



Research article

Framing Peace in Media Narratives and the Potential of Journalism in the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

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ABSTRACT

The Russia-Ukraine conflict, intensified since 2022, has sparked polarized media coverage worldwide. This study investigates the role of peace journalism, a reporting style focused on nonviolent solutions and empathy, in the coverage of this ongoing crisis. Employing a content analysis of 100 news articles from four major international outlets (CNN, BBC, Russia Today, and Al Jazeera), the study assesses the prevalence and variations of peace journalism elements in Western and non-Western media. Results show that peace journalism features prominently in non-Western outlets, such as Al Jazeera and Russia Today, which often emphasize conflict resolution, people-oriented framing, and empathetic narratives. By contrast, Western outlets lean toward adversarial and binary frames, portraying Russia as an aggressor and omitting nuanced perspectives. Logistic regression analysis reveals that non-Western outlets and opinion articles are significantly more likely to incorporate peace journalism principles, suggesting structural and ideological influences on coverage styles. This study highlights how peace journalism may enhance public understanding of conflicts by fostering balanced narratives and promoting diplomatic solutions, especially in complex international crises like the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Introduction

The Russia-Ukraine conflict, marked by significant geopolitical, historical, and ideological complexities, represents one of the most impactful conflicts of the 21st century. The origins of this conflict trace back to Ukraine's independence in 1991 following the collapse of the Soviet Union, which fundamentally altered Eastern Europe's geopolitical landscape (Mankoff, 2022). Since then, Ukraine has continuously navigated its identity and autonomy, striving for a distinct national trajectory that often clashes with Russia's strategic interests and its view of Ukraine as within its sphere of influence (Motyl, 2017). This prolonged geopolitical tension intensified with Ukraine's pro-European stance, culminating in significant events such as the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the 2022 Russian invasion, which have reshaped global security dynamics (Treisman, 2021). The international reaction to the 2022 escalation was swift, with Western powers imposing sanctions on Russia and providing military

support to Ukraine, while nations like China maintained neutrality, reflecting a complex global political matrix (Giles, 2022). This conflict has escalated beyond regional disputes, influencing international policies and affecting global energy markets. As the conflict unfolds, the media has played a crucial role in framing the narratives surrounding this crisis. Western media predominantly portrays Russia as an aggressor, emphasizing Ukraine's sovereignty, while Russian media justifies the invasion as a defensive response to NATO's expansion (Dornschneider & Nöthlich, 2022). This divergence underscores the power of media framing, which significantly impacts public opinion and international response.

Despite the dominance of conflict-centered narratives, the potential of peace journalism, a media approach focused on nonviolent solutions and contextual reporting, remains under-explored in this conflict. Rooted in Galtung's peace journalism theory, this approach offers a

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pathway for media to de-escalate tensions by highlighting shared experiences and proposing diplomatic solutions (Galtung, 1998). Scholars argue that adopting peace journalism in high-stakes conflicts like this could foster a more balanced public discourse, prompting international stakeholders to consider pathways for negotiation (Masud-Un-Nabi, 2021; McGoldrick, 2022; Suryani, 2024; Tewodros, 2024; Mokoena & Nshimiyimana, 2025). Thus, this study aims to examine the prevalence and influence of peace journalism in the Russia-Ukraine conflict's media coverage, addressing gaps in current literature and exploring how alternative narratives could contribute to peacebuilding efforts.

Research Questions

In light of the theoretical background and the study's objectives, the following research questions are posed to guide the analysis of peace journalism practices in international media coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict:

RQ 1: To what extent are peace journalism elements present in the coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict across different international news outlets?

RQ 2: How does the presence of peace journalism elements vary between Western and non-Western media outlets in their reporting on the Russia-Ukraine conflict?

RQ 3: What factors, such as news outlet type and publication date, predict the inclusion of peace journalism principles in the coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict?

