

Article

News Framing of the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of CNN (USA) and CCTV (China) from a War and Peace Journalism Perspective

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Received: 20 September 2024

Accepted: 20 November 2024

Abstract: Framing analysis is a widely employed method for examining multiple narratives in media reporting to investigate potential political orientations and possible influences on viewers. However, there has been a lack of extensive investigation into the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian Conflict, specifically regarding the analysis of Western and Eastern media coverage from a war journalism and peace journalism perspective. To fill this vacancy, this study applied the Framing theory and the peace journalism model developed by Lee & Maslog (2005) to identify multiple strategies related to the themes, sources and war/peace journalism applied by CNN for America and CCTV for China. Analysing how CNN and CCTV present the conflict from WJ/PJ perspectives helps to facilitate an understanding of how two different media systems might shape their respective audiences' perceptions according to different ideologies. The findings revealed that CNN mainly focused on "Humanitarian Crisis and Civilian Impacts" and "Military Operations and Strategic", whereas CCTV predominantly centred on the themes of "Military Operations and Strategic" and "Political Reactions and Stances". Additionally, CNN's coverage overwhelmingly relies on Ukrainian sources and international voices, while CCTV is significantly centred on Russian sources and also includes considerable Ukrainian voices. Finally, CNN and CCTV both use a war journalism frame, but CCTV's use of a peace journalism frame is slightly higher than CNN's. This study displays similarities and differences in portraying international conflicts to diverse viewers, offering valuable insights into how Western and Eastern media influence perceptions of worldwide conflicts.

Keywords: Peace Journalism; War Journalism; framing; conflict reporting; Russian-Ukrainian conflict

Introduction

The ongoing dispute between Russia and Ukraine remains a persistent and contentious matter in modern geopolitics, characterised by intricate political and historical causes. On 24 February 2022, Russia staged a large-scale invasion of Ukraine (Nikolskaya & Osborn, 2022) when Putin announced a "special military operation" to "demilitarise and denazify" Ukraine (Grunau et al., 2022; Waxman, 2022). The war has resulted in extensive devastation of fatalities, economic loss, and humanitarian crises. As of August 2023, the conflict has resulted in nearly 500,000 casualties among Ukrainian and Russian troops (NYT, 2023) a total of 26,717 civilian fatalities or injuries (OHCHR, 2023). The humanitarian crisis has been exacerbated and the war has compelled more than six million people to flee Ukraine (ODP, 2023).

The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian conflict, as a contemporary war, is more complicated by the involvement of multiple media. The direct observation of wars by the audience is hardly realised, particularly for

international audiences. Instead, media serves as the primary source to shape public understanding and influence their views on the parties involved. This could affect national sentiment and can even sway public support for or against government actions. Not only that, but different framing strategies can also drive international support or condemnation toward certain parties and even promote peace efforts to de-escalate tensions or war-oriented actions to escalate situations (Fröhlich, 2018; Ruigrok et al., 2009), such as diplomatic negotiations or military support. Notably, cross-national reports can reflect their unique ideologies and set a global agenda that continues to impact international relations and policies even after hostilities cease, in terms of their war narratives.

However, the proliferation of disinformation and propaganda has exacerbated the challenges associated with source verification and fact-checking in digital world. At the same time, the news industry has faced criticism for its coverage of conflict and war, with a tendency to focus on violence, present conflicts regarding winners and losers, and oversimplify complex situations, contributing to misinformation and inadvertently perpetuating cycles of violence, fostering nationalistic sentiments, and hindering public comprehension of peaceful resolutions (Katiambo, 2020; Lukacovic, 2016; Matheson, 2021). To critique such phenomenon and promote diminish, reconciliation, or peacefully transform conflicts and not just focus on violence *per se* (Galtung, 1998; Galtung et al., 2013; Lynch & Galtung, 2010), Johan Galtung, the founder of Peace and Conflict Studies, proposed the idea of “Peace journalism” with Mari Holmboe Ruge in *The Structure of Foreign News* (Galtung & Ruge, 1965).

