

**Manuscript version: Author's Accepted Manuscript**

The version presented in WRAP is the author's accepted manuscript and may differ from the published version or Version of Record.

**Persistent WRAP URL:**

<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/171450>

**How to cite:**

Please refer to published version for the most recent bibliographic citation information. If a published version is known of, the repository item page linked to above, will contain details on accessing it.

**Copyright and reuse:**

The Warwick Research Archive Portal (WRAP) makes this work by researchers of the University of Warwick available open access under the following conditions.

Copyright © and all moral rights to the version of the paper presented here belong to the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. To the extent reasonable and practicable the material made available in WRAP has been checked for eligibility before being made available.

Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge. Provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

**Publisher's statement:**

Please refer to the repository item page, publisher's statement section, for further information.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: [wrap@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:wrap@warwick.ac.uk).

# **International broadcasting during times of conflict: a comparison of China's and Russia's communication strategies**

Chang Zhang<sup>a</sup>, Dechun Zhang<sup>b</sup> & Philippe Blanchard<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Government and Public Affairs, Communication University of China, Beijing, People's Republic of China; <sup>b</sup> Leiden Institute for Area Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands; <sup>c</sup> Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK

Accepted 23.10.2022

Published online 18.11.2022

## **Abstract**

The vital role of international broadcasting during times of international conflict has gained increasing attention; however, national variations in terms of communication strategies have rarely been explored in depth. This study fills this research gap by providing a comparative analysis of the communication strategies of Chinese and Russian state-sponsored international broadcasters. By examining CGTN's coverage of the South China Sea arbitration and RT's coverage of the Ukraine crisis in 2014, we find that the Chinese international broadcaster preferred official Chinese sources and a peace frame during a time of conflict, whereas its Russian counterpart tended to engage with Western countercultural speakers and present conflict frames. Supplemented by interviews, we interpret the two media's different usage of sources and frames in the light of the media's organizational culture and the sponsoring states' national identities. The research advances the scholarship on the increasingly intensive information war between the East and the West through the way international broadcasters cover international conflicts. It enriches our understanding of the cultural and national dynamics underpinning the non-Western emerging countries' approaches of international communication.

## **Keywords:**

International broadcasting; public diplomacy; international conflicts; South China Sea arbitration; Ukraine crisis; Chinese foreign policy; Russian foreign policy

## **Introduction**

China and Russia are increasingly engaged in disseminating discourses and narratives to a broad range of audiences beyond their borders. Although the United States has thus far retained the role of an international hegemon by shaping the perceptions of international politics through news media and popular culture (Löfflmann, 2013), this country is reducing its funding for public diplomacy (Nelson, 2013; Zakaria, 2017). Proliferating information technologies have enabled direct interactions between the public and news media, and facilitated the development of public diplomacy initiatives by non-Western countries (Bjola et al., 2019). Thus, China and Russia, in turn, are intensively investing in externally oriented communication projects in order to expand their international reach (Rawnsley, 2015). During challenging circumstances as well as in more routine times, such nations depend on international broadcasting to engage in what Sheaffer and Gabay named as public diplomacy (2009), externally oriented communication (Xie & Boyd-Barrett, 2015), or outward facing propaganda (Carter & Carter, 2021). For Price (2003), international broadcasting plays a vital role in both international and domestic politics, determining the future of a nation's development and reform. Considerable academic attention has been focused in this respect on China and Russia, which are among the largest powerful countries in the world, yet in need to counter the West's vast soft power resources (Atlantic Council, 2020; Bērziņš et al., 2015; Roman et al., 2017). However, research on China's and Russia's international broadcasting has two main limitations. First, instead of exploring how precisely Russia and China narrate world politics, studies have often examined the two countries' communication efforts through a Western-centric securitized lens. Terms such as "charm offensive" and "sharp power" are some related examples (Kurlantzick, 2007; Walker et al., 2017). The tendency to "look for enemies" (Suzuki 2009, 789) and the fear of a "propaganda threat" (Chernobrov & Briant, 2020, 12-13) emanating from authoritarian countries that can adversely affect Western values, norms and models, generates blind spots in the precise analysis and understanding of authoritarian broadcasting styles and strategies. Second, although single-case studies on China's and Russia's outreach actions have flourished (Avgerinos, 2009; Brady, 2015; Velikaya & Simons, 2020), variations in the content and style between the two major authoritarian players in international broadcasting are yet to be studied in a systematic manner (Rawnsley, 2015). Some explorative studies have brought light on the common counter-hegemonic visions and divergent communication styles of the two broadcasters (Rawnsley, 2015; Wilson, 2015; Xie & Boyd-Barrett, 2015). However,

systematic comparisons of Chinese and Russian international media's coverage of international conflicts, both closely connected to their national interests, are scant. Single-case studies, though delineated the contours of CGTN's and RT's communication styles, cannot be substituted to a comparison of how these channels communicate international conflicts that have similar geopolitical importance to their sponsoring states.

Against this background, the paper aims to explore the distinctive approaches that CGTN and RT adopt to counter Western media's representation of world politics. Responding to Rawnsley's (2015) appeal to look into the communication styles of Chinese and Russian international broadcasters and contextualize these specifics in the organizational and media-state textures, we propose a systematic comparative content analysis of CGTN's and RT's coverage of the South China Sea arbitration and the Ukraine crisis. The South China Sea arbitration and the Ukraine crisis mark China's and Russia's clashes with the West over the global geopolitical order at the two ends of Eurasian continent. An examination of the two media's coverage the respective cases seems to map out CGTN's and RT's use of sources and frames in their coverage of international conflicts. Further, we draw on interview and archive data to explain the cultural and institutional contexts that made these communicative features emerge. Such a comparison is essential as it allows an examination of commonalities and divergences of non-Western emerging powers' international communication strategies within similar political systems, media genres and natures of events. The research intends to contribute to advance our understanding of emerging powers' discursive contestation of the West in a broader sense, as well as open the discussion on the impact of national and institutional-cultural factors on the communication strategies of authoritarian states sponsored international broadcasters.

The paper begins with an overview of previous studies' discussion of China's and Russia's approaches to international broadcasting and implications for CGTN's and RT's communication styles. Subsequently, the article introduces the analytical framework, data, and methods employed to reveal the similarities and differences between the two channels' communication strategies. The article then presents the empirical findings of the comparative content analysis of CGTN's coverage of the South China Sea Arbitration and RT's coverage of the Ukraine crisis. The findings are discussed from the viewpoint of the two channels' organizational culture and the sponsoring countries' national identities.

## Literature review

### *International broadcasting: a contested battlefield*

International broadcasting as an “elegant term for the use of electronic media by one society to shape the opinion of the people and leaders of another” (Price, 2003), has been widely used in the time of international conflicts and war since the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the two World Wars and in the interval, the communicative practices that intend to “manage collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols” are conceptualized as “propaganda” (Lasswell, 1927b: 627). “Propaganda” remained a neutral term until WWII, when it started to gain unpleasant connotations for its increasing interlink with authoritarian regimes (Lasswell, 1951; Klemperer, 2013). Emerging in mid-1960s, “public diplomacy” became a predominant terminology to capture the communication practice the international actors draw upon to shape the public opinion of another country in order to achieve foreign policy goals (Cull, 2008). The real differences between “propaganda” and “public diplomacy” are contested. Some have defined “public diplomacy” away from “propaganda” for its stickiness to facticity, objectivity and mutuality (Brown, 2008). Others perceive the dichotomy a contingent policy for the US to “reserve the term propaganda for the works of enemy and to embrace a new benign term for its own democratic practice” (Cull, 2013: 143). They thus propose to use public diplomacy for its less value-laden and ideological nature (Szostek, 2020). Another term that is usually interlinked with international broadcasting is journalism. The proximity of international broadcasting to journalism is due to its structural adherence to the news genre, which means the culture of journalism will both influence and contradict with international broadcasting (Cull, 2008). In practice, international broadcasting may straddle between the two categories as the state-sponsored broadcaster. For example, the US-sponsored Al Hurra, which vows to advance objective journalism, de facto advocates the US policy line, owing to financial and administrative constraints (Seib, 2009). Our research does not aim to delve into the theoretical debates on the nature of China’s and Russia’s international broadcasters, as the conceptual differentiation between public diplomacy and propaganda regarding China and Russia is more often than not blurry (Rawnsley, 2013). Rather, it seeks to figure out the different sources and frames Chinese and Russian international broadcasters employ to construct favorable discourses about international conflicts and to counter western narratives.

### *Different international communication approaches: Image fever and the cynical attacker*

A comparison of China's and Russia's international communication strategies is beneficial not only because the two national media systems fall into the category of the authoritarian model under Hallin and Mancini's (2004, 2011) typology, but also because Wilson (2015: 295) indicates that the two countries are "authoritarian regimes that have been deeply imprinted with the values and attitudes of their Marxist–Leninist heritage, which constitutes an important element of their national identity." In the 21st century, the international communication strategies of China and Russia have diverged after a long period of joint development. The primary driving force for the two countries' investment in international broadcasting was their desire to reshape their national images during the early 2000s. With China's accession to the World Trade Organization and Russia's integration into the international energy market, the two governments aimed to create a favorable environment for their economic outreach and foreign policy endeavors (Wilson, 2015). Under the flags of peaceful development and a harmonious world, China, through its image campaign, strived to present itself as a stable, reliable, and responsible economic partner in order to mitigate "China threat" suspicions and optimize opinions in the international environment (Hooghe, 2015; Zhao, 2015). To leverage energy reserves and return to the great power bloc, Russia endeavored to present itself as a reliable business partner that embraces an open market and abides by democratic values (Kiseleva, 2015). International broadcasting is a crucial tool for rebuking long-held negative views that were considered to be induced by the distorted and demonized representations in Western media (Brady, 2015; Simons, 2011). At that stage (2000–2007), China's and Russia's international communication gravitated toward self-image promotion, which was conceptualized as a "charm offensive" (Kurlantzick, 2007; Pan et al., 2019) and rarely involved discursive offensives against others.