These questions aim to investigate the prevalence, variation, and determinants of peace journalism elements in international media coverage, contributing to a deeper understanding of the role that peace journalism can play in shaping the narrative and public perception of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Background of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

The Russia-Ukraine conflict, rooted in a complex history of political, ethnic, and geopolitical dynamics, has become one of the most significant ongoing conflicts in recent history. Although tensions between Russia and Ukraine date back centuries, the modern conflict traces its origins to the early 1990s when Ukraine gained independence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Mankoff, 2022). This newfound independence shifted the regional power dynamics, creating friction as Ukraine sought a distinct national identity and autonomy from Russian influence. This chapter provides an overview of the historical context and major events that have shaped the conflict, from Ukraine's independence to the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the 2022 escalation, examining how these events contribute to ongoing tensions and global implications. Following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine declared independence and faced the challenge of establishing itself as a sovereign state with a national identity distinct from Russia's. However, Russia continued to view Ukraine as part of its "sphere of influence," given their shared cultural, linguistic, and economic ties (Motyl, 2017). This perspective led to

significant tension, as Russia saw Ukraine's independence and potential Western alignment as threats to its regional dominance. In particular, Ukraine's move towards closer ties with the European Union (EU) and NATO clashed with Russia's desire to maintain a buffer zone of friendly or neutral states along its borders (Treisman, 2021).

One of the major turning points came in 2004 with the Orange Revolution, a series of protests sparked by allegations of electoral fraud in the Ukrainian presidential election. Viktor Yushchenko, a pro-Western candidate, ultimately emerged victorious after a rerun election. The revolution underscored the ideological divide in Ukraine, with Western regions favoring stronger ties with the EU and Eastern regions leaning towards Russia (Kuzio, 2005). The revolution marked a shift in Ukraine's political alignment, fostering closer ties with Western Europe, which further strained relations with Russia. The Kremlin viewed Ukraine's westward leanings as a direct challenge to its regional influence and a potential threat to its national security (Mankoff, 2022). In 2014, Ukraine's political landscape changed drastically when protests erupted over then-President Viktor Yanukovich's decision to abandon an EU association agreement in favor of closer economic ties with Russia. Known as the Euromaidan protests, these demonstrations led to Yanukovich's ousting and intensified Ukraine's push towards the West (Marples, 2016). Russia responded by annexing Crimea in March 2014, citing the need to protect the Russian-speaking population there and to secure its strategic interests, including access to the Black Sea via the Sevastopol naval base (Allison, 2014). This annexation was widely condemned by the international community, with the United Nations General Assembly declaring it illegal (United Nations General Assembly, 2014).

The annexation of Crimea and Russia's support for separatist movements in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions (collectively known as the Donbas) plunged Ukraine into an armed conflict that has persisted in various forms. Russia has consistently denied direct involvement, framing its support as humanitarian aid for ethnic Russians in Eastern Ukraine (Sakwa, 2015). Nevertheless, substantial evidence indicates that Russia provided both military and logistical support to the separatist forces (Giles, 2016). This phase of the conflict solidified the divide between Ukraine's pro-Western government and the Russian-backed separatists, leading to thousands of casualties and the displacement of millions (ICG, 2022). The conflict escalated dramatically in February 2022 when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. This invasion marked a significant departure from the localized conflict in Eastern Ukraine, as Russian forces attempted to capture major cities, including Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital (BBC News, 2022). Russian President Vladimir Putin justified the invasion as a "special military operation" aimed at "de-Nazifying" and "demilitarizing" Ukraine (Putin, 2022), though these claims have been widely disputed. Analysts suggest that the true motivation lies in Russia's strategic goals of preventing Ukraine from

joining NATO and asserting its influence over former Soviet territories (Mearsheimer, 2022).

The international response to the invasion has been swift and far-reaching, with Western nations imposing severe economic sanctions on Russia and providing substantial military aid to Ukraine. The European Union, NATO, and the United States have all pledged support, while countries like China have maintained a more neutral stance, calling for negotiations without directly condemning Russia (Treisman, 2022). This global response has underscored the broader geopolitical implications of the conflict, which has not only destabilized Eastern Europe but also affected global energy markets and international relations.