Although a significant portion of investigations have aimed at peace journalism in multiple conflicts, such as the Indo-Pak Conflict (Hussain, 2015), the Israel-Palestine conflict (Bhowmik & Fisher, 2023), and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict (Elareshi et al., 2024; Schumacher et al., 2024), minimal research has been conducted on the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian Conflict, particularly in terms of comparing the coverage by the Western and Eastern media through a lens of war and peace Journalism. To fill in the gap, this study seeks to conduct a content analysis to investigate the war and peace Journalism practice between CNN and CCTV regarding the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian Conflict from the American and Chinese perspectives. It aims to compare the themes, sources, and practices of peace/war journalism, providing valuable insights into the media’s representation of conflict reporting and understanding how they shape their audiences’ perceptions. Accordingly, this study reinforces an understanding of Western and Eastern media practice from a peace journalism lens in the context of conflict reporting. The study applies Galtung’s dichotomic model, developed by Lee and Maslog (2005), to address the following questions:

RQ1: What themes did CNN and CCTV’s video coverage focus on during the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian conflict?

RQ2: Who were the sources mainly cited in CNN and CCTV’s video coverage of the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian conflict?

RQ3: What journalism types (peace or war) were preferred by CNN and CCTV’s video coverage for the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian conflict?

Literature Review

Initially, the news industry presented its preference for war, violence, and propaganda for their promotion of causes favoured by elites and establishments, as well as for simplifying and polarising narratives of victory or defeat (Ross & Tehranian, 2011). Johan Galtung proposed the ideas of war journalism and peace journalism in 1965 to critique such phenomena and promote diminish, reconciliation, or transform conflicts in a peaceful way (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). War journalism is the traditional way of reporting conflicts. It is often featured as “sensationalist, superficial, and primarily concerned with depicting spectacles to boost ratings and circulation” (Allen & Seaton, 1999). It seems like a mode of reporting guided by “objective” but actually harbours an undisclosed inclination towards violent tendencies (Lynch, 2008). In contrast, peace journalism is designed to prevent “one-dimensional” conflict reporting, incentivizing a “culture of peace” and maintaining a nonpartisan stance to encompass all sides (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000). It is a responsible and conscientious approach to media coverage of the conflict that adheres to established norms, facilitating peace-making and peacekeeping and altering the “attitudes of media owners, advertisers, professionals, and audiences towards war and peace” (Shinar, 2007).

Alongside the core idea of peace journalism, Galtung proposed the first groundbreaking peace journalism model in the 1990s. Then the model was developed by Lee and Maslog (2005) into 13 sets of evaluative criteria for war and peace journalism, respectively including (1) visible or invisible effects of war, (2) elite or people orientation, (3) differences or agreements, (4) focus on here-and-now or long causes and effects, (5) direct violence or structural/cultural violence, (6) good and bad dichotomy or no labelling, (7) two or multiple party involvement, (8) zero-sum or win-win approach, (9) partisan or non-partisanship, (10) military options or peaceful options, (11) demonising, (12) victimising, and (13) emotive words. These are more practical and are designed to apply to this study as an analytical instrument.

In fact, peace journalism is grounded in the Framing theory. Entman defined “framing” as a “fractured paradigm” (Entman, 1993), encompassing cores of some other theories, such as priming and “revisiting and reinterpreting the impacts of agenda-setting” (López-Rabadán, 2022). Framing is a strategic action involving both “salience and selection” of reality (Entman 1993). It is “the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation” (Entman 2007). In this study, framing is used as a methodological strategy to identify war and peace journalism.

From 2022, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has gradually become the focus of research in terms of framing and peace journalism. For example, Schumacher et al. (2024) analysed how German political journalists and correspondents on Twitter communicated about Russia/Ukraine during the ongoing discourse surrounding the Russian-Ukrainian War. They found journalists exhibit significant variations in their level of engagement on Twitter and the frequency with which they share personal content. Hoon (2023) identified the framing of this conflict and Russian President Vladimir Putin’s image in *The New York Times* Online. Rafeeq (2023) applied content analysis to investigate how the conflict is being covered in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in two leading English-language daily newspapers, *Gulf News* and *Khaleej Times*. The findings suggest that both media outlets tended to prioritise peace journalism when reporting on the conflict. Elareshi et al. (2024) analysed 397 images of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in 2022 from Asian news websites. The findings indicate that while war journalism was prevalent in the identified visual narratives, there were limitations in assessing elements associated with peace journalism.

