine, compelling the nation to make a decisive choice between aligning with either Russia or the US. This, as per Putin's stance, triggered a division within Ukraine

itself and led to the "withdrawal" of Crimea (Al Jazeera, 2021). It may be that by blaming the conflict on the US, the newspapers are echoing the statements of Putin and the official position of Russia. As discussed earlier, *Argumenti Nedeli* Deputy Editor-in-Chief Andrey Uglanov has publicly expressed harsh criticisms of the US, arguing that it always has the intention of humiliating and hating Russia. As argued by Shimotomai, (2015:81), *Argumenti Nedeli* "provides a hint of the Kremlin voice". Similarly, prior research on *Izvestiya* (e.g., Voltmer, 2000; Jones, 2002) indicates findings suggesting a lack of balance and objectivity, with *Izvestiya*'s coverage being heavily biased in favour of Putin.

Nonetheless, while there is an agreement that Russia allegedly plays no role in causing the conflict in Ukraine, there are various reasons named for the alleged US aggression. Among those are the ideas that the US is involved in the Ukraine conflict due to its wish to put other countries against Russia. In both *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, the narratives seemed to suggest that the US has the ability to force other nations to support their policies. In addition, the narratives suggest that the motivation of the US is to harm Russia. For example:

> America does not need Ukraine. They want to cause problems in Europe and, subsequently, harm Russia. Americans sincerely do not understand that there was no victory in the Cold War. How can you come to terms with this?! Moreover, Russia still has technologies, foreign policy interests and ambitions. And this greatly hinders the global hegemony of the United States. (*Argumenti Nedeli*, 17/07/2014)

Notably, this quote highlights an additional theme discernible in the discourse of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, pertaining to the representation of Russia as a formidable power seeking to regain its prestige and challenge the hegemony of the US. The narratives suggest that the US is purportedly apprehensive of Russia's aspirations, leading it to engage in actions detrimental to Russia's interests. Thus, the reference to the Cold War serves to exemplify the newspapers' perspective that the US lacks the legitimacy to maintain global dominance. Furthermore, the US is accused of seeking to prevent Ukraine from being aligned closely with Russia to diminish Russia's regional influence and bolster its own presence in the region. This argument, again, aligns with the Russian government's narrative of defending its interests against perceived Western encroachment. If adopting the position of priory scholarly findings regarding the two newspapers' pro-government bias, attributing motives of regional dominance to the US may

serve as a justification for Russia's own actions in the region, such as its involvement in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine and legitimising those actions as defensive measures.

Interestingly, while direct references to the Cold War were not found to be frequently used, the narratives included two concepts normally associated with the Cold War – "policy of containment" and "revisionism". More specifically, it is argued that the US is primarily worried about Russia's increasing power in Europe. As a result, it is asserted that Americans allegedly took actions to destabilise Ukraine, with this being driven by Russia gaining excessive influence in Kyiv, which angers the US. For example:

> Of course, the American policy of containment of Russia is not a terrible secret for Moscow. Now, however, this doctrine has been expounded with the utmost frankness. According to American experts, its essence was formulated back in 1947. Almost 70 years have passed since then, but the US has never truly stopped its policy of containment. They just put it aside for a while - in the 90s of the last century, our country was humiliated and weak, so there was no need for active opposition. Now much has changed, and Washington has taken up the old strategy. (*Argumenti Nedeli*, 27/08/2015)

The concept of "policy of containment" is a reference to a foreign policy strategy followed by the US during the Cold War. In 1947, George F. Kennan articulated a policy whereby Communism was to be constrained and segregated, to stop it from disseminating to neighbouring nations. American foreign policy advisors held the view that the contagion of Communism, once established in one country, would invariably propagate to the surrounding states (Hickman, 2019). In the context of current politics, *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* may argue that the US is employing a similar containment strategy towards Russia. This could be perceived in various ways, such as through economic sanctions, isolation, military deployments in regions close to Russia, and support for pro-Western governments in neighbouring countries, which were all concepts criticised in the *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* discourse in 2014-2017. These actions were depicted as attempts to constrain and limit Russia's influence. For example, *Izvestiya* asserts the following:

> Why did the United States begin to divide the countries bordering Russia, forcing them to make an impossible choice - are you with the West or with the East? Because they wanted to besiege Russia, not give it a chance to return to big politics, repeat its first Syrian initiative

and gain a foothold in the Mediterranean. They wanted to withdraw Russia from the team of global players. (*Izvestiya*, 29/09/2015)

In addition, we note *Argumenti Nedeli* using the term "revisionist Russia", which refers to the view that placed responsibility for the Cold War on the US. Revisionists suggest that American policies, including their desire to spread capitalism and democracy, caused the Cold War. Thus, by using this reference, Russia is depicted as a victim of historical injustices or as a country striving to reclaim its rightful place in the world and respond to perceived US dominance and interventions in global affairs. Furthermore, it depicts a broader trend of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* observed over the four-year period, namely, the argument that Russia is protecting Russian-speaking populations in Ukraine, thus justifying its geopolitical moves. Meanwhile, the US intervention is associated with Russia's "containment" or the unwillingness of the US to accept Russia as a global power and acknowledge its interests. For example:

The Americans are very concerned that so far, they have not been able to seriously press Moscow for its Ukrainian policy. Moreover, as former US Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul recently stated, now the White House "has too few cards left to play with." Therefore, in Washington, the discussion on the topic of "how can we maintain our influence in the world and contain revisionist Russia" does not stop. (*Argumenti Nedeli*, 16/05/2015)

Interestingly, some articles also explained that the US feels compelled to showcase its power and use aggression because it is in reality weaker than Russia. This involves using the arguments of the US interventions abroad, which are deemed to be unsuccessful. The alleged lack of success of the US is, in turn, associated with the weakening of its power – in the perceived absence of other methods to influence countries abroad, the US is using its military power. For example, we see this manifested in the *Argumenti Nedeli* quotation:

In addition, this year was marked by a sharp weakening of the positions of the old West. In the US, this was due to two defeats in wars that were not worth unleashing, and to an internal political crisis from which they still have not extricated themselves. For Europe, the reason lies in the protracted systemic crisis. And against this background, the rise of Russia became especially offensive. (*Argumenti Nedeli*, 06/02/2014)

In light of these contentions, it is not surprising that *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* exhibit a degree of reluctance in discussing how power is perceived in relation to the actions of the US, as it may potentially undermine the perception of Russia's own power. Both *Argumenti Nedeli*

and *Izvestiya* resort to Othering to depict the US as a threat, motivated by its intention to harm Russia. Simultaneously, the narratives suggest that such perceived threats are unlikely to exert any adverse effects on Russia. This aspect might serve as an explanatory factor contributing to the divergent conceptualisation of "power" between the American and the Russian newspapers when describing each country as the Other.