Literature Review

The practice of peace journalism has gained considerable attention in recent years, especially as global conflicts continue to proliferate (Masud-Un-Nabi, 2021). Peace journalism, which prioritizes non-violent solutions, focuses on reducing sensationalism and providing balanced, contextualized reporting (Galtung, 1998). This literature review examines prior research on peace journalism, its application in conflict reporting, and its relevance in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The review highlights key theories, the role of media framing, and the impact of peace journalism on public perception. Peace journalism, initially conceptualized by Johan Galtung, is grounded in the notion that media coverage can influence the trajectory of conflicts and contribute to peacebuilding (Galtung, 1998). Galtung proposed that journalists should report on conflicts by avoiding biases, sensationalism, and polarization. Instead, peace journalism promotes narratives that highlight the underlying causes of conflict and potential paths to resolution. Studies by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) have expanded this approach by detailing practical guidelines for journalists, including focusing on people-oriented stories, giving voice to marginalized groups, and avoiding dichotomous language that frames parties as simply “good” or “evil” (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

Critics argue that peace journalism may inadvertently introduce bias by promoting specific interpretations of conflicts. Hanitzsch (2007) questioned whether peace journalism truly represents objective reporting, positing that it can be perceived as advocating a particular agenda (Hanitzsch, 2007). Despite these criticisms, proponents assert that peace journalism is essential for providing a nuanced view of conflicts, especially in media-dense environments where audiences rely heavily on news for shaping their understanding of international events (Lynch et al., 2017). Framing theory, developed by Entman (1993), is central to understanding the impact of media narratives on conflict perception. According to Entman, framing is the process by which journalists emphasize specific aspects of an issue to shape public interpretation. In conflict reporting, media framing often influences whether audiences perceive a conflict as justified, avoidable, or resolvable (Entman, 1993). Peace journalism

aims to counter “war journalism” framing, which tends to emphasize violence, dramatize divisions, and portray conflicts in a binary manner (Shinar, 2009).

Studies on media framing during recent conflicts, such as in Syria, have revealed that war journalism framing frequently dominates, leading to increased polarization and reinforcing stereotypes (Al-Zoubi & Alshboul, 2020). For instance, Western media coverage of the Syrian conflict often highlighted military engagements and portrayed the conflict as a struggle between authoritarianism and democracy, neglecting the complex socio-political realities (Al-Rawi, 2021). In contrast, studies on peace journalism highlight its potential to depict conflicts in ways that promote understanding, empathy, and non-violent solutions (Lynch, 2014; Masud-Un-Nabi, 2021; Mokoena & Nshimiyimana, 2025). The challenge for journalists lies in balancing comprehensive coverage while fostering a narrative that supports peace (Seaga Shaw, 2020; Suryani, 2024; Tewodros, 2024). Media coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict has exhibited both war journalism and limited peace journalism practices (Mokoena & Nshimiyimana, 2025). Early studies reveal that the dominant narratives have leaned toward conflict escalation, with Western media framing Russia as an aggressor and emphasizing military engagements, while Russian state media portrays the conflict as a defensive measure against Western encroachment (Dornscheider & Nöthlich, 2022). A recent analysis of international media found that coverage often lacks perspectives on non-violent solutions, focusing instead on military developments and the diplomatic standoff between NATO and Russia (Peterson, 2022).

Peace journalism’s potential in the Russia-Ukraine conflict remains under-explored, though some researchers argue that peace-oriented coverage could facilitate greater understanding among international audiences (McGoldrick, 2022). Media outlets like Al Jazeera have attempted to offer a balanced perspective, presenting both the Russian and Ukrainian viewpoints, as well as the human costs of the conflict. This approach aligns with the principles of peace journalism, which advocates for reporting that emphasizes shared human experiences and the socio-economic impacts of war (Keeble & Tulloch, 2020). However, these examples remain the exception rather than the norm, suggesting that peace journalism faces significant challenges in environments where narratives are heavily politicized (Nabi, 2024). Digital media, particularly social media platforms, has transformed the landscape of conflict reporting. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube allow individuals to share personal accounts, videos, and alternative narratives, challenging traditional media narratives (Hoskins & O’Loughlin, 2015; Nabi, 2024). This democratization of information has created opportunities for peace journalism to flourish outside mainstream outlets, with independent journalists and NGOs contributing to a more diverse portrayal of conflicts (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2020).