The divergence between Chinese and Russian international communication strategies began to emerge around 2008, when China continued signaling the benevolence of its rise, and Russia adopted a confrontational approach to pull Western countries down. In 2009, China upgraded its financial and policy commitment to the "Media going out" project (SCMP, 2009), which aims to present "a true, multidimensional, and panoramic view of China," instead of overcriticizing Western societies (Li and Wu 2018). Against this background, China's externally oriented news media CCTV International was revamped as CCTV News and expanded its foreign language news portfolio. In the same year, the Russian flagship

international broadcaster RT launched the campaign “Question more” to transform from a Russian public relations promoter to an offensive journalistic underdog, shedding light on the dark side of Western societies (Herpen, 2015; Richter, 2017). According to Rawnsley (2015, 275), this differentiation from a joint starting point can be attributed to Russia’s new communication policy line. Although Chinese international communication practitioners kept holding the belief that “to know us is to love us,” Russians developed a “*ne opravdivatsya*” strategy (“do not explain”) (Rawnsley, 2015), re-orientating its international communication towards exposing the credibility gap between US words and deeds, and revealing the bias inherent to Western media (Headley, 2015). CCTV’s China-centered approach continued and was even intensified in Xi’s era. Responding to Xi Jinping’s appeal to “tell China’s story well” in the time of media convergence, the channel relaunched itself as CGTN (China Global Television Network) on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2016. Under the new slogan “See the difference”, it aims to deliver “different coverage for the same world”, and to include “different perspectives for the same coverage” (Li & Wu, 2018). The core concern driving the present study will be: to what extent do the coverages of international crises by CGTN and RT reflect the respective, distinctive geopolitical strategies of their sponsoring states?

### ***Chinese and Russian international broadcasting during times of international conflict***

In the complex matrix of Chinese and Russian international media, CGTN and RT deserve particular attention for their political importance and comparable televisual genre. CGTN received political endorsements from Chinese President Xi who urged the media to “tell China stories well” upon its establishment (CCTV English, 2016). Under Xi’s leadership, the external media flagship assumed a central place in China’s “Great Overseas Outreach” (*Da wai xuan*) project (Diamond & Schell, 2019), which aims to not only promote China’s national image but also win overseas consensus regarding China’s global vision (Gagliardone, 2013; Gagliardone & Pál, 2017). Vowing to move away from old-fashioned propaganda, CGTN fully embraced digital platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Weibo, and WeChat, into its portfolio (Li and Wu 2018), and attempted to provide global audiences with accurate and timely news coverage and rich audiovisual resources (CGTN, 2020). Similarly, RT plays a vital role in Russia’s external communication project. As President Putin claims, RT is built to “not only provide an unbiased coverage of events in Russia but also break the Anglo–Saxon monopoly on global information streams” (Kremlin.ru, 2013). Incubated by the Russian state-owned media company RIA Novosti, RT

is fully funded by the Russian state Duma and has its editor-in-chief, Margarita Simonyan, appointed as editor-in-chief of the media conglomerate Rossiya Segodnya (“Russia Today” in Russian, the parenting agency overseeing RT channel), which incorporated RIA Novosti, Sputnik, and Voice of Russia in 2013 (CSIS, 2014). RT prioritizes audiovisual newscasts because Simonyan (2016, 53) believes that TV news outperforms other news formats (newspapers, radio, and social media) and provides the most “professional, comprehensive, and visual” media representation. RT’s digital engagement strategy is more successful than that of CGTN, with its channel the first to hit 10 billion viewership on YouTube (RT, 2020). In fact, its suspension from the European market during the 2022 Russo-Ukrainian War for its pro-Russian coverage was also due to its digital success and growing influence on European public opinions (The Washington Post, 2022).

Chinese and Russian external communication styles are in part directly reflected by CGTN and RT. Empirical studies have suggested that CGTN tends to adopt official sources (Fearon & Rodrigues, 2019; Gabore, 2020) and have confirmed Yang’s (2017: 86) observation that CGTN vows to “push Chinese perspectives and voices into the international arena in order to contest the discursive power of the West.” Moreover, increasing evidence indicates that CGTN is employing a new strategy of “borrowing mouths,” which refers to the use of pro-China sources to legitimize the Chinese policy line (Alpermann, 2020). The use of such sources significantly shapes CGTN’s tones and frames (Fearon & Rodrigues, 2019; Gabore, 2020). CGTN not only tends to frame China as a promoter of global order and harmony (Madrid-Morales 2017; Marsh 2017; Zhu 2022) but also represents China’s inclination to portray developing countries in a positive light, with the aim of both breaking the stereotypical presentation of Western media and paving the way for China’s diplomatic offensives (Matingwina, 2016). In other words, CGTN positions itself in the paradigm of “positive reporting”, or “constructive journalism” (Zhang & Matingwina, 2016). By sharing CGTN’s rationale to present different perspectives from Western mainstream media, RT has engaged with a wider range of opinion holders in Western societies. In a move to minimise its Russian profile, RT managed to incorporate Larry King (a distinguished host formerly worked in CNN), Ed Schultz (a former talk show host on MSNBC), and Chris Hedges (a former reporter for NPR and the New York Times) into its news production team and include high-profile politicians, such as Jeremy Corbyn (UK), Nigel Farage (UK), and Bernie Sanders (USA) into its interviewee pool (Richter, 2017). By reaching out to dissidents in Western society, RT revives the Soviet propaganda strategy of “agents of influence” or



“useful idiots” and attempts to legitimize Russian foreign policy among Western audiences by using credible sources (Abrams, 2016).

Compared to CGTN’s positive approach, RT appears to be featured with more aggressive communication style. Despite a short PR period (promoting Russia’s national image), RT shifted to critical journalism under the “question more” campaign in 2009 (Richter, 2017). The target of the question was usually the West, especially the US government (Yablokov 2015; Zhu and Jiang 2018). RT’s anti-Westernism taps into narratives such as the decline of Europe, liberal interventionism, the hypocrisy of Western societies, and the corruption of liberal democracies (Kluver et al., 2019; Richter, 2017). Negative narratives regarding the West serve to neutralize Western criticisms of Russia and naturalize Russia’s political system and foreign policy line (Hutchings & Szostek, 2015). Moreover, RT uses populism and anti-elitist discourses to mobilize an imagined global community of “the people” against the dangerous “others.” The “others” in the context of Russia generally refer to the US government or other Western countries (Tolz, 2001; Yablokov, 2015b).

Populist discourse, as used by RT, refers to “a mode of identification available to any actor operating in a discursive field in which the notion of the sovereignty of the people and its inevitable corollary, the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, are core elements of its political imaginary” (Panizza, 2005). Controversial events, such as Occupy Wall Street movement, the Guantanamo Bay scandal, and the 2010 WikiLeaks scandal, evoked populist dissatisfaction against economic inequality and global fury against the US’s violation of human rights (Richter, 2017). These conspiratorial narratives have reframed the Russia–US relationships. By portraying the United States as a “puppet master” that interfered in the politics of Libya and Afghanistan through the manipulation of overseas NGOs, RT subtly justified the Kremlin’s crackdown on NGOs in Russia (Yablokov, 2015b). The magnification of the grievances of the marginalized and the vocalization of populism and antielitism further aims to confirm Russia’s equal status with or superiority to Western democracies (Yablokov, 2015b).

## **Data and Method**

### *Case selection*

To determine differences in communication strategies between China and Russia, this study adopts the most similar system design approach to identify variations in key variables among

similar cases (Przeworski and Teune, 1970). First, China and Russia are selected to focus on authoritarian powers shaped by an intertwined communist legacy. Second, the inclusion of CGTN and RT ensures that variables such as the nature (state sponsorship), genre (televised news), and modality (multimodal and multiplatform) of media are held constant, enabling the emergence of meaningful divergences in communication styles. Third, the selected media events represent international conflicts featuring similar event characteristics and international significance: both the South China Sea arbitration (Philippine vs. China) and the Ukraine crisis (with Russia's annexation of Crimea as its summit) are international conflicts with global implications. Moreover, as suggested by Simons (2015) in his comparative public diplomacy study, they are crucial moments for China and Russia to contest territorial boundaries, renegotiate international norms, and expand their geopolitical clout on both discursive and physical battlefields. However, these cases bear limitations. Arbitration is largely a juridical action accompanied only occasionally by military exercise, whereas the Ukraine crisis involves military confrontations, which may compromise the results of a comparative framing analysis. To compensate for this slight asymmetry, we add discursive disagreement to the criteria of conflict framing, which reduces the impact of the characteristics of an event on the accuracy of measurement, enabling the detection of conflict frames in both international lawsuits and physical confrontations.

The South China Sea arbitration is chosen for three reasons. First, the initiation of arbitration by the Philippines marks the first time that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was applied to disputes in the South China Sea; it sets a legal precedence for territorial dispute management in contested waters (Bernard, 2019; Rabena, 2018). Second, China's objection to the arbitration and persistent claim of the nine-dash line demonstrates the state's determination to seek great power status in the West Pacific (Curtis 2016; Varrall 2015; Zhao 2018). Third, the arbitration fosters an intensive discursive investment by China in promoting the legitimacy of Chinese foreign policy as well as the legality of its jurisdiction (Bensa & Wijaya, 2017; Strating, 2020). Considering these three factors, we believe that the South China Sea arbitration is a valuable case for evaluating China's international communication style during times of crisis.

Resembling the South China Sea conflict, the Ukraine crisis highlights the chronic contestation of the European security order by Russia since the 1990s. While the South China Sea arbitration is a clash between the emerging powers of China and the West, the 2014

Ukraine crisis reflects the contradictions between Russia and the West. Going beyond litigation, the Ukraine crisis is the largest de facto territorial change in Europe since the end of the Cold War (Mankoff, 2014), with an accompanying normative contestation over sovereignty and self-determination. The aggressive territorial revision at stake shows Russia's goal of asserting its status as a great power by resetting the European security order (Larson & Shevchenko, 2014; Pezard et al., 2017; Pifer, 2019). Moreover, the Ukraine crisis blended a discursive offensive and a military attack. Longitudinal tracking has showed the augmentation of Russia-sponsored information actions by media, thinktanks, and activists during the Ukraine crisis (Biersack & O'Lear, 2014). Many studies have also confirmed how Russia's information warfare has confused the European public and delayed the EU's response (Hutchings & Szostek, 2015; Riga, 2015).

### *Sampling*

We collected the news video clips from CGTN's and RT's official YouTube accounts, respectively tagged "South China Sea" and "Ukraine unrest". The sampling approach has operability and directionality because the data could be easily accessed and they appropriately encapsulated the core message that the channels intended to convey to global audiences; the data were selected, edited, and uploaded by the media organizations. We consulted the channel's original websites to verify the validity of the YouTube sample and did not identify any major discrepancy. The systematic viewing of the clips from the sample (see below) reveals that we were close to saturation, that is, the last additional clips that we view bring less and less novelty regarding our research question. However unfortunately in the absence of random sampling from the exhaustive corpus of original programmes, we are not able to fully certify the sample's exhaustiveness and inclusivity. On these grounds, we cautiously claim that our research findings are an accurate and generalizable account of RT and CGTN's coverage of the two crises.

The folders originally contained 388 video clips. After having screened out raw CCTV footage, aerial photographs and talk show programs, and deleted duplicate videos, only core materials (news bulletins) were retained as our sample: 177 CGTN clips and 76 RT clips. Although the number of CGTN videos exceeds the number of RT videos, the length of RT videos (11h 9m in total, 8m 49s per clip on average) exceeds CGTN's (4h 17m in total, 1m

28s per clip). The balance between the number of videos and video length ensures data comparability. The videos were transcribed for content analysis<sup>1</sup>.