In the case of the US, it is widely recognised as having emerged victorious in the Cold War, a position that resonates in the global sphere. Conversely, Russia is portrayed as the losing side in the war, a standpoint that the Russian newspapers vehemently challenge. Instead, they strive to present a contrary narrative, often adopting a "revisionist" approach. Thus, attributing excessive power to the present-day US may potentially undermine this objective. Consequently, the newspapers may carefully navigate the discourse on power, seeking to emphasise Russia's own greatness and downplaying any narrative that may amplify the power of the US, as it may challenge Russia's prevailing objectives in the global arena.

In relation to *Novaya Gazeta*, we observe the opposite trend, with the newspaper presenting the argument that the "world order" Russia is trying to challenge simply doesn't exist anymore. This stance is elegantly summarised in a 2015 *Novaya Gazeta* article:

> Many experts assess Russia's actions in the international arena, starting from the war in Georgia in 2008 and especially from the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in the eastern regions of Ukraine as its struggle against the global world order, in which our country has been given an inappropriate place. This position is best articulated in one of Dmitry Trenin's recent articles, "Moscow has challenged the post-Cold War global order backed by the United States." Other authors take this position to the extreme, presenting Russia as a collective oppositionist who defied "almighty Obama." Thus, by the way, the "revolutionary spirit" familiar to Russian political culture is channelled from the domestic political agenda into the external sphere. We are revolutionaries again, and now certainly on a global scale. (*Novaya Gazeta*, 14/12/2015)

As evident, *Novaya Gazeta* largely echoes the positions appearing in *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*. However, those positions are rejected as invalid:

> If we accept without doubt the starting thesis, which presupposes the existence of a "world order", i.e. some kind of hierarchy that has developed at the global level, where the strongest are able to manage the main political processes and relations, then our new revolutionaries would probably be right. But is it really so? [..] The times of Lenin's article "Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism", on which more than one generation of domestic international affairs experts grew up, are long gone. Most of the old empires do not exist in their former capacity, while the new countries that have arisen in the place of their colonies are increasingly difficult to ignore. (*Novaya Gazeta*, 14/12/2015)

Indeed, *Novaya Gazeta* adopts a distinct perspective asserting that the prevailing "world order" once challenged by Russia, no longer holds relevance. According to their stance, extending efforts to battle the perceived hegemony of the US is futile since US hegemony does not exist in the manner that Russians traditionally envision. Instead, *Novaya Gazeta* consistently advocates for a more pragmatic approach, urging cooperation as a more viable and well-suited strategy for Russia.

In other words, *Novaya Gazeta*'s position on the "world order" implies that the geopolitical landscape has undergone significant shifts, rendering the previous confrontational approach towards the US ineffective and outdated. This suggests that Russia's traditional view of the US as a dominant hegemon does not reflect the current global dynamics. By challenging this established narrative, the newspaper encourages a re-evaluation of Russia's strategies and aims in the global arena.

Indeed, *Novaya Gazeta*'s general position in the examined time frame seems to posit that pursuing a confrontational stance would yield diminishing returns for Russia's interests. It suggests that the traditional confrontational mindset, also observed in the discourse of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, which was once seen as a means to assert Russia's influence and oppose the US-led global order, may not give the desired outcomes in the contemporary context. In light of this realisation, the newspaper advocates for alternative approaches that emphasise cooperation and engagement:

> The terrible truth is that at the beginning of the 20th century, Russia and America were quite comparable - they were two young countries rich in nature and people with a rapidly developing economy and a good scientific and technological background. But by the beginning of the 21st century, we paid for communism, the Gulag, for the millions of soldiers

> thrown into the furnace by Stalin in order to conquer the world, and for Putin's mess - a total, shameful, incomparable backlog. Only by recognizing the depth of this lag can we begin to overcome it. And just as Peter I learned from the Dutch and Germans, we need to learn from the Americans. (*Novaya Gazeta*, 24/01/2014)

These instances serve as illustrative examples that shed light on the possible rationales behind *Novaya Gazeta*'s decision to avoid direct emphasis on the manifestation of US power in the international sphere and its implications for Russia. The conventional narrative of US hegemony is contested by the newspaper, leading to the endorsement of an alternative approach that aligns with what it perceives as the present-day realities. As a result, *Novaya Gazeta* appears to steer its discourse towards advocating for strategies that better suit the current global context. By doing so, *Novaya Gazeta* is challenging both the perspectives of *Argumenti Nedeli*, *Izvestiya*, and the official stance of the Russian government. This can be viewed as an example of *Novaya Gazeta*'s efforts to provide critical analysis and independent journalism. Meanwhile, in contrast, the position of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* echoes the official positions of the Russian state. Despite the divergence in their perspectives, the ultimate result remains consistent: each of the three newspapers refrains from engaging in extensive analyses concerning the power manifestations of the US. This contrasts with American newspapers, which extensively delve into discussions pertaining to Russia's demonstrations of power, examining them in considerable depth.

11.2 Ideology

Argumenti Nedeli and *Izvestiya*: Pseudo democracy

Considering the earlier elucidated distinctions between the newspapers, it is unsurprising that the connotations associated with the term "ideology" differ significantly for *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, as compared to *Novaya Gazeta*. Consequently, the subsequent sections will delineate the positions of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Novaya Gazeta*, illustrating their respective dissimilarities. First, in this section, the concept I termed "pseudo-democracy" will be examined. Although not explicitly labelled as such in the discourse of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, this term has been employed to encapsulate the underlying notion conveyed in their narrative. "Pseudo-democracy" serves to depict the portrayal of US democracy by *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* throughout the examined four-year period. This portrayal outlines the argument that US democracy is a facade, as the US allegedly fails to adhere to its proclaimed

democratic principles. In essence, these newspapers accuse the US of being hypocritical in its democratic claims and actions.

Throughout the examined period, *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* repeatedly contend that the US falls short of practising what it preaches in terms of democratic governance. They highlight instances where the US is perceived to act in ways that contradict democratic principles, thereby reinforcing their position that the proclaimed democratic values are merely a façade, hence my choice of the term "pseudo-democracy". This narrative positions the US as a hypocritical actor on the global stage, projecting an image of democracy while allegedly engaging in actions that undermine democratic norms. Moreover, the discourse contests the alleged US practice of employing the notion of spreading democracy as a justificatory tool for its foreign policy stances. For example:

> The usual mantra about "good and democratic Western bombs and evil Russian missiles" will no longer work. (*Argumenti Nedeli*, 14/08/2014)

This excerpt exemplifies a broader pattern observed in both newspapers, wherein they contend that identical or analogous actions are construed differently depending on whether they are undertaken by Russia or the US. Consequently, portraying military interventions by the US as aligned with democracy, while censuring Russia for analogous behaviour, is deemed to be an act of hypocrisy that is undemocratic in itself.