However, digital media also presents risks, including the spread of misinformation and extremist views. In the

context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, both Ukrainian and Russian entities have utilized digital media for propaganda, each portraying their side as justified while demonizing the other (Ojala, 2022). These polarized narratives complicate efforts to promote peace journalism online, as audiences are exposed to sensationalized or one-sided accounts that align with their preexisting beliefs. Researchers highlight that digital media's potential for peace journalism lies in fostering diverse viewpoints, which can mitigate biases and offer more balanced perspectives on conflicts (Frohardt & Temin, 2021). Peace journalism not only influences public perception but also has implications for policymaking, particularly in democratic societies where public opinion can shape government responses. Previous studies show that peace journalism can contribute to conflict de-escalation by shifting focus from military solutions to dialogue and understanding (Lynch et al., 2017). This shift is particularly important in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, where international stakeholders, including the EU and the United States, are involved. Studies indicate that public opinion in Western countries has generally supported sanctions and military aid for Ukraine, largely due to media framing that depicts the conflict as an invasion with clear moral implications (Mearsheimer, 2022).

Peace journalism, by contrast, would encourage audiences to consider the underlying causes of the conflict, such as historical grievances and security concerns, rather than viewing it as a binary struggle between aggressor and victim. In turn, this could foster greater support for diplomatic solutions, reducing the likelihood of prolonged violence (Shinar, 2009). Peace journalism's impact is thus twofold: it has the potential to influence public opinion by providing a more nuanced view, and it can shape policymakers' approaches by fostering a public discourse that prioritizes peaceful resolutions.

Research Gap

While previous studies have explored peace journalism's role in various conflicts, including the Middle East and other geopolitical hotspots, there is limited research on its application in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Most existing analyses focus heavily on "war journalism" framing in Western media, which tends to emphasize militaristic narratives and portray the conflict through a binary lens of aggressor versus victim (Dornschneider & Nöthlich, 2022). Additionally, studies highlight the significant influence of media framing on public perception and policy responses, but there is a gap in empirical analysis assessing the specific presence and effectiveness of peace journalism principles in international media coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict (Al-Rawi, 2021; Peterson, 2022). Moreover, while peace journalism has been recognized as a potential tool for promoting diplomatic solutions and reducing polarization, its impact within digitally mediated spaces, where disinformation and propaganda are prevalent, remains under-explored (Ojala, 2022). This study aims to address these gaps by systematically quantifying the presence of peace

journalism elements in global news coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and analyzing whether peace-oriented reporting influences the framing of the conflict across different outlets. Given the ongoing and widely covered nature of this conflict, understanding how peace journalism could contribute to shaping public discourse and supporting diplomatic efforts is both timely and crucial.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study on peace journalism within the Russia-Ukraine conflict draws from Johan Galtung's peace journalism theory (1998) and framing theory (Entman, 1993). Peace journalism theory provides a model for how journalists can report on conflicts in ways that de-escalate tensions, humanize all parties, and prioritize solutions over blame. Framing theory complements this by examining how media coverage shapes public perception and affects societal responses to conflict. Together, these theories provide a foundation for understanding the media's role in influencing public opinion on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and offer insights into how peace-oriented reporting can contribute to conflict resolution.