### *Content analysis*

To compare and contrast the communication strategies of Chinese and Russian international broadcasters, two indicators are targeted in the content analysis: source and frame. The analysis of sources is crucial because media reproduce and legitimize power hierarchies through the selective inclusion or exclusion of different voices (Cook 1998, 5; Couldry 2010; Ginneken 2009, 91; Tuchman 1980, 95). Our main goal was to evaluate the extent to which CGTN and RT reproduce the sourcing patterns of Western mainstream media, and to compare the two channels. Sources were coded in two dimensions: nationality and social status. (1) Following Atwater and Green's (1988) and Wittebols's (1996) coding scheme, we distinguished five categories of nationalities: host country (China vs. Russia), country of dispute (the Philippines vs. Ukraine), the West (including the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union), controversial region (Crimea), and other (countries that are not directly involved in conflict). (2) Inspired by prior research, we designated the status of the source as governmental official, expert, layperson, military personnel, entrepreneur, police, journalist, and activist. (Galtung & Ruge, 1981; Lasorsa & Reese, 1990; Webb et al., 2002). The coding scheme of the sources is displayed in Appendix 1 and 2.

Framing is the second focus of our content analysis. Framing refers to a journalistic practice of selectively highlighting certain features of an actor or event in a news report, at the expense of other possible features (Pan and Kosicki 1993; Tankard 1991). In the context of international broadcasting, framing constitutes a strategic action to advance an interpretation that favors sponsoring states (Kim & Jahng, 2016). According to Entman (1993), framing is a complex that embeds problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation for the concerning news event. In this study, we mainly focused on the generic frames marking conflict versus peace (de Vreese et al., 2001), which are among the most frequently used frames in mass communication research (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). To consider the different characteristics of events, we identified conflict framing as news reports that emphasize conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions

---

<sup>1</sup> Full coding of the corpus is available from the corresponding author upon request.

on verbal or physical levels (Bartholomé, Lecheler, & de Vreese 2018, 1690; Semetko & Valkenburg 2000, 95).

Although conflict frames are widely known for their capacity to attract public attention by dramatizing violence and casualties, they have been criticized for sowing division and exacerbating confrontation (Galtung 1986; Lee 2010). By contrast, peace frames promote mutual trust and enhance the prospect of peace (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000). Drawing on the literature on peace journalism, we defined peace frames as those that emphasize “peace initiatives, tone down ethnic and religious differences, prevent further conflict, focus on the structure of society, and promote conflict resolution, reconstruction, and reconciliation” (Lee 2010, 362). A peace frame is identified when the content involves agreement finding, solution seeking, peace building, or reconstruction. An examination of a peace/conflict frame can reveal schemes through which CGTN and RT cover international conflicts of geopolitical significance. The coding scheme of peace/conflict frames is displayed in Appendix 3.

### ***Qualitative inquiry: Semi-structured interviews and archive analysis***

To complement the results of the content analysis, we conducted semi-structured interviews and consulted archived data. These help interpret the two media’s communication styles by means of their respective organizational cultures, political cultures, and national media legacies and identities. Interviewing is a method of choice for determining the personal beliefs, professional values. Previous research have included interviews and used observations aimed at examining the organizational culture of CGTN and RT (Elswah & Howard, 2020; Varrall, 2020); however, they have rarely been used to explain the communication styles of the two media in a comparative manner. This study uses fieldwork data collected from Beijing in 2017 and Moscow in 2018 to explore the divergent uses of sources and frames in the coverage of the South China Sea arbitration and the Ukraine crisis.

## **Findings**

### ***Alternative voices? Megaphone of the pro-China developing world versus the alternative West***

Confirming counter-hegemonic premises, Chinese and Russian international broadcasters vocalize voices marginalized by Western mainstream media. In this context, CGTN prioritizes Chinese official sources, whereas RT prioritizes antiestablishment Western

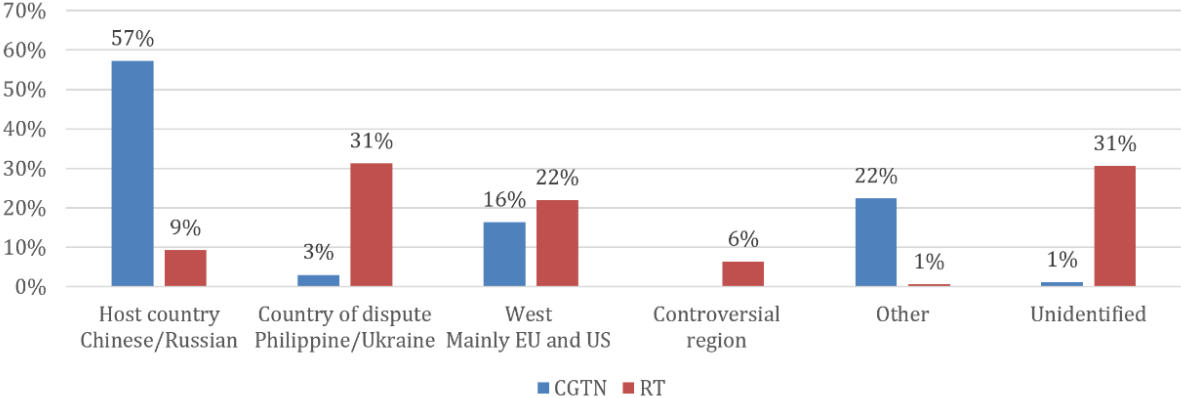
experts. CGTN's sourcing strategy is twofold. First, official Chinese sources are given substantial attention by CGTN. As presented in Figure 1, more than half (57%) of CGTN's videos feature at least one Chinese source. The majority of Chinese sources are affiliated with the Chinese Foreign Ministry or Defense Ministry, including Wang Yi, Lu Kang, and Yang Yujun. This is in agreement with the report by Liao and Ma (2014) that officials and spokespersons affiliated with the Chinese foreign and defense ministries constitute the main information sources of official Chinese media. The concentration of the official sources of China markedly differ from that of the Philippines (3%). This finding indicates that CGTN disseminates Chinese voices, perspectives, and interpretations of the South China Sea arbitration at the expense of those from the Philippines, a key stakeholder in international arbitration and territorial conflicts. This asymmetry reveals a deviance from the norm of balance in representing news events where Chinese national interests are at stake (Bennett, 1996).

This prioritization of Chinese official sources is indicative of CGTN's organizational culture. For CGTN, recycling Chinese official voices is both an administrative requirement and an ideological safety measure. As part of the China Media Group, a ministry-level media conglomerate under the direct supervision of the Central Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party, CGTN vows its loyalty to the party's leadership (Burns, 1989; Shambaugh, 2017). In practice, this loyalty is evaluated by the congruence between their news selection and framing and the will of those in power. According to Palmer (2018), "Incidents that *RT* could shrug off, such as the political scientist Yascha Mounk slamming the Russian President Vladimir Putin live on air or James Kirchick damning the station as propaganda for a bigoted state, would kill careers at CGTN." Thus, regardless of risk aversion or active promotion seeking, reproducing the voices of leaders and representatives of key ministries is a safe strategy.

Another pattern of CGTN's sourcing is to highlight voices of the developing world. The second most cited sources are from countries that were not directly involved in the relevant dispute; these sources appear in 22% of the clips. A closer examination reveal that these sources tend to be from developing countries that have friendly diplomatic relationships with

China, including Iran, Tanzania, and Pakistan<sup>2</sup>. This finding confirms Zhang’s (2019) belief that CGTN is developing a ‘borrow-mouth’ strategy to defend Chinese foreign policy by using testimonies from China sympathizers. Second, the fact that CGTN is widely engaged with sources from developing countries highlights China’s counter-hegemonic agenda of supporting and unifying the voice of the developing world against the hegemonic media representation of a few developed countries (Benabdallah 2017: 508). Thus, CGTN fulfils its promise to empower alternative voices, although only those of countries who have good diplomatic relationships with China.

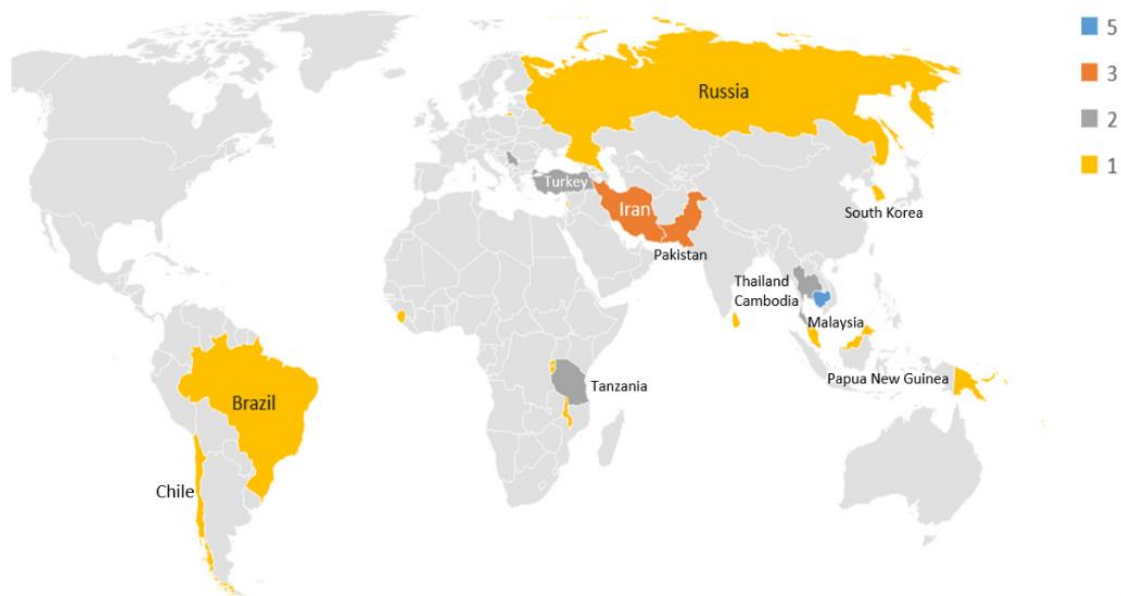
CGTN’s preference for highlighting the voices of developing countries can be traced to China’s identity as a developing country. Since the era of Deng Xiaoping, China’s national identity as a developing country has been driven by China’s foreign policy of both representing the developing world against Western hegemony and strengthening South–South cooperations (Deng, 1974; Zhou, 2021; Pu 2017). CGTN fulfills its promise to not only speak for the developing world but also construct a supportive international society for China’s foreign policy.