Indeed, the US stands accused of employing propaganda to disseminate the idea of promoting democracy, an alleged facade based on disingenuous arguments employed to advance its self-serving global agenda. In this manner, the US is allegedly purportedly exerting influence on other nations, pressuring them to adopt this purportedly deceptive ideology and align with the US foreign policy trajectory. This, in turn, is viewed as a form of soft power exertion, with the US allegedly seeking to shape the political landscapes of other nations to serve its own interests and objectives. For example:

> At the same time, one must understand that the strength of the United States and its allies is not only that it is a bloc of countries, soldered together by a single ideology, armed to the teeth and equipped with the most powerful propaganda tools in the history of mankind. And

not only in the ability of political leaders with delightful cynicism to deny the obvious and assert the false. (*Izvestiya*, 07/03/2014)

Finally, the notion of "pseudo-democracy" is linked to contentions of purported US endeavours to manipulate and exploit other countries. The portrayal of the US depicts it as engaging in exploitative practices, seeking to secure backing for its policies, including concrete military support, while also leveraging economic advantages from other nations, as evidenced in the accusation below:

There is no other country in the world whose well-being is built on the exploitation of other peoples and countries, on the deception of the population of a significant part of the planet in its undoubted favour. And on the "monetization" of the benefits received from the creation and export to other peoples of values, presented as "universal". And the country that consumes so many resources (especially foreign ones) and produces a third of the world's garbage in return - there is no other country behaving this way (*Argumenti Nedeli*, 05/06/2014)

Argumenti Nedeli and *Izvestiya*: Imperialist

The argument discussed in the previous section is closely related to the idea of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* accusing the US of being imperialist. Indeed, the two newspapers point out the economic power and influence of the US, arguing that the US is using it to control and manipulate other nations. They posit that the US seeks to maintain its status as the world's sole superpower and dominant global player. In addition, the topic of NATO repeatedly appears, arguing that it is being used to pursue American global influence. Furthermore, the US is criticised for allegedly trying to impose its culture on other countries. It is alleged that the US has a desire to impose its domination on Russia and an aversion to the idea of a multipolar world. In the discourse presented within *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, Russia is portrayed as opposing American imperialism, while simultaneously being compelled to confront it. Consequently, the depiction positions Russia as a virtuous and passive participant, while attributing an antagonistic role to the US:

Calls to restore the multipolarity of the world are now heard from all the stands. Yes, this should be one of the main goals of our foreign policy. But there is only one way to restore

> the multipolarity of the world: by countering the imperial ambitions of the United States with our own imperial ambitions! (*Argumenti Nedeli*, 27/11/2014)

Certainly, the discourse indicates that Russia has emerged as a formidable contender, potentially surpassing the US, and consequently stands as the sole entity capable of challenging the US. This assertion is discernible through recurrent commendation of Russia's strength, a prominent feature found in the discourse of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* throughout the period from 2014 to 2017. For example:

> Russia, against its will, entered into a clinch with the neo-imperial policy of the United States. Our successes, as well as our opponents - unwittingly - rallied the nation. President Putin's approval ratings at home and abroad have reached unprecedented heights, in contrast to the decline of Obama and most European leaders. (*Izvestiya*, 21/11/2014)

Over the course of the four years, the two newspapers have levied criticism against purported US imperialism on multiple fronts. The US is reproached for its entanglements in foreign nations, which have been linked to the instigation of violent conflicts - a notion ironically referred to by the two Russian newspapers as "bringing democracy". Furthermore, the US is accused of embroiling other nations in these conflicts, effectively coercing them into fighting battles on behalf of the US, even though it might be against the wishes of those countries:

> An illusion born of the nineties - we have no enemies. We do. And that's okay. Yes, the US is our enemy. This is not good, this is not bad, this is also a given, an objective reality. Europe, the European Union is no exception: the satellite, perhaps, will publicly demonstrate how disgusting the overlord's order is to him, but he will fulfil it anyway. (*Izvestiya*, 28/08/2014)

Interestingly, we note the use of the word "satellite" when referring to the European Union. In the context of the Cold War, the term "satellite" referred to countries or states that were under the political and military influence or control of a major power, without necessarily being part of that power's territory. During the Cold War, the word "satellite" was commonly used to describe the Eastern European countries that were effectively controlled by the Soviet Union. Thus, using such a term in relation to the current US policies may be used to assert the position that the US behaviour is characteristic of that of the Cold War period.

Moreover, countries perceived to be subject to US attempts at influence are characterised as reluctantly engaging in such interactions yet compelled to comply and offer support to the US. This compliance is attributed to their desire to safeguard their own power and authority while avoiding any diminishment or loss of the broader authority held by the Western bloc.

Furthermore, within the discourse of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, numerous occurrences can be found wherein the allies of the US are depicted as lacking genuine agency, rather than being subject to varying degrees of US control. This tendency may be interpreted as a manifestation of the phenomenon known as "Othering" where these newspapers employ exaggerations and restricted perspectives to magnify the negative attributes of the Other (in this case, the US and its allies), thereby heightening the perceived levels of threat:

> So far, there are significant differences between the US and Europe in understanding these topics. European countries would like to soften the US position on Russia and China, hoping to continue productive cooperation with these countries. But working out a common line on these topics is a matter of the survival of the West as a pole of power and authority. This is what the G-7's role is now reduced to. This role is confrontational and protective. (*Izvestiya*, 08/06/2015)

Finally, Russia is spoken of as confronted with a conflict against the US stemming from the alleged American aspiration to establish dominance over and subjugate Russia. While doing so, Russian newspapers point to the American history of military interventions and engagements in various regions, such as the Middle East, interpreting these actions as attempts to exert control over other countries, reinforcing the narrative of a hegemonic agenda. For instance, the following quotation exemplifies the contention that the US seeks to impose its leadership and ideological framework universally:

> What is happening now is the result of the US's difficult adjustment to a changing world where it no longer has the capacity for absolute dominance. It would seem that for many, including those in Europe and Asia, this is already a fact that few dispute. However, the US political class does not think so. At least they don't want to accept it. Therefore, they beat their chests with cries that America is exceptional and should lead the rest. In other words, they do not agree with objective changes in the world. (*Izvestiya*, 07/09/2017)

Here, the concept of "American exceptionalism" is also observed to surface, representing a notion that encounters strong opposition from Russia. Thus, the discourse of the two Russian

newspapers, presumed to align with the pro-government position, dismisses the notion of the US possessing distinct moral superiority or being exceptional, unique, or exemplary in comparison to other nations. As such, this argument is utilised as yet another example of a lack of justification for the American allegedly "imperialist" positions abroad.