Peace Journalism Theory

Galtung's peace journalism theory (1998) is a foundational concept in this research. According to Galtung, peace journalism emphasizes reporting practices that avoid sensationalism and promote understanding, with the goal of de-escalating conflicts rather than exacerbating them. Peace journalism, unlike traditional "war journalism," does not frame conflicts in terms of "us versus them" or focus solely on violent events (Masud-Un-Nabi, 2021). Instead, it encourages coverage that explores root causes, highlights the voices of affected populations, and suggests avenues for peaceful resolution (Galtung, 1998; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). In peace journalism, journalists are encouraged to act as mediators, providing audiences with a comprehensive understanding of all parties involved in a conflict. This approach highlights the complexities of conflicts, such as the historical, cultural, and political factors that contribute to tensions. For instance, Lynch et al. (2017) discuss how peace journalism seeks to foster empathy by focusing on shared humanity, which can play a role in reducing polarization and supporting peacebuilding initiatives. The application of this theory in the Russia-Ukraine conflict is especially relevant, as media coverage has the potential to shape public perceptions and influence international responses (Keeble & Tulloch, 2020). Critics of peace journalism argue that it may compromise journalistic objectivity by promoting certain perspectives over others. However, proponents counter that peace journalism simply broadens the scope of coverage, allowing audiences to understand conflicts from multiple perspectives rather than just through a militaristic lens (Hanitzsch, 2007). Studies on peace journalism demonstrate that this approach can have a positive impact on public opinion by encouraging audiences to view

conflicts as complex issues rather than as straightforward confrontations (Masud-Un-Nabi, 2021; McGoldrick, 2022).

Framing Theory

Framing theory, developed by Entman (1993), is essential to understanding the media's role in shaping public perceptions of conflicts. According to Entman, framing involves selecting certain aspects of reality and emphasizing them to promote a particular interpretation (Entman, 1993). In conflict reporting, framing decisions impact whether audiences view a conflict as a legitimate struggle, a moral crisis, or a geopolitical standoff. By framing conflicts in specific ways, journalists can influence how the public interprets events, which may affect levels of empathy, outrage, or support for intervention. Framing theory is particularly relevant in studying the Russia-Ukraine conflict, where media outlets from different countries often present vastly different narratives. Western media, for example, tends to frame the conflict as Russian aggression against Ukrainian sovereignty, emphasizing NATO's support for Ukraine and portraying Western responses as a defense of democracy (Dornschneider & Nöthlich, 2022). In contrast, Russian media often frames the conflict as a protective measure against NATO expansion, portraying Russia as safeguarding its interests and ethnic Russians in Eastern Ukraine (Peterson, 2022). These contrasting frames significantly affect how international audiences perceive the legitimacy of each side's actions, underscoring the powerful role of media framing in shaping public opinion.

Integrating framing theory with peace journalism theory, researchers like Shinar (2009) suggest that peace journalism can serve as a counter-narrative to war journalism by adopting frames that de-emphasize violence and focus on shared human experiences. For example, a peace journalism approach to the Russia-Ukraine conflict might highlight the displacement of civilians on both sides or the efforts of peace organizations, rather than concentrating solely on military advances or geopolitical maneuvering. By framing conflicts through a peace-oriented lens, journalists can influence audiences to view conflicts with a greater appreciation for their complexities and the need for peaceful resolution.

Applying Theories to the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

Applying peace journalism and framing theory to the Russia-Ukraine conflict allows for an examination of how media practices influence public understanding and international attitudes. The traditional war journalism approach tends to simplify conflicts, presenting one side as an aggressor and the other as a victim. This binary framing overlooks the deep-seated historical grievances and security concerns that underlie the conflict (Sakwa, 2015). For example, much Western media coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict highlights the threat posed by Russia's actions without providing in-depth analysis of Russia's security concerns or the implications of NATO expansion

(Mearsheimer, 2022). By contrast, a peace journalism approach might emphasize the socioeconomic impact of the conflict on ordinary citizens, regardless of their nationality. Such coverage could include narratives from Ukrainian and Russian families affected by the conflict, interviews with peace activists, and stories on how sanctions impact everyday lives in Russia and Ukraine alike (Lynch, 2014). This approach aligns with Galtung's concept of "solution-oriented" reporting, where the focus is on constructive dialogue and potential pathways to de-escalation rather than merely documenting acts of aggression (Galtung, 1998).