**Figure 1 Distribution of source nationality per channel** (number of clips containing source with corresponding nationality) reported to total number of clips)

---

<sup>2</sup> The countries range from Asia (Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Lebanon), Africa (Rwanda, Tanzania), Latin America (Brazil, Chile), and Oceania (Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea) (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).



**Figure 2. Distribution of the nationality of CGTN's sources**

(number of clips containing sources with corresponding non-Chinese nationality)

Unlike CGTN, RT generally avoids using official Russian sources (9%); instead, it provides exposure to Western (22%) and Ukrainian (31%) sources. A closer examination reveals that citizens of the Ukrainian mainland and Crimea were mainly employed to express grievances against protestors and voluntarily express support for Crimean independence (*RT*, 2014v; *RT* 2013g). Unlike CGTN, which intentionally mutes anti-Chinese voices from Western politicians, RT exposes such voices for the purpose of inoculation. Originating from medical science, inoculation in a communication context refers to building an attitudinal immunity against certain perspectives by exposing the audience to weakened arguments accompanied with pre-emptive refutations, which stimulate voluntary resistance against additional attitudinal attacks (McGuire 1961, 1964). In this context, RT invites Western mainstream politicians, such as the Bulgarian Member of European Parliament (MEP) Marusya Lyubcheva and the German MEP Alexandra Thein, to serve as targets of Russia's discursive counterattack. As a guest speaker, the Bulgarian MEP champions the prosperous prospect for Ukraine to collaborate with the EU by using the example of Bulgaria. The Serbian–American scholar Srdja Trifkovic responds by opining that integration with the EU has brought Bulgaria misfortune and backwardness:

“I’m amazed that a Bulgarian politician can talk in glowing terms about the European Union when Bulgaria is now a basket case...it’s importing tomatoes



from Turkey for goodness sake, and Bulgaria used to supply all of Eastern and Central Europe with vegetables only 20 years ago.”

---- From clip (*RT* 2013m)

If Trifkovic’s speech dissuades the swaying Ukraine from joining the EU’s Eastern partnership program, the British Eurosceptic Robert Oulds speaks of the EU as a rich country club. To add to Trifkovic’s sarcasm, Robert Oulds weighs in, indicating that Bulgaria’s success was due to it being “within the pay wall of the European Union” (*RT*, 2013c). The narrative works to dissuade the Western European audience from supporting the EU’s addition of Ukraine. This case suggests that *RT*’s inclusion of anti-Russian Western government officials creates an impression of a proforma balance, but it de facto exposes the audience to weakened criticisms towards Russia and more importantly compels the formation of arguments against those (Borcher, 2011).

Compared with *CGTN*’s vocalization of developing nations, *RT* partly reproduces and exploits Western hegemony. We make this argument because Caucasian experts remain the essential reference group for the channel to turn to. Among 50 sources that were attributed to experts in *RT*’s video clips, 49 included Caucasian men, which reproduces and even reinforces the conventional racial and gender order of Western media. Many of the Caucasian guest speakers have an Eastern European/Russo–American background, such as Srdja Trifkovic, a Serbian American scholar, and Mark Sleboda, an American-born and raised, Russian sympathizer based in Moscow. This sourcing strategy partly consolidates the racial and gender hierarchy of knowledge production in Western media, instead of challenging it; middle-aged Caucasian male authorities are widely used to interpret international news (Lee 1998, 356). The inclusion of Western mainstream politicians helps boost *RT*’s accessibility among Western audiences. Morales (2020) indicates that *RT*’s visual and aural similarity with Western media effectively increases its attractiveness within the pan-Western market. *RT*’s usage of counter-establishment Caucasian experts can be perceived as the revival of the “useful idiots” strategy. The goal of this strategy is to legitimize the Russian foreign policy line by using credible dissident insiders within Western society and “lend *RT* a veneer of legitimacy that allows it to mask its propagandistic intentions and instead portray itself as a serious, reliable newscaster” (Richter, 2017: 26).

As much as for *CGTN*, *RT*’s unusual practice of magnifying Western sources instead of Russian ones is connected to *RT*’s organizational culture. Self-positioned as a counter-

hegemonic media, RT is provided with adequate institutional leeway by the Kremlin to undermine Western positions by using various tools. Different from his Chinese counterpart, Putin does not seem to demand that the channel tells the Russian story well; instead, he emphasizes that the media's priority should be to "break(ing) the Anglo–Saxon monopoly on the global information streams" instead of becoming "any kind of apologist for the Russian political line, whether domestic or foreign" (Putin 2013). RT's strategic distancing from Russia is also echoed by its editor-in-Chief Margarita Simonyan, who justifies the "de-Russification" strategy of the channel with the question "Who is interested in watching news from Russia all day long?" (Von Twickel, 2010). When asked why RT does not highlight Russian voices in its media coverage, our interviewee, the PR manager of RT, responds,

"Not necessarily everything has a Russian perspective on it." She added, "90% of our news sources have nothing to do with Russia whatsoever" (Interviewee R5, 2018).

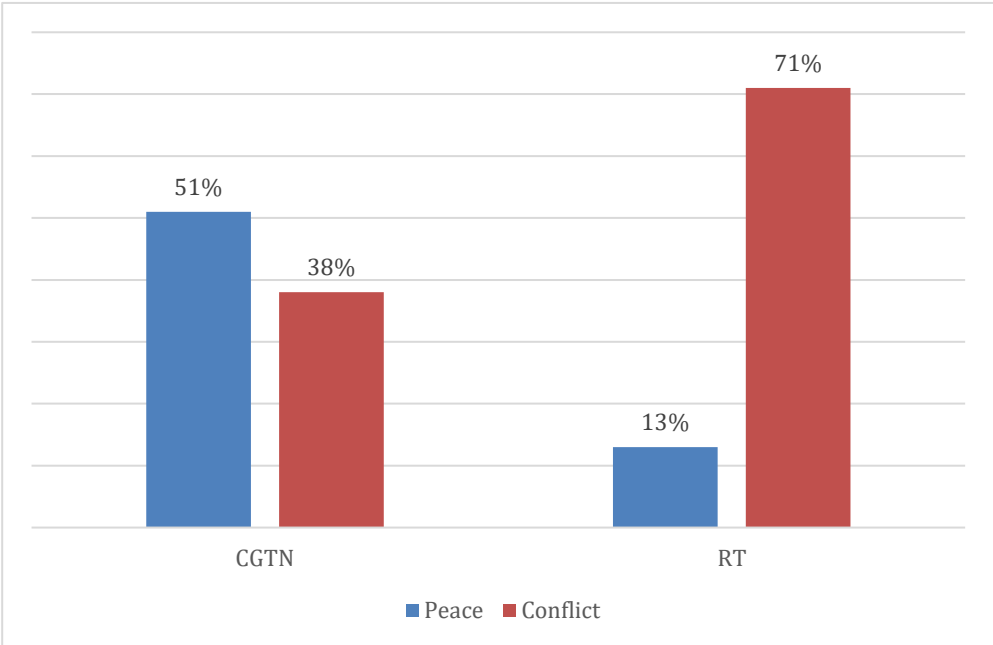
This explains why RT pursues its counter-hegemonic agenda, that is, suspending Western media's dominance in representing and interpreting reality, not by magnifying Russian voices but by relying on a wider range of sources. Our interviewees confirmed that RT would rather cite Russian sympathizers and internal dissident sources from Western societies than directly quote Russian officials as long as it serves to delegitimize Western foreign policies. This echoes Richter's (2017) and Abrams's (2016) findings that RT is reviving the Soviet propaganda technique of using "useful idiots" that exploit the insider's influence and the patriotic dissident position to undermine the legitimacy of target governments.

### *Covering international conflicts with different frames*

Apart from sourcing patterns, we compare CGTN's and RT's framing patterns. The conflict frame is both visible in CGTN and RT coverage, although a higher presence ratio was noted in RT (71%) compared with CGTN (38%). CGTN mainly frames international conflicts using a peaceful schema. Although this schema points to the inevitability of a conflict, it admits the attainability of peace through the endeavors of stakeholders to negotiate and coordinate. By contrast, RT demonstrates a more explicit preference for conflict.

The peace frame within CGTN emphasizes that disputes between the Philippines and China should be resolved through negotiation (the term "negotiation" appears in 37 out of 90 clips with a peace frame). This confidence and belief in the possibility of resolving problems

through consultation and negotiation instead of military threats appears to indicate China’s reluctance to use force, at least discursively. As Feng (2007: 25) summarizes, “under security threats, diplomatic means and negotiations are preferred and proposed as the first preference” for China, and even if “force is employed under the condition that all other means turn out to be unsuccessful, the Chinese will still pursue opportunities to go back to the negotiation table for a peaceful settlement.” The constant emphasis on the need to resolve the China–Philippines conflict through peaceful talks (CGTN, 2016a, 2016d), dialogue and negotiations (CGTN, 2016f), and consultation and negotiation (CGTN, 2016b, 2016b, 2016c) demonstrates China’s official appeal to solve the South China Sea deadlock through diplomatic measures instead of the use of force.



**Figure 3 Peace and conflict frames in CGTN and RT**

(share of news bulletins containing the frame)

CGTN’s preference for a peace frame is the most prominently observed in scenes where potential military conflicts are involved. In other words, even when reporting on military exchanges between China and its largest geopolitical competitor, the United States, CGTN frames them in a peaceful manner. In clip (CGTN, 2016e) a US military visit is covered and visually represented as an example of peaceful cooperation. Instead of showing a series of military drills conducted by both China and the United States, CGTN presents a military visit paid by the United States to China (Figure 4). by means of an amicable scene of US military visitors being greeted by welcoming Chinese children. This showcases the prospect of a

peaceful resolution of the South China Sea conflict by the United States and China. The voiceover announces that the US army harbored a cautious yet open attitude toward forming a new balance between China and the United States after the divisive arbitration. This entangled visual and verbal message downplays the military pressure that the US navy poses to China to push it to accept the arbitration. CGTN instead emphasizes that US forces attempt to restore their relationship with their Chinese counterparts after the arbitration event. The voiceover relays the commander's words:

Fleet Commander Justin Hart spoke briefly to the media and said the visit was aimed at building relationships with his counterparts from the Chinese Navy (CGTN, 2016e).