Novaya Gazeta: exemplary democracy

Novaya Gazeta's depiction of the US significantly diverges from the portrayals found in *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*. While considering how the empty signifier "ideology" is filled with meaning in relation to the US in *Novaya Gazeta*'s discourse, I have chosen the term "exemplary democracy". Instead of being critical, *Novaya Gazeta* advocates that the American system should serve as a model for Russia to emulate. Concurrently, *Novaya Gazeta* refutes the idea of a significant power competition between Russia and the US, as well as between Russia and the West, asserting that such a competitive framework is no longer applicable. As an illustration, in an article discussing the departure of the US ambassador to Russia from his post, *Novaya Gazeta* presents the following argument:

> They hated him not because he was an enemy of Russia, but because he was a friend. He is a friend of Russia, which should and can be an equal member of the family of democratic states, which, together with the United States, is participating in a non-zero-sum game. (*Novaya Gazeta*, 10/02/2014)

Indeed, *Novaya Gazeta*'s discourse strongly advocates for Russia to embrace democratic principles and values. While doing so, the newspaper advocates for human rights and cases involving social and political issues, such as corruption, freedom of speech, and discrimination. In its discourse, it expresses the hope for a democratic change in Russia, emphasising the wish to have a society that upholds individual freedoms and the rule of law. *Novaya Gazeta* explicitly disapproves of the idea that Russia is morally superior to the US. Instead, the newspaper takes a contrary stance, suggesting that Russia should consider adopting aspects of the American model due to its perceived success in addressing societal challenges. Furthermore, *Novaya Gazeta* emphasises that the existing issues within Russian society serve as indicators of the need for improvement and learning from other nations. For example:

> We rank first in the world in terms of the number of children abandoned by their parents. We have 700 thousand in orphanages, shelters and boarding schools. There are practically no orphanages in the US, compassionate Americans adopt children, often with severe learning disabilities, from China, Nigeria, Congo, Guatemala, and Russia - until recently. Do I understand correctly that a country in which 700,000 abandoned children (80% with living parents) is more spiritual than one that adopts disabled children from Nigeria? (*Novaya Gazeta*, 24/01/2014)

Thus, the newspaper's perspective on emulating certain aspects of the American model signifies its recognition of perceived strengths in American governance, social policies, and civil liberties. *Novaya Gazeta* points to factors like the US's protection of individual freedoms, strong democratic institutions, and mechanisms for government accountability as exemplars worth considering for Russia's own development. For example:

> The West is a way of life and a system of relations that needs to be studied in order to understand how we can join this powerful process that spans centuries and continents. The British company OwnFon has just started selling a mobile phone for the blind. This is a phone without a display, with Braille on the buttons. Its body is 3D printed. You can talk as much as you like about our inherent spirituality, but the telephone for the blind was created in the West. You can boast all you want about our special way, but the best prostheses for the disabled are made in the West. Everything necessary for life is created in the West. [..] There has been a revolution in Ukraine because Ukraine wants to be the West. The West is not a country or a group of countries, the West is a direction of history. (*Novaya Gazeta*, 06/06/2014)

Thus, *Novaya Gazeta* conspicuously presents the Western societal model as a commendable exemplar for emulation. Concurrently, the newspaper negates the notion prevalent in Russia that the country should adhere to its own distinctive trajectory. The responsibility for the failure to adopt Western ideals is ascribed to the attitudes of the Russian government, which are perceived to impede Russia's advancement as a whole. This perception largely stems from the belief expressed by *Novaya Gazeta* that Russia remains entrenched in its historical past and is resistant to adapting to contemporary geopolitical realities. To address this issue, the newspaper posits that a fundamental shift in Russia's perspective is required, particularly in terms of moving away from viewing the US as an adversary and relinquishing the inclination to perceive

the world through the lens of Cold War-era bipolarity. For example, when talking about Russian authorities being suspicious about the US' offer to share their systems for tracking communication, *Novaya Gazeta* states the following:

> Such behaviour of intelligence officers speaks of their Soviet mentality during the Cold War when the United States was considered the main enemy of the Soviet people. Now times have changed, the world has ceased to be bipolar, the threats have changed, and now our common enemy is terrorism, and it can be dealt with only by establishing effective interaction. (*Novaya Gazeta*, 27/01/2014)

In essence, *Novaya Gazeta* characterises Russia's policies as an anachronistic resonance of historical practices that hold little relevance in contemporary geopolitics and in shaping bilateral relations with Western nations. Additionally, it perceives Russia's conduct in the present as mirroring past imperialist behaviours, thereby implying a regression towards historical patterns of dominance and expansionism. This is evident while interpreting Russia's behaviour in Ukraine:

> From the 17th century, Russia expanded by colonizing neighbouring territories, while other empires often annexed lands on other continents. Today, this means that we continue to see the former colonies as primordially Russian lands and primordially Russian borders, which we cannot part with under any circumstances. [..] However, the modern world is more of a collection of networks and communities than a contour map with the names of states. The fact that the state borders are easily rebuilt where it is convenient for the ruling elites has once again been confirmed by the Ukrainian crisis. (*Novaya Gazeta*, 08/09/2014)

Indeed, this characterisation implies Russia's return to historical actions of territorial expansion, hegemonic aspirations, and the pursuit of dominance over other nations. By drawing such parallels, the newspaper underscores concern about Russia's actions in the present and how they align with historical precedents.

However*, Novaya Gazeta* also allows for contrasting ideas. For example, regarding the conflict in Ukraine in 2014, we note opinions that the West should consider how it also might have contributed to the conflict, and that Russia might not be *solely* responsible for it. Similarly, an opinion piece argues that the bad relationship between Russia and the US cannot simply be reduced to Putin's authoritarian ruling style, suggesting that one should consider that:

> The West, under the leadership of the United States, has uncompromisingly brought its military, political, and economic potential ever closer to post-Soviet Russia. As part of NATO's eastward expansion, the three former Soviet Baltic republics have military bases on the border with Russia, now reinforced with missile defence systems in neighbouring states, a bipartisan winner-take-all principle that comes in various forms. (*Novaya Gazeta*, 09/04/2014)

In addition, we noted that *Novaya Gazeta* occasionally published the perspectives of those people who expressed harsh criticism of the US. For example, in an article published in June 2015, *Novaya Gazeta* features a piece outlining the opinions of the European far right or, as the newspaper calls them, fighters for the "Russian world", who are supportive of Russia's position in Ukraine. Thus, overall, despite the obvious general pro-Western stance observed in the articles, *Novaya Gazeta* appears to provide a comprehensive understanding of complex topics, also presenting different viewpoints and analyses, acknowledging opinion plurality. Indeed, despite its critical approach to the Russian government, the newspaper does not neglect opinions that reflect critically on the actions of the US and its allies, as well as arguments critically approaching the pros and cons of the US sanctions on Russia. In addition, the newspaper reflects on the position of Putin, allowing for opinions that argue that Putin might genuinely feel threatened by the West, rather than using the argument to justify his policy decisions.