Additionally, Media comparison between Western and Eastern countries has always been a focal topic. For instance, Gabore (2020) investigated the sourcing and framing of Western and Chinese media regarding COVID-19 in Africa. The results indicate that the former was not predominantly negative, while the latter tended to be unusually positive. Yang and Van Gorp (2023) identified the divergent interpretations of frames and analysed the competing framing practices of actors who play a prominent role in the debate on China’s Belt and Road Initiative by India, the US, Japan, the UK, and Australia. Fahim and Islam (2024) analysed the coverage of the second Nagorno-Karabakh war by both Eastern (TRT World and Al-Jazeera) and Western media (BBC World News and DW). The results showed that media outlets and journalists are not free from bias.

However, minimal studies focused on the aspects of war and peace journalism frames regarding the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian conflict between Western and Eastern media outlets, particularly for American and Chinese mainstream media. America and China are forceful countries representing the West and the East, with different ideologies and cultural backgrounds. Notably, different countries with different political institutions have distinct press systems. Siebert, Schramm, and Peterson (1956) have identified four theories of the press in different countries based on their particular political and philosophical objectives: 1) the Authoritarian theory (the press functioned from the top down); 2) the Libertarian theory (the press is regarded as a collaborative partner in the pursuit of truth); 3) the Social Responsibility theory (media’s obligations are to provide high-quality information through professional journalism); 4) the Soviet Communist theory (mass communication functions as an instrument for government service). The American media system belongs to a model of libertarianism due to its commercialisation, whereas Chinese media is acknowledged to support government political actions close to the Soviet communist model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Josephi, 2005). Journalistic traditions and press systems in America and China have similarities but also significant differences (Ha et al., 2021). As influential economists, both have strong discourse power to express their

attitudes toward international conflict in public and even affect the peace process. Thus, investigating these two countries' media narratives is necessary and representative.

Methodology

To proceed with this research, CNN for the American and CCTV for the Chinese sides were selected. Both media outlets possess extensive reach and effectively disseminate their message to a wide-ranging audience. CNN has its effects on war and intervention, foreign policy, and diplomacy, which is known as the "CNN effect". Feist (2001) argued, the "CNN effect" is "a theory that compelling television images, such as images of a humanitarian crisis, cause U.S. policymakers to intervene in a situation when such an intervention might otherwise not be in the U.S. national interest." On the other side, CCTV News has always been the preeminent news program in China, commanding nationwide, and its audience even deeply penetrates distant rural areas (CCTV, 2023). CCTV-7 National Defence and Military (CCTV for short) especially focuses on national and international military operations, one of China's most professional military TV programs. Generally, analysing conflict stories by a globally influential media organisation is crucial for understanding peace framing practice in war coverage and the media's role in shaping public understanding of international disputes (Bhowmik & Fisher, 2023). The study applied their official websites for sample selection.

The study chose the first half year of the 2022 Russian and Ukrainian conflict from February 24th to August 23rd, 2022. There are several reasons for selecting this timespan. First of all, following the initial invasion on February 24th, there were multiple military actions on the Southeastern front and Ukrainian counteroffensives. The war continued to escalate and led to high-frequency reporting, eliciting numerous responses and discussions from various nations worldwide. Other than that, Chinese and American leaders, respectively, had different diplomatic interactions with the belligerent countries. For example, on the afternoon of February 25, 2022, Chinese President Xi Jinping engaged in a telephone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The two parties exchanged perspectives regarding the ongoing situation in Ukraine. In public, the US President, Biden, repeatedly condemned Russia's actions and expressed his commitment to continuing to provide military and economic support and assistance to Ukraine. Thus, Chinese and American media inevitably produced plentiful coverage regarding this conflict. These factors facilitated the abundance of data.

During the data collection and coding process, keywords such as "Russian (俄)", "Ukrainian (乌)", and "conflict (冲突)" were entered into the search bar for selection in each official website. Besides, Kalogeropoulos and his colleagues (2016) proposed that when it comes to the duration of video clips related to the Paris attacks on Facebook, the average length was three minutes, and viewers typically watched approximately 50% (equivalent to 90 seconds) of the entire video. However, considering the significance of such international conflict, audience engagement with videos tends to be prolonged. Hence, video length is restricted to a maximum of 3 minutes in order to strike a balance between maintaining depth in video content and capturing both the audience's and even coders' attention. Ultimately, throughout the first half year, a total of 580 videos for CNN and 477 videos for CCTV were documented and conducted for analysis. The unit of analysis is each video coverage provided by CNN and CCTV.