**Figure 4.** CGTN's footage of the US Army at Qingdao (CGTN, 2016e)

The Chinese traditional national culture plays a role in shaping CGTN's communication style, especially its peaceful framing preference (D'Hooghe 2015). This is confirmed by the fieldwork (Interviewee C3, C6, 2017): two staff members working in CGTN, one American and one Chinese person, mention the influence of Confucian culture on CGTN's editorial practice. The Chinese anchor points to Zhong Yong (中庸), alias the doctrine of the mean. According to him, Zhong Yong philosophy demands that people be humble; even if they did good deeds, they should be reluctant to admit their own excellence or initiate conflict with others (Interviewee C3, 2017). The American manager of CGTN confirmed that CGTN represents a moderate voice and the distinctive Chinese personality trait of humbleness

(Interviewee C6, 2017). In CGTN's context, Zhong Yong's thinking triggers the whole organization to employ discourses that promote peaceful negotiation as a method of conflict management (Ji et al., 2010). Also, Zhong Yong's thinking restrains journalists from CGTN from deviating from the peace-oriented official discourse. In other words, this philosophy permeates the organization and influences its frame selection.

Compared with the peace frames that dominated CGTN, RT has a preference for adopting conflict frames in its coverage of the Ukraine crisis. The main components of the conflict frame within RT were confrontations between the police and protestors and the asymmetric visualization of casualties on the police side. First, most of RT's conflict frames were substantiated with physical confrontations between the police and protestors, with protestors being portrayed as the imposers of violence. Taking Figure 5 as an example: the protestors on the left have been portrayed as initiating violence against the police who are squeezed into the right corner, adopting defensive postures. The horizontal composition divides the photograph into an equal dichotomy between left and right, which also creates a contrast between protestors (the attacker) and the police (the victims). This visual composition, together with the contrast in body language, portrays protestors as a security threat to the social order and national stability of Ukrainian society because the police are considered the safeguards of order and stability (RT, 2013a).

RT is found to asymmetrically present casualties in favor of the police, which corresponds to the practice of war journalism. For example, after a skirmish between the police and protestors, the anchor only disclosed that "70 policemen were injured, and 20 protestors arrested" without revealing the casualties on the protestor side (RT, 2014a). This partial representation of police casualties exaggerates the violence of protestors and excludes protestor casualties due to police violence. Furthermore, RT interviews an injured policeman to reveal the protestors' brutality. The interviewed policeman says, "They covered my head and bound my arms and legs with masking tape and taped up my eyes as well" (RT, 2014c). This description of the attack allowed the police to provide their side of the "truth" regarding the conflict to the audience, whereas voices from the protestor side were largely downplayed. Thus, the police were in a better position to shape the audience's understanding of the conflict, making the audience more likely to empathize with the police and the pro-Russia Yanukovich government that they defend.



Figure 5. A burning excavator pushed by protestors toward the police (RT, 2013c)



Figure 6 An injured Ukrainian policeman (RT, 2014i)



**Figure 7 A Ukrainian policeman on fire (RT, 2014i)**

This biased representation is further intensified by a visual representation of police casualties. For example Figures 6 and 7 showcase the outcomes of physical attacks against the police. The faces or bodies of policemen, positioned in the center of the photograph, intend to create a powerful emotional response. According to visual studies, the human face is the object that is the most likely to arouse affective reactions, such as compassion (Smith & Rossit, 2018). By allowing the audience to directly gaze at the face of a wounded policeman, RT attempted to mobilize the politics of compassion to construct a shared “we” identity between the police and audience; RT thus invited the audience to reevaluate the Ukraine crisis without hard persuasion. RT highlights physical confrontations between police and protestors and mobilizes the audience’s emotive reactions such that they would sympathize with the Ukrainian police.

We postulate that RT’s preference for conflict frames primarily has its roots in the Soviet propaganda system. Soviet propaganda featured a recurrent conflict frame during the entire Cold War era (Barghoorn, 2015; Shultz & Godson, 1984). Influenced by a Leninist dialectical view of history driven by class struggles, Soviet propagandists hold that political interactions and historical evolution are driven by constant power struggles ranging from diplomacy, as institutionalized conflict, and war, as a form of violent continuation of political clashes (Shultz & Godson, 1984). Reflected in the foreign propaganda realm, Cold War confrontations between capitalist states and the socialist bloc and those between colonial and imperialist groups are normally structured in conflict frames (Barghoorn 2015: 41). Even during the period of *détente*, “conflict” constituted the main mediated frame for Russian

propaganda because Soviet propagandists held the belief that peace could only be achieved through struggle (Adam 1980). With the impact of this historical legacy, RT frames the Ukraine crisis as a conflict between Ukrainian protestors and the police, with the West and Russia even attempting to portray Russia as an upholder of regional peace and order.

A more fundamental factor that accounts for RT's preference for a conflict frame is Russia's political culture. Different from China's advocacy of harmony and peace, Russia's political culture is established on the martial principle of *Kto-Kovo* ("who dominates whom") (Ermarth, 2009). The principle does not encourage conflicts to be resolved by "negotiations, bargaining, voting, or legal adjudication" but through struggle, intrigue, and force (Ermarth 2009: 87). The Marxist–Leninist ideology, such as Marx's remark that the destruction of the regime of feudalism and capitalism must "be offensive and executed quickly, pre-emptively if possible" further underlines the significance of offensiveness (Klein, 1989). Some commentators believe that Russia's relative weakness compared with the United States would invite an external attack instead of peaceful *détente*. Therefore, during the Cold War era, Soviet leaders refused to accept the cooperative mutual reassurance that the United States proposed; rather, they stressed unilateral damage control, namely harnessing the capacity to initiate an aggressive first strike to ensure security (Snyder, 1977). RT's discursive attack against the West is a mirror image of the Russian worldview, which is based on the strategic inferiority of Russia. Drawing on an underdog mentality, RT implies that Russia holds a discursively disadvantaged position, susceptible to Western geopolitical and geocultural attacks. The impression of Russia's discursive vulnerability, once established, is mobilized to rationalize the channel's preemptive discursive counteroffensive.

## **Conclusion**

Our research provides a nuanced, contextualized, and historicized comparison of Chinese and Russian international broadcasters. It extends comparative studies of China's and Russia's international communication approaches (Rawnsley, 2015; Xie & Boyd-Barrett, 2015). Contradicting Hallin and Mancini's (2004, 2011) simplified categorization of political communication that is either within the confine of liberal democracy or on a West/non-West dichotomy, we dig into the characteristics of the content and national and institutional cultures among non-Western international political communication.



	<b>CGTN</b>	<b>RT</b>	
<b>Source</b>	Nationality	China Other countries	Ukraine, The West
	Social position	Governments of developing countries, Chinese experts	Western marginalized experts, western/Ukraine officials, Crimean laypersons
<b>Frame</b>	Peace frame dominated	Conflict frame dominated	

**Table 1 Comparison between CGTN’s and RT’s communication styles**

Our comparative study confirms some of the features of communication of CGTN and RT observed in prior studies. CGTN has a stronger tendency to quote the official sources of the host country (Fearon & Rodrigues, 2019; Gabore, 2020). Following China’s claim to be a developing country, CGTN increases the visibility of developing sources in its coverage. This echoes an interview with CGTN’s controller Liu Cong, in which he states that CGTN not only envisions to empower “a variety of voices... not just voice of China, but also voices of other Asian countries, of African countries and of Latin American nations” (Li & Wu, 2018: 41). Although previous studies have attributed CGTN’s sourcing patterns, such as prioritizing official sources, to Confucian culture (Fearon & Rodrigues, 2019) and attributed the vocalization of developing countries to China’s strategy of maintaining diplomatic relationships (Gabore, 2020), we consider these strategies to be the implementation of China’s developing country identity.

In order to avoid appearing as a megaphone for the Kremlin, RT provides airtime to Western experts and Ukrainian citizens. This implies that the media delicately aligns itself with the disruptive dimension of Russia’s foreign policy line of undermining Western moral, cultural, and political supremacy to justify that Russia inherits the European civilization and its ensuing great power status (Neumann, 2016; Yablokov, 2015a). This institutional flexibility to accommodate marginalized opinion holders in Western societies, including some anti-Russian ones, not only leads to a widened viewership in Western societies (Orttung & Nelson, 2019) but also proves to be effective in fanning US isolationism among US audiences (Carter

& Carter, 2021). RT's tolerant, dynamic working environment and democratic organizational structure stimulates reporters to reveal the disfunction and corruption of Western political institutions, adroitly playing into the paradigm of watchdog journalism<sup>3</sup> and anti-establishment populism (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007).

Framing is the other angle from which we scrutinized the communication styles of the two media sources and cultural contexts. CGTN holds a preference for peace frames, whereas RT favors conflict frames. We link CGTN's emphasis on negotiation as a mechanism to seek peaceful settlement of regional conflicts and peaceful cooperation with the United States to China's initiative to build the image of a peaceful rising power (Chang & Lin, 2014; X. Li & Worm, 2011). Such peaceful discourse is both strategically geared toward dispelling international suspicions of the "China threat" (Li, 2008) and legitimizing China's assertive actions with peaceful discourse (Šimalčík, 2020). RT's highlighting of physical confrontations between protestors and police during the Euromaidan protests confirms the content analysis findings related to Russia's external-oriented media (Gaufman, 2015; Riga, 2015; Miazhevich, 2018). Its overrepresentation of police casualties at the expense of protestors casualties may fuel public aversion toward the violence of protestors and thus legitimize Russia's interference in Eastern Ukraine. RT's confrontational framing style is a revival of a Soviet propaganda style that used to emphasize the inevitability of violence and clashes among countries or domestic forces, and justify Russia's interventions (Barghoorn, 2015).

In terms of journalistic culture, CGTN and RT fall into different categories. CGTN's advocacy of consultation and negotiation as a regional dispute resolution mechanism can be viewed as peaceful and constructive journalism, that provides solutions and positive prospects (Zhang, 2014). However, its capacity to convince is likely to be undermined when proactive measures are being implemented in the South China Sea area (Kuok, 2019). By contrast, RT follows the style of war journalism that dichotomizes conflicting forces, dramatizes confrontational scenes, and exaggerates casualties in a one-sided manner (Lichtenstein et al., 2018). Combining the in-depth interviews and prior literature, we argue

---

<sup>3</sup> As per watchdog journalism, news media is perceived as an independent monitor of state power that holds the public sector accountable for civil society (Norris, 2014); however, foreign news media organizations may interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign states.

that the Zhong Yong philosophy of Confucius culture and the aggressive martial culture of Russia influence CGTN's and RT's framing preferences. This analysis is an attempt to link political culture with the communication style of international broadcasters and lays a foundation for more comprehensive theoretical endeavors.

A comparison using the same grid indicates that the diverging sourcing and framing strategies employed by CGTN and RT require an understanding of national and organizational cultures as well as international identity. As such, this study not only provides insights into the production and mediation processes of CGTN and RT but also opens the space for this culturalist approach for other non-Western international broadcasters, such as in Iran, Egypt, and Turkey. It may also help journalists from outside Russia and China make sense of the programs produced in these States, improve their own understanding of international communication strategies, and develop their own investigations into authoritarian politics.