Moreover, *Novaya Gazeta* acknowledges the potential co-responsibility of media portrayals from Russia, Ukraine, and the US in contributing to the strained relationship between the nations. The newspaper recognises that each country may have its own prevailing media narrative, and these narratives can significantly influence public perceptions, thereby intensifying the existing conflict and further deteriorating the relationship. These media narratives may emphasise different aspects of the conflict between the countries, portray their actions in contrasting lights, and influence public sentiment accordingly. Consequently, this divergence in media representations can lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and the perpetuation of negative opinions:

> An unbiased observer interested in world politics has a firm conviction that Crimea will become a stumbling block between Russia and the West for at least decades. This is not only

about a conflict between states represented by elites but also about a deep crack between the peoples themselves. Let's pay tribute to the media: we have a propaganda machine that convinces people of a conspiracy of world imperialism, and Kyiv TV channels talk about the terrible barbaric Muscovy, waging war against Ukraine, which has already almost entered Europe. Commentators in Europe and the US are talking about a New Cold War between the West and Russia, which cannot live by the laws of the "free and civilized world." Everyone is digging a hole together. And how could we all not be in it? The pit is much deeper than the meaningless ditch on the Russian-Ukrainian. (*Novaya Gazeta*, 24/10/2014)

To summarise, in its discourse, *Novaya Gazeta* places significant emphasis on two central propositions. Firstly, the newspaper contends that Russia should adopt the democratic model exemplified by the US as it is deemed objectively superior. Secondly, it advocates for a departure from confrontational approaches and suggests that Russia should adapt to contemporary geopolitical circumstances, much like the US has done. However, despite its apparent endorsement of the US democratic model, *Novaya Gazeta* maintains a commitment to offering thorough and comprehensive analyses of various events and developments. The newspaper appears to strive to provide an impartial and nuanced understanding of the issues at hand.

The continuity of discourse: *Argumenti Nedeli*, *Izvestiya*, and *Novaya Gazeta*

One of the research questions of my thesis was to examine whether the time period that coincides with Donald Trump's presidential candidacy, pre-election campaigns, and early presidency is associated with any apparent changes in the way the newspapers of each country present the other. In the case of the three American newspapers, there did not seem to be any apparent change. The analysis of *Argumenti Nedeli*, *Izvestiya*, and *Novaya Gazeta* indicated that, despite frequently mentioning Trump, he does not affect the way the newspapers construct the US. Rather, Trump's candidacy is viewed as largely being a separate issue that is in a way disconnected from the US. In the case of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, even though there is a clear preference for Trump as a candidate and favourable attitudes to his subsequent election win, the narrative does not consider him synonymous with the entirety of the US. Instead, much like Russia, Trump is positioned as an outsider or "Other" in relation to the US. In other words, the core issues that the newspaper allege exist between Russia and the US, do not cease to exist in the discourse over the years. While there are variations in relation to Trump's portrayal that

seem to coincide with his foreign policy decisions, due to the observed Trump's disconnect from the concept of the US in the selected Russian newspaper discourse, my thesis does not discuss these changes in detail.

In the case of *Novaya Gazeta*, the discussion on Trump largely focuses on the potential issues associated with his presidency, in particular, the potential weakening of the EU, and Trump's critical attitudes toward NATO. In addition, his approach is feared to have the potential to cause damage to liberalism. However, as with *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, the criticism is directed specifically at Trump, rather than affecting the way the US is described. In addition, despite having previously expressed concerns about the consequences of Trump's election win, the newspaper praises the US election system and democracy, arguing that Trump's win, despite the predictions, proves the respect for voters' opinions in the US, thus once again praising the US democratic system.

11.3 Russian newspapers: conclusion

The examination of how *Argumenti Nedeli*, *Izvestiya*, and *Novaya Gazeta* portray the US reveals significant differences in their perspectives. *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* depict the US as an aggressive and imperialistic force with intentions to oppress Russia. Conversely, *Novaya Gazeta* presents the notion of power struggles and great power competition as outdated and incompatible with contemporary geopolitics, instead advocating for US-Russia cooperation.

Despite these contrasting portrayals of the US, a common thread emerges across all three newspapers – a reluctance to attribute excessive significance to the concept of power. In the case of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, this approach seems to serve the purpose of not giving undue emphasis to the US' power and influence. Thus, by avoiding extensive discussions on US power, these newspapers shift the focus towards presenting Russia as a (re)emerging power, thereby promoting a narrative of Russia's resurgence on the global stage.

On the other hand, *Novaya Gazeta*'s avoidance of emphasising power relations can be understood in the context of its rejection of great power competition and a desire for US-Russia cooperation. By downplaying power dynamics and power struggles, *Novaya Gazeta* aims to

advocate for a more cooperative and peaceful approach in the international arena. This aligns with its endorsement of the US democratic model and the belief that Russia should adapt to contemporary geopolitical realities, moving away from past imperialistic behaviours.

Distinct differences are also evident when examining the representation of "ideology" in *Argumenti Nedeli*, *Izvestiya*, and *Novaya Gazeta*. In particular, *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* portray the US as having an imperial mindset and accuse it of hypocrisy, asserting that the US does not adhere to the liberal and democratic principles it advocates. I define this portrayal through the term "pseudo-democracy", signifying the newspapers' idea that the US promotes a false or insincere form of democracy. On the contrary, *Novaya Gazeta* takes a contrasting stance by arguing that the US societal and ideological model is worth emulating. This depiction of the US' ideology is described as "exemplary democracy", signifying the notion that the US serves as a model or example of a successful democratic system.

The term "pseudo-democracy" in the discourse of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* captures the perception that the US' promotion of democracy is not genuine, but rather a guise to advance its own interests and agenda globally. The two newspapers argue that the US employs propaganda and fake arguments to justify its foreign policy positions, coercing other countries to adopt its ideology and align with its course of action. This portrayal aligns with the notion of Othering, as it exaggerates the negative qualities of the US and presents it as a threat to Russia.