Then, the study applied an inductive approach to analyse the RQ1 and RQ2 and a deductive approach to investigate the RQ3 based on Lee & Maslog (2005). Specifically, themes are derived from each case; sources are coded individually, with repeated ones consolidated as a single source within each video. Following the Peace Journalism model, war and peace journalism are coded as "1" when presented and "0" when not presented in each coverage. Two coders analysed data for around two weeks.

To ensure the accuracy of the analysis, the primary author and the other researcher experienced in framing analysis carefully reviewed the data for two weeks. The study applied Holsti's Coefficient of Reliability (CR), a statistical measure used to examine intercoder reliability in content analysis. Finally, it was determined that there was a strong level of agreement between the coders, with a score of 0.88 (Holsti's CR > 0.7 is acceptable). This indicates that the statistical data collected can be confidently utilised. When discrepancies arose, both coders engaged in discussions to reach a consensus on coding decisions. Subsequently, all analysis procedures were conducted utilising ATLAS and Excel software.

Findings

1. Themes Covered by CNN and CCTV in the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

A combined total of 1,057 videos were meticulously documented and analysed, comprising 580 videos from CNN and 477 videos from CCTV. The first question aims to identify the themes that CNN and CCTV used in their video coverage of the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Following an inductive approach, six recurring themes and one “other” theme were identified within war reports from both CNN and CCTV.

CNN predominantly focused on the theme of “Humanitarian Crisis and Civilian Impact,” which accounted for 28.79% of a total of 167 cases. The subsequent theme, “Military Operations and Strategic,” occupied 27.41% of the time, with 159 videos. Another frequently utilised theme by CNN was “Political Reactions and Stances”, with 104 cases, representing 17.93%. In contrast, the themes of “Resistance, Determination and Solidarity” and “Socioeconomic and Cultural Impacts” had comparatively lower prevalence in CNN’s video coverage, comprising 13.79% (80 cases) and 8.62% (50 cases), respectively. The theme of “Peace Efforts and Negotiations” received minimal attention, with twelve videos accounting for a mere 2.07%. Lastly, other themes were featured in eight videos collectively, amounting to a share of 1.38%.

CCTV primarily focused on the theme “Military Operations and Strategic” in 267 cases, accounting for 55.97% of its total coverage. The subsequent theme of “Political Reactions and Stances” was featured in 115 videos, occupying 24.11%. In contrast, CCTV gave less attention to the topic of “Peace Efforts and Negotiations,” with only 61 cases representing 12.79%. Furthermore, some other videos gave minimal representation to the themes of “Humanitarian Crisis and Civilian Impact,” “Socioeconomic and Cultural Impact,” and “Resistance, Determination and Solidarity” (4.82%, 1.68%, and 0.21%, respectively). Finally, two videos covered miscellaneous themes, which accounted for another 0.42%.

Overall, CNN paid more attention to the themes of “Humanitarian Crisis and Civilian Impacts” and “Military Operations and Strategic”, while CCTV highly focused on “Military Operations and Strategic” and “Political Reactions and Stances” (Figure 1).

Table 1. Themes Covered by CNN and CCTV

Theme	CNN		CCTV	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Humanitarian Crisis and Civilian Impacts	167	28.79%	23	4.82%
Military Operations and Strategic	159	27.41%	267	55.97%
Political Reactions and Stances	104	17.93%	115	24.11%
Resistance, Determination and Solidarity	80	13.79%	1	0.21%
Socioeconomic and Cultural Impact	50	8.62%	8	1.68%
Peace Efforts and Negotiations	12	2.07%	61	12.79%
Others	8	1.38%	2	0.42%
Total	580	100.00%	477	100.00%