This study has some limitations. First, the comparative study of South China Sea arbitration and the Ukraine crisis cannot claim to represent the whole of CGTN and RT's communication styles, even less the overall communication strategies of these two countries. Future researches could perform longitudinal content analysis in order to assess the stability of the highlighted features, or on the contrary some possible inflection points. Second, future studies could explore CGTN's and RT's digital strategies in a multimodal approach, especially considering social media platforms, which are important for China and Russia's international diplomacy (Huang, 2021; Tsvetkova, 2020; Zhang & Ong'ong'a, 2021). Third, an audience-related study would bring crucial light on the impact of the said strategies. Although some pioneering studies have validated RT's popularity among certain global audiences (Orttung & Nelson, 2019) and its effectiveness in fanning US isolationism among US audiences (Carter & Carter, 2021), more comparative audience studies on non-Western international broadcasters (e.g. Morales 2020) are warranted to illustrate an ever-shifting global media consumption landscape.

## References

- Abrams, S. 2016. "Beyond Propaganda: Soviet Active Measures in Putin's Russia." *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 15(1): 5–31. <https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.15.1.01>
- Adam, U. 1980. "The Soviet Union and the Rules of the International Game." In *The Soviet Union in world politics*, edited by K. London, Boulder Colo.: Westview Press. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/version/46390485>
- Alpermann, B. 2020. "'In other news': China's International Media Strategy on Xinjiang -- CGTN and Xinhua on YouTube." Paper presented at the Association for Social Science Research on China (ASC) Annual, Ludwigshafen, October.
- Atlantic Council. 2020. "Chinese Discourse Power: China's Use of Information Manipulation in Regional and Global Competition" (Atlantic Council, p. 30). Atlantic Council.
- Atwater, T., and Green, N. F. 1988. "News Sources in Network Coverage of International Terrorism." *Journalism Quarterly* 65(4): 967–971.
- Avgerinos, K. P. 2009. "Russia's Public Diplomacy Effort: What the Kremlin is Doing and Why it's Not Working." *Journal of Public and International Affairs* 20: 115-132.
- Barghoorn, F. C. 2015. *Soviet Foreign Propaganda*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bartholomé, G., Lecheler, S., and de Vreese, C. 2018. "Towards A Typology of Conflict Frames: Substantiveness and Interventionism in Political Conflict News." *Journalism Studies* 19(12): 1689–1711. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2017.1299033>
- Benabdallah, L. 2017. "Explaining Attractiveness: Knowledge Production and Power Projection in China's Policy for Africa." *Journal of International Relations and Development*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-017-0109-x>
- Bennett, W. L. 1996. "An Introduction to Journalism Norms and Representations of Politics." *Political Communication* 13(4): 373-384.
- Bensa, C. P., and Wijaya, L. 2017. "Media Propaganda Techniques in the South China Sea Dispute." *Jurnal Komunikasi Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia* 2. <https://doi.org/10.25008/jkiski.v2i1.93>
- Bernard, L. 2019. "The Legal Impact of the South China Sea Arbitration Award on Indonesia." *Australian Institute of International Affairs*. <http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/the-legal-impact-of-the-south-china-sea-arbitration-award-on-indonesia/>
- Bērziņš, J., Jaeski, A., Laity, M., Maliukevicius, N., Navys, A., Osborne, G., and Tatham, S. 2015. "Analysis of Russia's information campaign against Ukraine." *NATO StratCom Report*.

- Biersack, J., and O’Lear, S. 2014. “The geopolitics of Russia’s annexation of Crimea: Narratives, identity, silences, and energy.” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 55(3): 247–269. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2014.985241>
- Bjola, C., Cassidy, J., and Manor, I. 2019. “Public Diplomacy in the Digital Age.” *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 14(1–2): 83–101. <https://doi.org/10.1163/1871191X-14011032>
- Brady, A.-M. 2015. “China’s Foreign Propaganda Machine.” *Journal of Democracy* 26(4): 51–59. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2015.0056>
- Brown, J., 2008. *Public Diplomacy & Propaganda: Their Differences* [WWW Document]. Am. Dipl. URL <https://americandiplomacy.web.unc.edu/2008/09/public-diplomacy-propaganda-their-differences/> (accessed 9.3.22).
- Burns, J. P. 1989. *The Chinese Communist Party’s Nomenklatura System*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge.
- Carter, E. B., and Carter, B. L. 2021. “Questioning More: RT, Outward-Facing Propaganda, and the Post-West World Order.” *Security Studies* 30(1), 49–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2021.1885730>
- CCTV English. 2016. “President Xi Urges New Media Outlet to ‘Tell China Stories Well’.” *CCTV.Com*, December 31. <http://english.cctv.com/2016/12/31/ARTIdbvXHYpQnQ35nWBGttZg161231.shtml>
- CGTN (Director). 2016a, June 4. *Cambodia: Carter wrong about South China Sea*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WauC6zypAoE>
- CGTN (Director). 2016b, June 7. *Chinese FM insists on settling South China Sea disputes via bilateral negotiation*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dlfdWx1FVH4>
- CGTN (Director). 2016c, July 6. *China will never accept nor recognize whatever ruling the South China Sea arbitral tribunal produces*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3sTUQfUUjI>
- CGTN (Director). 2016d, July 10. *African media voice support for China’s stance on South China Sea*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jIrZ9UEcoO0>
- CGTN (Director). 2016e, August 9. *US naval ship visits Qingdao after disputed South China Sea ruling*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkOwZwuDOyg>
- CGTN (Director). 2016f, August 16. *China calls ASEAN members to safeguard stability in South China Sea*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzbSZzHDE\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzbSZzHDE_Y)
- CGTN. 2020. “About us—China Global Television Network.” <https://www.cgtn.com/about-us>, Retrieved at September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2022.
- Chang, T.-K., and Lin, F. 2014. “From Propaganda to Public Diplomacy: Assessing China’s International Practice and its Image, 1950–2009.” *Public Relations Review* 40(3): 450–458. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.04.008>

- Chernobrov, D., and Briant, E. L. 2020. "Competing Propagandas: How the United States and Russia Represent Mutual Propaganda Activities." *Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263395720966171>
- Cook, T. E. 1998. *Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cottle, S. 2006. *Mediatized Conflict: Developments in Media and Conflict Studies*. London: McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Couldry, N. 2010. *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics after Neoliberalism*. Los Angeles: Sage publications.
- CSIS. 2014. "Rossiya Segodnya: The National Champion of News." *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. <https://www.csis.org/blogs/post-soviet-post/rossiya-segodnya-national-champion-news>
- Cull, N. J. 2008. "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, 31–54.
- Cull, N.J., 2013. "Roof for a House Divided: How U.S. Propaganda Evolved into Public Diplomacy," in: *Roof for a House Divided*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Curtis, H. 2016. "Constructing Cooperation: Chinese Ontological Security Seeking in the South China Sea Dispute." *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 31(4), 537–549. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2015.1066698>
- d'Hooghe, I. 2015. *China's Public Diplomacy*. Leiden: Brill. <https://brill.com/view/title/24897>
- de Vreese, C. H., Peter, J., and Semetko, H. A. 2001. "Framing Politics at the Launch of the Euro: A Cross-National Comparative Study of Frames in the News." *Political Communication* 18(2): 107–122.
- Deng, X. 1974. "Speech to the Special Session of the UN General Assembly, 10 April 1974." *Peking Review, Supplement To* 15: 1–5.
- Diamond, L., and Schell, O. 2019. "Media." In *China's Influence and American Interests: Promoting Constructive Vigilance*. Stanford: Hoover Press.
- Elsawah, M., and Howard, P. N. 2020. "'Anything that Causes Chaos': The Organizational Behavior of Russia Today (RT)." *Journal of Communication* 70(5): 623–645.
- Entman, R. M. 1993. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." *Journal of Communication* 43(4): 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- Entman, R. M. 2008. "Theorizing Mediated Public Diplomacy: The U.S. Case." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13: 87–102. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161208314657>
- Ermarth, F. W. 2009. "Russian Strategic Culture in Flux: Back to the Future?" In *Strategic Culture and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Culturally Based Insights into*

- Comparative National Security Policymaking*, edited by J. L. Johnson, K. M. Kartchner, and J. A. Larsen, 85–96. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230618305\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230618305_6)
- Fearon, T., and Rodrigues, U. M. 2019. “The dichotomy of China Global Television Network’s news coverage.” *Pacific Journalism Review: Te Koakoa* 25(1 & 2): 102–121. <https://doi.org/10.24135/pjr.v25i1.404>
- Gabore, S. M. 2020. “Western and Chinese Media Representation of Africa in COVID-19 News Coverage.” *Asian Journal of Communication* 30(5): 299–316. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2020.1801781>
- Gagliardone, I. 2013. “China as a Persuader: CCTV Africa’s First Steps in the African Mediasphere.” *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* 34(3): 25–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02560054.2013.834835>
- Gagliardone, I., and Pál, N. 2017. “Freer but not Free Enough? Chinese Journalists Finding their Feet in Africa.” *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism* 18(8): 1049–1063. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916636171>
- Galtung, J. 1986. “On the Role of the Media in Worldwide Security and Peace.” In *Peace and Communication*, 249–266. Universidad para La Paz, San Jose, Costa Rica.
- Galtung, J., and Ruge, M. 1981. “Structuring and Selecting News.” In *The Manufacture Of News N/E: Deviance, Social Problems and the Mass Media* (2nd Revised edition), edited by J. Young and S. Cohen. Constable. London.
- Gaufman, E. 2015. “Memory, Media, and Securitization: Russian Media Framing of the Ukrainian Crisis.” *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 1(1): 141–175.
- Ginneken, J. 2009. “Who gets to Speak in the World News?” In *Understanding Global News: A Critical Introduction*, 85–108. New York: SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446217955>
- Hallin, D. C., and Mancini, P. 2004. *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hallin, D. C., and Mancini, P. 2011. *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Headley, J. 2015. “Challenging the EU’s Claim to Moral Authority: Russian Talk of ‘Double Standards’.” *Asia Europe Journal* 13(3): 297–307. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-015-0417-y>
- Herpen, M. H. V. 2015. *Putin’s Propaganda Machine: Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Huang, Z. A., & Wang, R. (2021). “Exploring China’s Digitalization of Public Diplomacy on Weibo and Twitter: A Case Study of the U.S.–China Trade War”. *International Journal of Communication*, 15(0), 28.