In contrast, *Novaya Gazeta*'s use of the term "exemplary democracy" signifies its positive view of the US as a democratic role model. The newspaper posits that Russia should emulate the US democratic system, as the US has demonstrated success in dealing with societal problems. This perspective rejects the idea that Russia should follow its own distinct path and encourages cooperation with the US, emphasizing the need to adapt to new geopolitical realities.

The differing representations of "ideology" by using signifieds in these newspapers reflect their contrasting attitudes towards the US and its political system. While *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* criticise the US for its alleged hypocrisy and imperial mindset, *Novaya Gazeta* embraces the US' democratic model as one to be emulated. These portrayals reflect each newspaper's overall stance on US-Russia relations and their vision for the future of global politics.

Concerning historical references, it is notable that none of the three Russian newspapers explicitly invoke the term "Cold War" in their discourse. However, implicit allusions to themes associated with the Cold War persist, evident in the usage of terms such as "containment," "revisionist," and "satellites." Although not as prominently employed as in the selected American newspaper discourse, these references indicate a continued awareness of historical connotations.

Moreover, the discourse of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* reveals a distinct historical reference when characterising the US as "imperialist." This designation harks back to Cold War-era perceptions of the US as a global power seeking to exert dominance and control over other nations, akin to the dynamics observed during that historical period. While direct mentions of the Cold War may be scarce, the use of terms like “containment” and “revisionist” implies the reference to Cold War concepts and geopolitical strategies. These references suggest that elements of Cold War thinking and historical context still resonate within the Russian media discourse, even if not explicitly acknowledged. It is crucial to recognise that the historical narrative surrounding the Cold War has shaped contemporary geopolitical discussions, and the presence of these allusions underscores the enduring impact of historical legacies on current discourse. The choice of specific terms, such as “imperialist” reflects how historical interpretations and connotations continue to inform the perception of the US’ actions and motivations in the global arena.

When comparing the overall *Novaya Gazeta’s* approach to that of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, it appears that indeed, as discussed in the theoretical section, *Novaya Gazeta* has a more liberal or open editorial policy that encourages a diverse range of opinions and dissenting voices. As discussed earlier, after its establishment, the main aims of the newspaper were to “achieve political and business honesty and integrity, and independence from power”, emphasising that its position would be one of “non-alignment” (Rostova, cited in Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2018: 68).

On the other hand, *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* may follow stricter editorial guidelines that align with specific political or ideological viewpoints, thus limiting the representation of opposing perspectives. *Izvestiya* and *Argumenti Nedeli* may have ties to political entities that prefer a more homogeneous narrative, which would lead to a narrower range of perspectives. While *Novaya Gazeta’s* independent stance and commitment to free expression would allow

for opinion plurality, *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* may be more cautious to avoid antagonising authorities. While interpreting this, one should, nonetheless, recognise that the media landscape is complex and may be influenced by numerous factors, so the reasons for opinion plurality or lack thereof in different newspapers may vary.

Chapter 12: Comparison of the US and Russian newspaper discourse

The main question my thesis aimed to answer was: *Can we describe the recent newspaper American and Russian newspaper rhetoric using Cold War themes? If so, how?* The answer to this question appears to be as complex as the question itself. The answer, both in the case of the selected American and the selected Russian newspaper seems to be "to an extent". Through the analysis of American newspapers, it became evident that the empty signifier "ideology" was imbued with specific meanings, represented by signifieds such as "authoritarianism", "illiberalism", and "traditionalism and discrimination against sexual minorities". Meanwhile, the abstract notion of "power" was endowed with tangible attributes through signifieds "aggression", "spheres of influence", "expansionism", and "propaganda".

As previously discussed in more comprehensive detail, these concepts can be to an extent associated with the historical context of the Cold War. Notably, the ideology of the Soviet Union during that era can be characterised as "authoritarian" and "illiberal". However, a novel concept that was not prevalent in the Cold War period has emerged – "traditionalism". This notion is closely linked to Russian Orthodoxy, nationalism, and, according to the interpretations presented in the three American newspapers - *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* - it is also associated with the discrimination of sexual minorities and women. Thus, "traditionalism" emerges as a symbol of a new ideological binary, which is defined in opposition to the ideals of US liberalism. Thus, while the historical concept of ideological binarity remains, the specific concepts have evolved from the previous dichotomy. The transition reflects the shifting dynamics in global politics and ideological discourse, where new fault lines have emerged, and different sets of values and beliefs are now at odds.

Certainly, one could contend that concepts such as "expansionism" or "spheres of influence" might not be exclusively tied to the Cold War era and that they could pertain to the broader use

of historical comparisons in general. Undoubtedly, this argument holds considerable validity. Instead of immediately assuming that these concepts represent a resurgence of Cold War elements in the newspaper discourse, a comprehensive analysis of such discourse should be undertaken, encompassing as many discursive patterns as possible.

In the context of *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*, it became apparent that while some references indeed portrayed Russia in the context of themes associated with the Cold War, a significant pattern emerged involving the use of historical references in a broader sense. Historical references, including those not explicitly linked to the Cold War, were employed to construct a particular image of Russia and interpret its actions through a specific lens. This suggests that the newspapers' discourse draws upon historical narratives and analogies, serving as a means to shape perceptions and foster particular understandings of Russia's behaviour and geopolitical intentions. Therefore, a nuanced examination of historical references and their underlying implications is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the discursive patterns in play.

Simultaneously, it is crucial to acknowledge that the direct references to the Cold War found in the discourse of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* indicate the lasting influence of this historical period on their portrayal of contemporary events. While conducting the analysis, it became evident that the Cold War's legacy appears to continue to shape the newspapers' perspectives on various geopolitical issues and how they interpret and frame present-day developments.

Similar arguments are applicable to the Russian newspapers. Undoubtedly, terms such as "aggression" and "imperialism" could plausibly be associated with the Cold War; nevertheless, it would be erroneous to exclusively link them to that historical period. To comprehensively analyse the discourse of *Argumenti Nedeli*, *Izvestiya*, and *Novaya Gazeta*, a broader approach is warranted to discern overarching trends. Consequently, upon closer examination, certain allusions to the Cold War era did emerge, particularly through the usage of terms like "containment", which have a strong historical association with that period.