Source: Own compilation

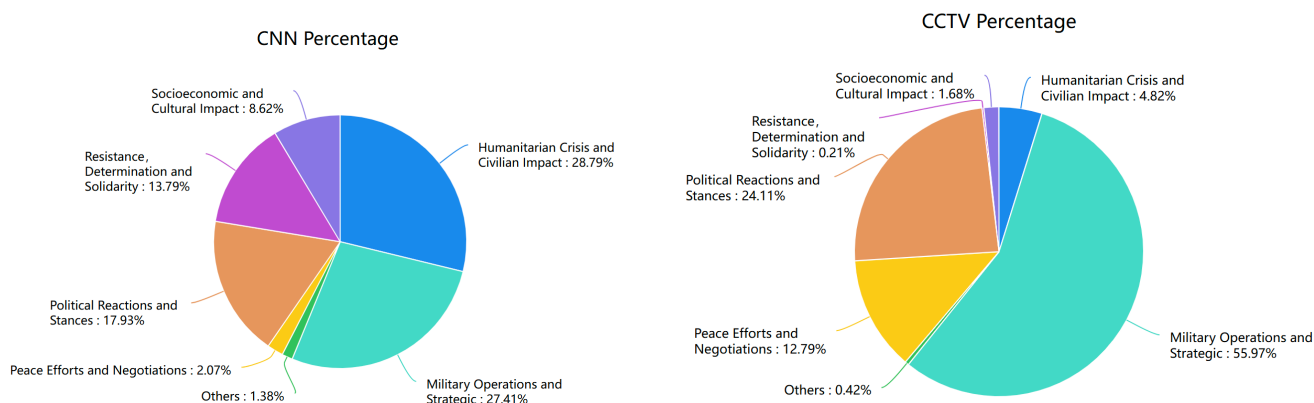


Figure 1. The proportion of themes by CNN and CCTV

2. Sources Cited by CNN and CCTV in the 2022 Russia-Ukraine Conflict

The second question is designed to determine the sources that CNN and CCTV mainly cited in their video coverage of the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian conflict. The findings revealed distinct patterns in sourcing across the two outlets. CNN predominantly relied on Ukrainian sources (Table 2), which account for 24.62% of the total occurrences (338 occurrences). Expert commentary was also a significant component in CNN's reporting, representing 16.53% (227 occurrences). Furthermore, CNN frequently incorporated perspectives from victims and local residents (221 occurrences, 16.10%), thereby emphasising the human impact of the conflict. International sources were to some degree heavily cited by CNN with 182 occurrences, 13.26%. U.S. sources also had an 11.51% occurrence rate (158 occurrences), indicating CNN's attention to the stance and involvement of their government in this conflict. While less prominent than Ukrainian sources, Russian sources were frequently utilised at a rate of 11.87% (163 occurrences), demonstrating an effort to provide balanced coverage by presenting Russian viewpoints as well. Public figures contributed to contextualising the coverage albeit to a lesser extent (42 occurrences, 3.06%), while Protesters/demonstrators played a more minor role with only a 1.38% occurrence rate (19 occurrences). Chinese sources were least paid attention to CNN with 5 times and 0.36%. Other sources accounted for 1.31% of the 18 occurrences.

CCTV overwhelmingly leaned upon Russian sources (Table 2), which dominate its reporting (43.86%, 703 occurrences). Ukrainian sources were also prominently featured, with 501 occurrences (31.25%). Furthermore, in order to provide a global context in CCTV's coverage, international officials were represented (10.79%, 173 occurrences). U.S. sources contributed to an unneglected extent and were cited in 143 occurrences, accounting for 8.92%. Other sources, such as experts (2.25%, 36 occurrences) and Chinese officials (1.68%, 27 occurrences), appeared less frequently and played a minor role in the overall narrative.