- Hutchings, S., and Szostek, J. 2015. "Dominant Narratives in Russian Political and Media Discourse during the Ukraine Crisis." In *Ukraine and Russia: People, Politics, Propaganda and Perspectives*. 183–196. Agnieszka Pikulicka-Wilczewska, Richard Sakwa
- Interviewee C3. 2017. *Interview with Interviewee C3*.
- Interviewee C6. 2017. *Interview with Interviewee C6*.
- Jagers, J., and Walgrave, S. 2007. "Populism as Political Communication Style: An Empirical Study of Political Parties' Discourse in Belgium." *European Journal of Political Research* 46(3): 319–345. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00690.x>
- Ji, L.-J., Lee, A., and Guo, T. 2010. *The Thinking Styles of Chinese People*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199541850.013.0012>
- Kim, Y., and Jahng, M. R. 2016. "Who Frames Nuclear Testing? Understanding Frames and News Sources in the US and South Korean News Coverage of North Korean Nuclear Testing." *The Journal of International Communication* 22(1): 126–142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13216597.2015.1076732>
- Kiseleva, Y. 2015. "Russia's Soft Power Discourse: Identity, Status and the Attraction of Power." *Politics* 35(3–4): 316–329. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9256.12100>
- Klein, Y. 1989. "The Sources of Soviet Strategic Culture." *The Journal of Soviet Military Studies* 2(4): 453–490. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518048908429961>
- Kluver, R., Cooley, S., and Hinck, R. 2019. "Contesting Strategic Narratives in a Global Context: The World Watches the 2016 U.S. Election." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 24(1): 92–114. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161218786426>
- Kremlin.ru. 2013. "Visit to Russia Today Television Channel." President of Russia, June 11. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18319>
- Kuok, L. 2019. "How China's Actions in the South China Sea Undermine the Rule of Law." *Global China*, November.
- Kurlantzick, J. 2007. *Charm offensive: How China's soft power is transforming the world*. 需 New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.
- Larson, D. W., and Shevchenko, A. 2014. "Russia says no: Power, status, and emotions in foreign policy." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47(3): 269–279. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2014.09.003>
- Lasorsa, D. L., and Reese, S. D. 1990. "News Source Use in the Crash of 1987: A Study of Four National Media." *Journalism Quarterly* 67(1): 60–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769909006700110>
- Lasswell, H. D. 1927. *Propaganda technique in the world war*. Cambridge, MA: MIT press.
- Lee, M. A. 1998. *Unreliable Sources: A Guide to Detecting Bias in News Media*. Reprint edition. New York: Kensington Publishing Corp.



- Lee, S. T. 2010. "Peace Journalism: Principles and Structural Limitations in the News Coverage of Three Conflicts." *Mass Communication and Society* 13(4): 361–384. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205430903348829>
- Li, A., and Wu, M. 2018. "'See the Difference': What Difference? The New Missions of Chinese International Communication." *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 13(1): 41–47. <https://doi.org/10.16997/wpcc.275>
- Li, X., and Worm, V. 2011. "Building China's Soft Power for a Peaceful Rise." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 16(1): 69–89. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11366-010-9130-2>
- Liao, L., and Ma, M. 2014. "The Role and Influence of China's Mainstream Media in South China Sea Disputes? An Analysis from the Perspective of Signaling." In *China and the International Society: Vol. Volume 1* (pp. 169–201). WORLD CENTURY PUBLISHING CORPORATION. [https://doi.org/10.1142/9781938134517\\_0007](https://doi.org/10.1142/9781938134517_0007) .
- Lichtenstein, D., Esau, K., Pavlova, L., Osipov, D., and Argylov, N. 2018. "Framing the Ukraine crisis: A comparison between talk show debates in Russian and German television." *International Communication Gazette*. Advance online publication <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048518755209>
- Löffmann, G. 2013. "Hollywood, the Pentagon, and the Cinematic Production of National Security." *Critical Studies on Security* 1(3): 280–294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2013.820015>
- Madrid-Morales, D. 2017. "The Internationalization of Chinese Media: A Production Study of CGTN Africa." *Communication Papers* 6(11): 51–69.
- Mankoff, J. 2014. *Russia's Latest Land Grab*. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2014-04-17/russias-latest-land-grab>
- Marsh, V. 2017. "Tiangao or Tianxia? The Ambiguities of CCTV's English-Language News for Africa." In *China's Media Go Global*, edited by D. K. Thussu, H. de Burgh, and A. Shi, 117–135. London: Routledge.
- Matingwina, S. 2016. "China's Public Diplomacy in Zimbabwe: Perceptions, opportunities and challenges." *African East-Asian Affairs*, 4, 96-125.
- McGoldrick, A., and Lynch, J. 2000. *Peace journalism*. [https://www.transcend.org/tri/downloads/McGoldrick\\_Lynch\\_Peace-Journalism.pdf](https://www.transcend.org/tri/downloads/McGoldrick_Lynch_Peace-Journalism.pdf)
- McGuire, W. J. 1961. "Resistance to Persuasion Conferred by Active and Passive Prior Refutation of the Same and Alternative Counterarguments." *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 63(2): 326.
- McGuire, W. J. 1964. *Inducing Resistance to Persuasion. Some Contemporary Approaches*. <https://opus4.kobv.de/opus4-Fromm/frontdoor/index/index/docId/16094>
- Miazhevich, G. 2018. "Nation Branding in the Post-Broadcast Era: The Case of RT." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 21(5): 575–593. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549417751228>

- Mingjiang, L. 2008. "China Debates Soft Power." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2(2): 287–308. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pon011>
- Morales, P. 2020. "Mind the (Cultural) Gap: International News Channels and the Challenge of Attracting Latin American Audiences." *Media Culture & Society*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720972307>
- Nelson, A. 2013. *CCTV's international expansion: China's grand strategy for media?* [Report to the Center for International Media Assistance]. National Endowment for Democracy.
- Neumann, I. B. 2016. "Russia's Europe, 1991-2016: Inferiority to Superiority." *International Affairs* 92(6): 1381–1399. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12752>
- Norris, P. 2014. "Watchdog Journalism." In *The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability*, edited by M. Bovens, R. E. Goodin, & T. Schillemans, Oxford. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199641253.013.0015>
- Orttung, R. W., and Nelson, E. 2019. "Russia Today's Strategy and Effectiveness on YouTube." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 35(2): 77–92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586X.2018.1531650>
- Palmer, J. 2018. "China's Global Propaganda Is Aimed at Bosses, Not Foreigners." *Foreign Policy*, October 1. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/01/chinas-global-propaganda-is-aimed-at-bosses-not-foreigners/>
- Pan, C., Isakhan, B., and Nwokora, Z. 2019. "Othering as Soft-Power Discursive Practice: China Daily's Construction of Trump's America in the 2016 Presidential Election." *Politics*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263395719843219>
- Pan, Z., and Kosicki, G. M. 1993. "Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse." *Political Communication* 10(1): 55–75.
- Panizza, F. 2005. "Introduction: Populism and the mirror of democracy." In *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, edited by F. Panizza, 1–31. New York: Verso.
- Pezard, S., Radin, A., Szayna, T., and Larrabee, F. 2017. "European Relations with Russia: Threat Perceptions, Responses, and Strategies in the Wake of the Ukrainian Crisis." *RAND Corporation*. <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR1579>
- Pifer, S. 2019. "Five years after Crimea's illegal annexation, the issue is no closer to resolution." *Brookings*, March 18. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/03/18/five-years-after-crimeas-illegal-annexation-the-issue-is-no-closer-to-resolution/>
- Price, M. 2003. Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of International Broadcasting. *Cardozo Arts and Entertainment Law Journal* 21(1): 51–85.
- Przeworski, A., and Teune, H. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. Hoboken: Wiley-Interscience. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1958372>

- Pu, X. 2017. "Controversial Identity of a Rising China." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 10(2): 131–149. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pox004>
- Putin, V. 2013. *Visit to Russia Today television channel*. President of Russia. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18319>
- Rabena, A. 2018. "Understanding the Philippines' South China Sea Policy." *The Maritime Executive*, <https://www.maritime-executive.com/editorials/understanding-the-philippines-south-china-sea-policy>
- Rawnsley, G. D. 2013. "Thought-Work" and Propaganda: Chinese Public Diplomacy and Public Relations after Tiananmen Square. In Auerbach, J., & Castronovo, R. (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies*. 147-162. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Rawnsley, G. D. 2015. "To Know Us is to Love Us: Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting in Contemporary Russia and China." *Politics* 35(3–4): 273–286. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9256.12104>
- Richter, M. L. 2017. "What We Know about RT (Russia Today)." *European Values Think Tank*. Prague, Czech Republic <https://www.europeanvalues.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/What-We-Know-about-RT-Russia-Today-1.pdf>
- Riga. 2015. *Analysis of Russia's Information Campaign against Ukraine*. NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence. <https://www.stratcomcoe.org/analysis-russias-information-campaign-against-ukraine>
- Roman, N., Wanta, W., and Buniak, I. 2017. "Information Wars: Eastern Ukraine Military Conflict Coverage in the Russian, Ukrainian and U.S. Newscasts." *International Communication Gazette* 79(4): 357–378. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048516682138>
- RT. 2013a. 'Lucky Escape': Ukraine jumps from 'sinking ship' as EU deal suspended. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p95e4LAiJWs&t=1s>
- RT. 2013b, December 2. Putin: Ukraine unrest looks like planned action, not revolution. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAclITaR7W4>
- RT. 2013c, December 9. Ukraine: Era of Deep Division? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIYJbDnhBAA>
- RT. 2013d, December 14. Protest Mode: Where to go and what to see in revolutionary Kiev. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0eMBb1lFEs>
- RT. 2014a, January 20. Angry Riots: Ukrainians set up catapult to fire at police. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vH5sDDh71WE>
- RT. 2014b, January 25. Kiev Face-Off: Ukraine opposition urges snap elections, refuses president's offer. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cle7EXjV8Y>
- RT (Director). 2014c, February 25. 'We can't help now!': Europeans question Brussels' plan to bail out Ukraine. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p201JFRrFuI>