However, when examining the ideological dimension and other aspects, the distinction between the two sides appeared less sharply delineated. While the newspapers did criticise the US for perceived illiberalism, immorality, and undemocratic actions, they did not explicitly define

Russia's position in comparison. The portrayal of the US as an antagonist and Russia as the "Other" was apparent, reflecting a binary opposition. Nonetheless, the discourse did not consistently argue that Russia *itself* embodies democratic values. Notably, *Novaya Gazeta*'s discourse appeared to emphasise the incompatibility of Russia's current system with that of the US democracy, yet specific terms characterising Russia's political structure were not explicitly articulated.

In summary, while certain terms and references allude to the Cold War era, the newspapers' discourse encompasses a broader scope of ideas. The portrayal of the US and Russia involves complex nuances and overlaps, rather than a rigidly defined dichotomy. This approach warrants a more nuanced understanding of the newspapers' framing of geopolitical affairs and the implications it carries for the interpretation of contemporary international relations. By adopting this comprehensive perspective, we can better apprehend how historical echoes intertwine with present-day discourses, shaping the narratives surrounding global politics.

Chapter 13: Conclusion

The existing media scholarship overviewed in the thesis indicated that media is the main source of news about conflicts and war, with few people directly observing or being able to directly study the nature, causes, and consequences of conflicts. Thus, the majority of people rely on media to gain a better understanding of conflicts. Media framings of events affect opinions by emphasising specific values, facts, and other considerations. Furthermore, the analysis of the Cold War media scholarship suggested that, throughout the Cold War, the media played a key role in the creation and maintenance of antagonism between both sides of the conflict. Both the Soviet and Western media outlets portrayed each other as inferior and kept the "Us vs Them" rhetoric alive. Thus, the media created virtuous national identities to legitimise themselves and vilify their enemies, which in turn helped them achieve popular support. Indeed, one of the most common legacies of the Cold War was its contribution to the international collective memory discourse, providing observers and politicians with a convenient historical reference to interpret international relations in contemporary settings (Straughn et al., 2019: 94)

Often such consequences are caused by the assumption that acceptance of particular collective memories or historical analogies will lead to internal solidarity, agreement, and unity in achieving common goals and supporting particular courses of political action (Straughn et al., 2019: 93). In addition, such narratives also assign social roles to the actors involved (Spellman and Holyoak, cited in Ghilani et al., 2017: 279), featuring "victims, heroes, villains, and their respective relationships". Those narratives become particularly common in times of conflict. As explained in the theoretical section of the thesis, the concept of Othering reflects that conflict can occur in cases when rival groups either look into collective memories or emphasise different historical time frames or events from the same collective memory to look for reference models to explain current affairs. Historical analogies help set the boundary of group identity, by defining who is part of the ingroup and who is the Other (Ghilani et al., 2017: 279).

Indeed, Pehar (2001: 120) argues that historical analogies are "an essential part of national narrative and national identity" leading nations to group around their most central and deeply rooted memories. A reasonable explanation of the frequent use of such historical analogies in a nation's self-identity states that they help people symbolically transcend temporal limits. Normally, when a crisis occurs in the life of a particular nation, responses to it are based on the language of past models or past dealings with similar crises. This process not only preserves the identity of a nation but also makes it stronger. In addition, historical analogies give a structure of cognitive orientation in international relations. Due to the future always being undetermined and the complexity of international relations, it is difficult to predict future developments. Under these conditions, historical analogies play an important role by using a projection of past developments, making the future cognitively manageable (Drazen, 2001: 120-121).

The thesis explored thematic realities created in Russian and American newspapers within the selected time frames - the conflict in Ukraine, the year before Donald Trump's election, and the first year of his presidency. In particular, I inspected the ways in which they are used and the context in which they appear. Given those two significant events in the bilateral relationship between Russia and the US, I aimed to examine whether, in this case, political events disrupt discursive patterns. In doing so, I assumed that newspapers utilise language and narratives to create an image of the world, building certain realities and constructing meanings perceived by their users (Ionatamishvili et al., 2016: 17).

The use of Cold War tropes and direct references in contemporary American newspaper discourse indicates that historical ideas have left an enduring imprint on interpretations of current affairs and the formation of images of countries. The Cold War was a defining period in world history, marked by ideological tensions and geopolitical rivalries between the US and the Soviet Union. These events appear to be deeply ingrained in cultural memory, shaping historical narratives.

When contemporary newspapers employ Cold War tropes and direct Cold War references in their reporting, analysis, and opinion pieces, they draw upon the familiar historical context to frame and interpret current events. This framing may influence readers' perceptions and associations, as they unconsciously connect present-day developments with the historical backdrop of the Cold War. Cold War imagery, such as expansionist ambitions and ideological confrontation, has become symbolic in the discourse. By invoking these symbols, newspapers evoke historical connotations, allowing readers to understand and relate to complex issues through recognisable historical archetypes. Furthermore, the use of Cold War tropes in contemporary newspaper discourse may lead to the perpetuation of stereotypes and the process of "Othering", where countries or political actors are portrayed as adversaries or threats based on historical associations.

Indeed, the Russian threat is described using many historical references, going back not only to the Cold War and World War Two but also to the periods of the Russian Tsardom, explaining Russia's behaviour as an attempt to restore its former empire. The historical narrative and metaphors reach new heights when depicting Russian president Vladimir Putin, allegedly revealing the reasons behind Putin's aggression abroad. Consequently, the discourse suggests that, when it comes to Russia, history tends to repeat itself. This supports the theoretical statements of Ghilani et al. (2017: 279) who argue that historical analogies frequently build one's moral character (or lack thereof) based on past wrongdoings.

Furthermore, the notion of identities of the US and the West was linked to the juxtaposition of Russia as its Other and the enemy of the West. This conflict of identities and ideologies is one described in civilisational terms, being related to the defence of the West against the Russian threat. This links to the past narratives - after the end of the Cold War, scholars referred to the ideological polarisation focused on the US and the Soviet Union and their clashing worldviews: "liberal democracy" and "global Communism" (Haynes, 2018). The results of the empirical

study indicate that the ideological clash has arguably returned, at least within the discourse of the three American newspapers, with them concerning themselves with civilisational disharmony between the American and Russian values - two "civilisations" of differing ideologies.

At the same time, we should recognise that the old ideological binarity of Communism versus capitalism has been replaced by the antagonism of traditionalism vs liberalism, indicating that, while binarity exists, the nature of the ideological concepts has changed. In summary, the presence of Cold War tropes in contemporary American newspaper discourse demonstrates the continuity of historical ideas in shaping modern perceptions, while also showing how these ideas have evolved and adapted to new geopolitical realities. Despite the emergence of some new themes, it was evident that the past continues to inform how contemporary political challenges are interpreted. The overall narrative exhibited little variation and focused overwhelmingly on the aggression of Russia. Russia was depicted as willing to (re)create its spheres of influence and as endangering global peace, a threat to which the US must react. The use of such historical analogies echoes the theoretical points of Ghilani et al. (2017: 280) who posit that negative "lessons" from the past may give future directions, thus making the future more predictable.