Table 2. Sources cited by CNN and CCTV

Source	CNN (n=580)		CCTV (n=477)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Russian sources	163	11.87%	703	43.86%
Russian leader-Putin	39	2.84%	39	2.43%
Russian officials	97	7.06%	510	31.82%
Russian media	21	1.53%	149	9.30%
Russian soldiers	6	0.44%	5	0.31%
Ukrainian sources	338	24.62%	501	31.25%
Ukrainian leader-Zelensky	61	4.44%	82	5.12%
Ukrainian officials	189	13.77%	328	20.46%
Ukrainian soldiers	50	3.64%	2	0.12%
Ukrainian media	1	0.07%	89	5.55%
Ukrainian volunteers	37	2.69%	0	0.00%
International sources	182	13.26%	173	10.79%
International officials/organizations	120	8.74%	129	8.05%
International civilians	48	3.50%	3	0.19%
International media	14	1.02%	41	2.56%
US sources	158	11.51%	143	8.92%
US officials	142	10.34%	94	5.86%
US media	16	1.17%	49	3.06%
Experts	227	16.53%	36	2.25%
Victim/local residents	221	16.10%	6	0.37%
Public figures	42	3.06%	2	0.12%
Protesters/demonstrators	19	1.38%	2	0.12%
Chinese officials	5	0.36%	27	1.68%
Others	18	1.31%	10	0.62%
Total	1373	100.00%	1603	100.00%

Source: Own compilation

In sum, CNN mainly focused on sources from the Ukrainian side, experts, and victims/local residents, while CCTV was overwhelmingly interested in Russian sources but, at the same time, unneglected Ukrainian sources (Figure 2).

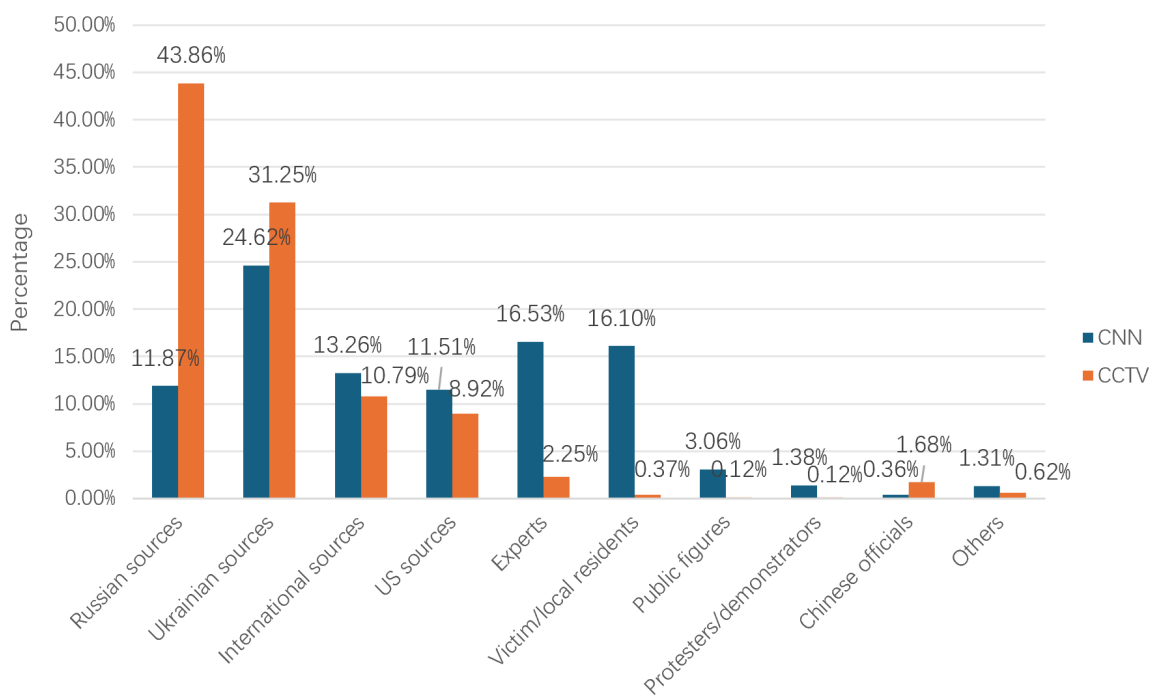


Figure 2. The proportion of sources in CNN and CCTV

3. War and Peace Journalism Presented by CNN and CCTV in the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

The final question aims to determine the frame types, peace or war, that CNN and CCTV utilised in their video coverage concerning the 2022 Russian and Ukrainian conflict. CNN and CCTV showed similar preferences for peace journalism and war journalism (Figure 3). CNN and CCTV predominantly employed war journalism frames in their coverage of the 2022 Russian and Ukrainian conflict, with 473 and 374 videos, respectively, accounting for 81.55% and 78.41%. Peace journalism was comparatively less utilised by both media outlets, with CNN featuring it in only 83 cases and CCTV in 82 cases, amounting to 14.31% and 17.19%, respectively. Lastly, a certain degree of neutrality was also observed in some reports, with CNN presenting it in 21 instances, while CCTV had an equal number of cases at a rate of 4.14% and 4.40%, respectively.