- RT (Director). 2014d, March 12. *Celente: US ignores own law in aiding post-coup Ukraine govt.* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvgL\\_QU4h2Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvgL_QU4h2Q)
- RT. 2020. "The first TV news network in the world to hit 10 bln views on Youtube RT." *RT International*, January 29. <https://www.rt.com/about-us/press-releases/rt-youtube-10-billion-views/>
- SCMP. 2009. "Beijing in 45b yuan Global Media Drive." *South China Morning Post*, January, 13th 2009. <https://www.scmp.com/article/666847/beijing-45b-yuan-global-media-drive>
- Seib, P., 2009. "Public diplomacy and journalism: Parallels, ethical issues, and practical concerns." *American Behavioral Scientist*. 52, 772–786.
- Semetko, H., and Valkenburg, P. 2000. "Framing European Politics: A content analysis of Press and Television News." *Journal of Communication* 50(2): 93 - 109.
- Shambaugh, D. 2017. "China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy." In *Critical Readings on Communist Party of China*, edited by K. E. Brodsgaard, 713–751. Leiden: BRILL.
- Sheafer, T., and Gabay, I. 2009. "Mediated Public Diplomacy: A Strategic Contest over International Agenda Building and Frame Building." *Political Communication* 26(4): 447–467. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600903297240>
- Shultz, R. H., and Godson, R. 1984. *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy*. 1st edition. Oxford: Pergamon-Brassey's.
- Šimalčík, M. 2020. "China and the South China Sea Conflict: A Case for Confucian Strategic Culture?" *The Journal of Indian and Asian Studies* 1(1): 1-33. <https://doi.org/10.1142/S2717541320500023>
- Simons, G. 2011. "Attempting to Re-brand the Branded: Russia's International Image in the 21st Century." *Russian Journal of Communication* 4(3–4): 322–350. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19409419.2011.10756816>
- Simons, G. 2015. "Taking the New Public Diplomacy Online: Russia and China." *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 11(2): 111–124. <https://doi.org/10.1057/pb.2014.22>
- Simonyan, M. 2016. "The View from Russia: 'Your News Channel' Is Here to Stay." In *The Future of 24-Hour News New Directions, New Challenges*, edited by S. Cushion, and R. Sambrook, 49–62. [https://www.peterlang.com/view/9781433136948/14\\_Chapter04.xhtml](https://www.peterlang.com/view/9781433136948/14_Chapter04.xhtml).
- Smith, F. W., and Rossit, S. 2018. "Identifying and Detecting Facial Expressions of Emotion in Peripheral Vision." *PLOS ONE* 13(5): e0197160. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0197160>
- Snyder, J. L. 1977. *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*. [Product Page]. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R2154.html>

- Strating, R. 2020. "Norm Contestation, Statecraft and the South China Sea: Defending Maritime Order." *The Pacific Review*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2020.1804990>.
- Suzuki, S. 2009. "Chinese Soft Power, Insecurity Studies, Myopia and Fantasy." *Third World Quarterly*, 30(4), 779–793. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40388149>.
- Szostek, J. 2020. "What happens to public diplomacy during information war? Critical reflections on the conceptual framing of international communication." *International Journal of Communication*, 14, 2728–2748.
- Tankard, J. W. 1991. *Media frames: Approaches to conceptualization and measurement*. Paper presented to the "Communication Theory and Methodology Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Convention, Boston, Massachusetts
- The Washington Post. 2022. "Social Platforms' Bans Muffle Russian State Media Propaganda." *Washington Post*, March 16. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/03/16/facebook-youtube-russian-bans/>
- Tolz, V. 2001. *Inventing the nation: Russia*. London: Arnold.
- Tsvetkova, N. 2020. "Russian Digital Diplomacy: A Rising Cyber Soft Power?" In *Russia's Public Diplomacy: Evolution and Practice*, edited by A. A. Velikaya and G. Simons, 103–117. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-12874-6\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-12874-6_6)
- Tuchman, G. C. 1980. *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: Free Press.
- Varrall, M. 2015. *Chinese worldviews and China's foreign policy*. Lowy Institute.
- Varrall, M. 2020. *Behind the News: Inside China Global Television Network*. Lowy Institute. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/behind-news-inside-china-global-television-network>
- Velikaya, A. A., and Simons, G, eds. 2020. *Russia's Public Diplomacy: Evolution and Practice*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-12874-6>
- Von Twickel, N. 2010. "Russia Today Courts Viewers With Controversy." *The Moscow Times*, March 23. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/sitemap/free/2010/3/article/russia-today-courts-viewers-with-controversy/401888.html>
- Webb, J., Schirato, T., and Danaher, G. 2002. *Understanding Bourdieu*. Allen & Unwin.
- Wilson, J. L. 2015. "Russia and China Respond to Soft Power: Interpretation and Readaptation of a Western Construct." *Politics* 35(3–4): 287–300. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9256.12095>

- Wittebols, J. H. 1996. "News from the Noninstitutional World: US and Canadian Television News Coverage of Social Protest." *Political Communication* 13(3): 345–361.
- Xie, S., and Boyd-Barrett, O. 2015. "External-National TV News Networks' Way to America: Is the United States Losing the Global 'Information War'?" *International Journal of Communication* 9: 66–83.
- Yablokov, I. 2015b. "Conspiracy Theories as a Russian Public Diplomacy Tool: The Case of Russia Today (RT)." *Politics*, 35(3–4), 301–315. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9256.12097>
- Zakaria, F. 2017. "The Decline of U.S. Influence is the Great Global Story of our Age." *Washington Post*, December 28. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/the-decline-of-us-influence-is-the-great-global-story-of-our-times/2017/12/28/bfe48262-ebf6-11e7-9f92-10a2203f6c8d\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/the-decline-of-us-influence-is-the-great-global-story-of-our-times/2017/12/28/bfe48262-ebf6-11e7-9f92-10a2203f6c8d_story.html)
- Zhang, Y. 2014. *Understand China's Media in Africa from the perspective of Constructive Journalism*. Paper presented at the international conference: China and Africa Media, Communications and Public Diplomacy.
- Zhang, Y., and Matingwina, S. 2016. "A New Representation of Africa? The Use of Constructive Journalism in the Narration of Ebola by *China Daily* and the BBC." *African Journalism Studies* 37(3): 19–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23743670.2016.1209224>
- Zhang, Y., and Ong'ong'a, D. O. 2021. "Unveiling China's Digital Diplomacy: A Comparative Analysis of CGTN Africa and BBC News Africa on Facebook." *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20578911211068217>
- Zhao, K. 2015. "The Motivation Behind China's Public Diplomacy." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 8(2): 167-196. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pov005>
- Zhao, S. 2018. "China and the South China Sea Arbitration: Geopolitics Versus International Law." *Journal of Contemporary China* 27(109): 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2017.1363012>
- Zhou, J. 2021. "Xi emphasizes South-South cooperation." *China Daily*, July 9. <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202107/09/WS60e6957ca310efa1bd66094e.html>
- Zhu, Y. 2022. "China's 'New Cultural Diplomacy' in International Broadcasting: Branding the Nation through CGTN Documentary." *International Journal of Cultural Policy*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2021.2022651>
- Zhu, Z., and Jiang, Y. 2018. "Russia Today's Strategy for YouTube Reports and Its Enlightenment(今日俄罗斯 YouTube 报道策略及启示)." *Chinese Journalist(中国记者)* 4: 118–121.

## Appendix

### *Appendix 1 Codebook of the nationality of the sources*

Code	Definition	CGTN	RT
1. Host Country	The country that hosts the news media	China	Russia
2. Country of dispute	The country that is directly involved in the dispute	The Philippines	Ukraine
3. West	Western countries that include the Anglo-European community	US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, members of European Union	
4. Controversial region	Region that has its sovereign status contested		Crimea (Ukraine-Russia)
5. Other	Political actors that originate from countries not listed above	E.g. South Africa, Laos, South Korea	E.g. Argentina, Belarus, Iraq

*Appendix 2 Codebook of the social positions of the sources*

Code	Definition	Examples: <i>CGTN</i>	Examples: <i>RT</i>
Government official	Elective Politicians, Administrative officials, speaks persons of government institutions, movement leaders	Hong Lei  Spokesperson of Chinese foreign ministry  ( <i>CGTN</i> , 2016d)	Victor Yanukovych  President of Ukraine  ( <i>RT</i> , 2013b)
Expert	Academic scholars, researchers of a think tank or governmental institutions or experts in a certain area	Wu Shicun  President of National Institute for South China Sea studies  ( <i>CGTN</i> , 2016n)	Robert Oulds  Chairman, Bruges Group Think Tank  ( <i>RT</i> , 2013e)
Common people	Regular citizens unaffiliated with a particular organisation or social position	Chen Yihu  Fisherman, Sansha  ( <i>CGTN</i> , 2016h)	Grigory Sitenko  Kiev Resident  ( <i>RT</i> , 2013c)
Army	Military force, including the governmental army, self-defence forces, militia	Admiral Sun Jianguo, Deputy PLA (People's liberation Army) Chief  ( <i>CGTN</i> , 2016f)	Vasily Lobov  Head, Air Force Veterans Association  ( <i>RT</i> , 2014e)
Entrepreneur	People are identified as representing, owning, or working for a large corporation or a small business	Li Manjuan  Zimbabwe Chinese business association ( <i>CGTN</i> , 2016l)	Alexey Miller  Gazprom CEO  ( <i>RT</i> , 2014b)
Police	Police officers and maritime law enforcers	Captain Xiang Guoxiang	Police beaten by masked rioters



		From No.1 Law Enforcement Vessel (CGTN, 2016c)	(RT, 2014c)
Journalist	Journalists, reporters, or correspondents of media institutions other than CGTN and RT	Rod Kapunan Columnist, The Standard (CGTN, 2016i)	Graham Phillips Ukraine-based Journalist
Activist	The people who advocate or practice activism		Anonymous protestor (RT, 2014g)

### ***Appendix 3 Codebook of the modes of representation of sources***

Code	Definition
Public speech	Formal statement at press conference, at congress or diplomatic meeting, etc.
Pre-recorded interview	Pre-recorded interview collected in formal setting: in the office, studio or in the scenes that are edited before broadcast.
Live interview	Synchronous interview of the guest speakers in the studio and through virtual video/audio call.
Leaked conversation	Leak phone calls, overheard speeches.
Ad hoc street interview	Street interview with passers-by, witnesses or common citizens without pre-arrangement.

*Appendix 4 Codebook of generic frames: peace and conflict frames*

Category	Criteria	Examples: <i>CGTN</i>	Examples: <i>RT</i>
Peace frame	<p>(a) Does it talk about negotiation and agreement?</p> <p>(b) Does it talk about the solution seeking and cooperation?</p> <p>(c) Does it talk about the ceasefire and disarmament?</p> <p>(d) Does it talk about reconstruction, rehabilitation?</p>	<p>“China adheres to an independent foreign policy of peace and a good neighbourhood policy”</p> <p>(<i>CGTN</i>, 2016j)</p>	<p>“In Ukraine, where the country’s president Victor Yanukovich has invited the leader of the opposition to become the prime minister in a bit to quell anti-government unrest.” (<i>RT</i>, 2014f)</p>
Conflict frame	<p>(a) Does the news story reflect verbal disagreement among actors?</p> <p>(b) Does the news story reflect one party/individual/group/country’s reproach of another?</p> <p>(c) Does the news story reflect any political contestation among different actors? (d) Does the news story reflect the physical confrontation and/or injury and casualty among actors?</p>	<p>“China has no alternative but to oppose to it and reject it”</p> <p>(<i>CGTN</i>, 2016g)</p>	<p>“There is still ongoing clashes between riot police and rioter, fires still burning, over to my head.”</p> <p>(<i>RT</i>, 2013a)</p>