At the same time, the Russian newspapers - *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* - displayed a strong anti-Western narrative. The two newspapers' narratives also featured antiliberal and anti-globalist views. Similarly to the Cold War binarity, although adding new themes, Russia is contrasted to the US, portrayed as moral, while the West is portrayed as immoral, with its actions allegedly being motivated by selfish interests. Hutchings and Szostek (2015: 185) theorise that such narratives are convenient for the Russian leadership, being used to legitimise the way leaders frame Russia's values and Russia's place in the world's politics. In addition, the author posits that they are used as a tool to diminish the credibility of Western criticism. Thus, what we observe in the discourse of *Izvestiya* and *Argumenti Nedeli* may be their use to instrumentally increase support for the Russian authorities. At the same time, as recognised in the prior sections, the ideological binarity is not as well-defined as it was during the Cold War period.

Hutchings and Szostek (2015: 185) posit that negative characteristics attributed to the Western governments by the Russian media include "hypocrisy, risibility, arrogant foolishness, and a

lack of moral integrity". "Double standards" is an accusation that Russia's state media repeatedly uses against the West by the Russian state media which repeats the words of the Russian president, foreign minister, and other officials. In addition, a repeatedly appearing theme in *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya* was the idea of Russia fighting the American hegemony, expansionism, and the allegedly immoral Western lifestyle. This can be linked to the idea of Russia (re)establishing itself as a superpower while also making references to its "glorious" past, including the Soviet period. These statements were combined with critical statements on the decreasing power of the US and its weakness, including its arguable fear of Russia. This discourse largely reflects the views of Putin who has often spoken of the decline of the US and the fracturing of the West.

At the same time, as established, the narratives appearing in *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*, while being linked to the Cold War themes to some extent, can also relate to a more general portrayal. For example, while describing the US as "imperialist", the reference to the historical period is not clear-cut. As such, when examining such discourses, it is essential to pay attention to contextual details. Similarly, we should note that the use will also depend on the newspaper's ideological leaning. In this case, we should recognise that *Novaya Gazeta*, as a pro-liberal newspaper, had completely different narratives to those of *Argumenti Nedeli* and *Izvestiya*.

The findings illustrate that the differences in framing in Russian and American newspapers may support the idea of "contextual objectivity" (El-Nawawy and Iskandar, 2003: 54) that exists in a certain socio-political environment in which journalists operate, allowing for sensitivity to cultural, religious, political, and economic climates (El-Nawawy and Iskandar, 2002). It is this contextualisation that complicates the aim of coverage that includes all possible sides of a story in times of conflict (ibid). If that is the case, journalistic objectivity could be affected by the external political environment (El-Nawawy and Iskandar, 2003: 54).

Indeed, Robinson (2001) posits that by looking at the positive political references of the media coverage of events, assumptions can be made on whether political consent is being manufactured. My study suggests the linkages between the national political environment and official government opinions in the discourse of five out of the six selected newspapers, supporting prior findings of scholars (e.g., McFarlane and Hay, 2003; Sharp, 1996). Such linkages advance our knowledge of media framing in Russian and American newspaper

discourse, although admittedly being limited to the six selected newspapers. The results indicate that news coverage largely echoes the views of the government elite.

My study found significant differences in tone and event framing between the Russian and American newspapers. This may have an effect on differences reinforcing or even increasing divisions. More generally, news reporting may limit audience interpretations and public debate by illustrating only certain aspects of events while ignoring other aspects. Such newspaper framing may further cause different interpretations by national audiences. Consequently, the public in one country may be subjected to different knowledge and attitudes toward events when compared with the public in a different country that is exposed to contrasting media coverage.

For forty-five years the Iron Curtain was dividing Europe. That division has now moved several hundred miles east (Huntington, 1996). Currently, my empirical results indicate that the line of division continues to exist between Russia and the US in their newspaper discourse. The division is not solely visible in the repetition of the Cold War discursive themes. Instead, in addition to themes reminiscent of the past, new binaries have been added.

As argued by Brändström et al. (cited in Ghilani et al., 2017: 280), historical analogies help one determine the range of possible (re)actions. The past can act as an anchor, limiting the scope of readily imagined choices and directing one's decisions toward a particular choice (Epley and Gilovich, cited in Ghilani et al, 2017: 280). This will depend on what happened in the source event: The past course of action could serve as an anchor constraining the range of readily imagined options and directing one's decisions toward a specific choice (ibid). The use of the Cold War rhetoric could thus play a negative part in the bilateral relationship. Indeed, Linn (2008), argues that "the tone of this dialogue must not revert to cold-war rhetoric, and instead should find a constructive way to engage Russia's leaders even as the tough actions are taken to gain Russia's attention and constructive reaction."

Following the conflict in Ukraine in 2014, critics were concerned that the talk of a New Cold War could trap the West into past perspectives, with potentially disastrous consequences. Pifer (2015) argues that the West "should not cite a Cold War straw man", warning that the Cold War rhetoric could lead to "something far worse—a hot one". Additionally, Krickovic and Weber (2015) argue that a New Cold War is "virtually inevitable, given that talks in both

capitals are “dominated by the sort of Russia-and-America-bashing, which prevents either side from developing an appreciation of the other’s security concerns”. Indeed, the empirical analysis of my thesis illustrates that the historical themes appear in both the Russian and the American newspaper discourse, with both sides interpreting the conflict from opposite points of view. As viewed in the newspaper discourse of both conflicting sides, each country’s newspapers, with the exception of *Novaya Gazeta*, argued that the Other should take responsibility for the rising tensions.

Practically, this can lead to an oversimplified explanation of new conflicts and even intensify them. As such, the use of historical analogies can potentially lead to adverse outcomes. The depiction of the Other in the recent American and Russian newspaper discourse raises the question of whether each country’s perception of the Other has been adjusted to the ever-changing political environment and realities.

My findings suggest a number of possible themes for future research. First, the use of the Cold War themes in newspaper discourse can be expanded to new time frames and new newspapers. Second, the use of other media sources could provide curious results. Similarly, an analysis of political speeches and media sources could provide insight into each source’s representativeness of the government perspectives in a systematic way. Third, my analysis included a peculiar finding that the historical analogies go back in history beyond the Cold War period which would validate a study using themes from another historical period. Finally, with further developments in natural language processing, a large-scale study can be carried out to further evidence on this topic.

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