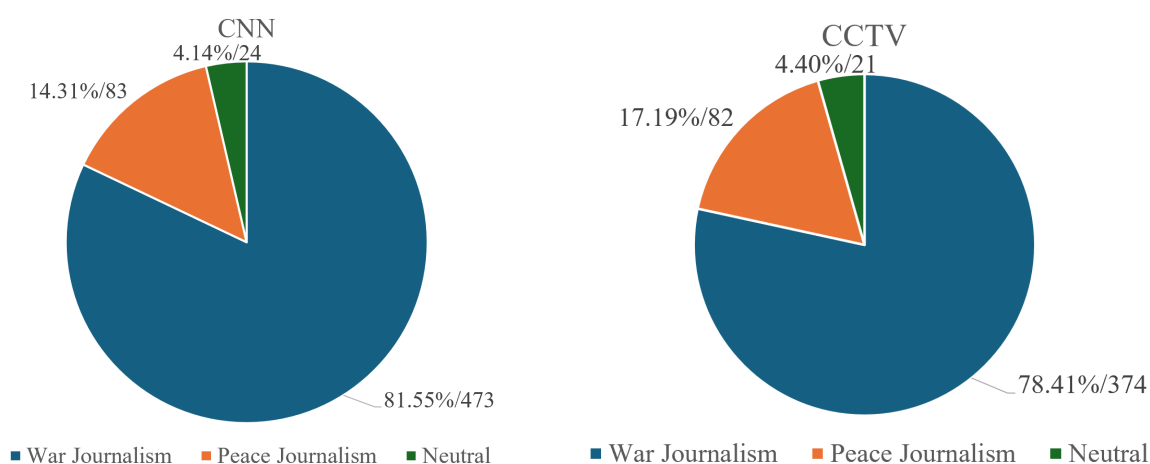


Figure 3. The proportion of WJ/PJ presented in CNN and CCTV

Discussion

The current study addresses the themes, sources, and war/peace journalism types with particular reference to the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian conflict by CNN of the US and CCTV of China. Investigating such media framing strategies of each country is beneficial for understanding the role of media framing in audience perceptions toward the Russian and Ukrainian sides. Not surprisingly, these two media outlets exhibit contrasting inclinations.

Firstly, both media paid distinct attention to different topics. CNN mainly focused on “Humanitarian Crisis and Civilian Impacts” and “Military Operations and Strategic”. This highlight on the humanitarian aspect suggests that CNN tends to humanise the conflict and highlight the impact on civilians in their reports, which is consistent with some other international media inclinations (Hoon, 2024). For example, Figure 4 shows a scene of a girl and her mother fleeing from their hometown to avoid the cruelty of war. This scene displays the brutality of war, arousing the audience’s empathy for Ukrainians and hostility towards Russia. By emphasising such human suffering pictures in Ukrainian society, CNN aims to evoke a sense of compassion and ethical responsibility in its audience. This framing could also encourage viewers to perceive the conflict as a moral dilemma that justifies international intervention or support for Ukraine. On the other side, it showcases the cruelty of Russia and de-legitimizes its invasion. Moreover, CNN’s emphasis on military operations acknowledges the severity of the situation while reinforcing the need for a strong response.



Figure 4. A fleeing Ukrainian girl and her mother in a subway station

In contrast, CCTV predominantly centred on the themes of “Military Operations and Strategic” and “Political Reactions and Stances”. Emphasising military operations and national/international stances is partly due to the inseparable link between the course of the war and the exhibition of military actions and diplomatic processes. This thematic framing strategy is in line with China’s official stance of neutrality and non-interference, aiming to encourage audiences to perceive the conflict as a geopolitical event that has a limited impact on domestic concerns. By placing less emphasis on human suffering, CCTV’s framing supports a narrative that prioritises stability and caution in foreign policy, thereby shaping Chinese public opinion towards favouring a non-interventionist approach.

Overall, the thematic disparities between CNN and CCTV correlate with their respective media systems’ fundamental ideologies (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Josephi, 2005). CNN’s framing strategies align with a progressive media model advocating for human rights and intervention, while CCTV portrays themes reflecting a state-controlled media system prioritising national interests and stability.

Secondly, the sources cited by CNN and CCTV showed different media and political inclinations. CNN’s coverage overwhelmingly relies on Ukrainian sources and international voices, whereas CCTV is significantly centred on Russian sources and also includes considerable Ukrainian voices. On the one hand, CNN aims to legitimise Ukrainian narratives and arouse more support in the viewers to justify their military and economic assistance to Ukraine. At the same time, the deliberate selection of sources helps CNN strengthen Western ideals of supporting sovereignty and democracy. On the other hand, Russian sources cited by CCTV exhibit its pro-Russian implication. Besides, the other focus on Ukrainian sources indicates that despite China’s pro-Russian stance, it endeavours to incorporate the Ukrainian perspective, aligning with its media policy of impartiality and geopolitical strategies. However, such source inclination might lead CNN viewers to regard Ukraine as the primary victim, while Chinese audiences view Russia as more legitimate. These polarising perspectives are not conducive to global audiences and even peace processes because the use of different sources can affect the bias of news reporting (Entman, 1993) and the public.

Thirdly, CNN and CCTV both clearly lean towards using a war news frame, but CCTV’s use of a peace news frame is slightly higher than CNN’s. Using neutral frames is very rare in both media. CNN’s tendency to use a war frame is related to its Western media reporting tradition and US government foreign policy. And

CCTV's rigid focus on military operations and casualties also contributes to its war-oriented approach. For both media, the widespread use of war news frames would reinforce audience attention to conflicts, arousing negative emotions and even support for violence-oriented solutions (Lynch et al., 2015; McGoldrick & Lynch, 2016). Additionally, CCTV's slightly higher proportion of peace news, to some degree, reflects the Chinese government's stance on peacefully resolving conflicts in its foreign policy. CCTV viewers may tend to perceive diplomatic or neutral stances as being more feasible. In fact, the "war journalism" approach tends to legitimise violence by focusing on military responses and ignoring the root causes of conflict (Katiambo, 2020). But peace news would lead audiences to pay more attention to the possibility of peace negotiations and thus influence their attitudes towards war (Galtung, 2015). For both media, it is necessary to reinforce the utilisation of peace journalism to cover international conflicts.

Conclusion

In general, CNN for America and CCTV for China have paid considerable attention to the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian conflict. However, according to different media systems and political orientations, they used distinct media framing strategies to construct this conflict synthetically. This study applied the framing theory and the peace journalism model developed by Lee & Maslog (2005) to determine their multiple strategies related to the themes, sources and peace/war journalism. The findings revealed that CNN mainly focused on "Humanitarian Crisis and Civilian Impacts" and "Military Operations and Strategic". In contrast, CCTV predominantly centred on the themes of "Military Operations and Strategic" and "Political Reactions and Stances". Additionally, CNN's coverage overwhelmingly relies on Ukrainian sources and international voices, whereas CCTV is significantly centred on Russian sources and also includes considerable Ukrainian voices. Finally, CNN and CCTV both clearly tend to use a war journalism frame, but CCTV's use of a peace journalism frame is slightly higher than CNN's.

This study fills the gap in the literature on the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian Conflict, particularly by comparing the coverage by the American and Chinese media through a lens of themes, sources, and war/peace Journalism. By comparing coverage across different countries, the research gives a deeper understanding of how national priorities, political affiliations, and cultural backgrounds shape the way conflicts are portrayed. This reveals commonalities and differences in global conflict narratives presented to different audiences, providing valuable insights into how media influences perceptions of worldwide conflicts.

However, the current study still has several limitations. Although there has been an emphasis on themes, sources, and peace/war journalism, the intricate correlation between them has not yet been thoroughly explored. Besides, the study only focused on video coverage in one Western and one Eastern media, which may lead to an inaccurate understanding of the holistic media environment, especially for the American side. Future research endeavours could further investigate the intercorrelations between WJ/PJ and multi-modal framing strategies regarding different wars in multiple media systems so as to promote journalism development and even facilitate the peace process.

Acknowledgement: The authors would like to express heartfelt gratitude to the family members who supported this research.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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