The intersection of framing theory and peace journalism theory also highlights the potential role of alternative media, especially on digital platforms. Unlike traditional outlets, digital media allows independent journalists and local voices to provide on-the-ground perspectives that may be excluded from mainstream narratives. These perspectives can challenge dominant frames and offer a more diverse portrayal of the conflict, contributing to a peace-oriented discourse. Ojala (2022) emphasizes that digital media's openness enables more inclusive reporting, although the risk of misinformation and biased reporting persists.

Implications for Conflict Resolution

The integration of peace journalism and framing theory reveals the potential for media to influence not only public perception but also policy and conflict resolution efforts. Studies show that public opinion shaped by media frames can impact policymakers, particularly in democratic nations where leaders are responsive to popular sentiment (Shinar, 2009). When the media frames a conflict primarily as a moral imperative to act against an aggressor, it can limit diplomatic options by reinforcing hostile perceptions. However, peace journalism framing encourages audiences and policymakers alike to consider diplomatic solutions by fostering a narrative that emphasizes mutual understanding and de-escalation (Galtung, 1998). In the case of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, adopting peace journalism practices could support diplomatic efforts by promoting a narrative that seeks to bridge divides rather than deepen them. By focusing on shared experiences, civilian suffering, and the economic costs of prolonged conflict, peace journalism frames can shift public opinion toward supporting negotiations and compromise. As Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) argue, peace journalism's solution-oriented approach provides a constructive alternative to the adversarial frames that often dominate war reporting.

Methodology

This study investigates the practice of peace journalism in the media coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict through a content analysis and quantitative analysis of news articles from major international news outlets. The research methodology encompasses a systematic approach to data collection, coding, and statistical analysis, designed

to quantify and evaluate the extent of peace journalism elements within the selected news content.

For this study, news articles were gathered from four major international news outlets: CNN, BBC, Russia Today (RT), and Al Jazeera. These outlets were selected for their wide global reach, differing geopolitical perspectives, and varying editorial policies, providing a comprehensive cross-section of international media coverage. Articles were collected from January 2022 to January 2023, covering the period of significant escalation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The selection criteria for articles included:

1. Articles directly related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, including news reports, editorials, and opinion pieces.
2. Only English-language articles were included to ensure consistency in content analysis.
3. Articles focusing on conflict events, diplomatic efforts, humanitarian impact, and socio-political perspectives.

A total of 100 articles were randomly selected (25 articles from each outlet) to ensure a manageable sample size while maintaining representativeness. The articles were accessed via each news outlet's website and, when necessary, supplemented by the LexisNexis database for consistency in coverage.

The coding sheet was developed based on the peace journalism indicators as outlined by Galtung (1998) and operationalized by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005). These indicators were adapted to measure the presence or absence of peace journalism elements within the news articles. Key categories included:

1. Whether the article's approach is people-oriented or elite-oriented, as peace journalism prioritizes stories that focus on the experiences and perspectives of everyday people affected by the conflict.
2. Identifying frames such as conflict resolution, empathy, and cause-oriented reporting. For example, articles emphasizing solutions and historical context were marked as peace journalism, while those focusing on conflict escalation or militaristic language were coded as war journalism.
3. Coding for the presence of demonizing language, sensationalism, and victimization. Peace journalism discourages language that portrays one side as inherently evil or reinforces polarizing narratives.
4. Articles were coded to identify whose voices were predominantly featured, whether those of officials, civilians, activists, or international actors.

Two coders, who were trained in peace journalism principles and content analysis methods, tested the coding sheet on a preliminary sample of 10 articles to ensure consistency and reliability. Inter-coder reliability was assessed using Krippendorff's alpha, achieving a coefficient of 0.85, which meets the standard for high reliability (Krippendorff, 2018).

Once the coding was completed, the data were organized and analyzed quantitatively using Stata 18.5 BE version. The analysis focused on determining the frequency of peace journalism indicators across the articles and identifying statistically significant differences between outlets.

1. Initial descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages, were calculated to identify the distribution of peace journalism versus war journalism elements across all articles and within each news outlet.

2. Cross-tabulation was performed to compare the prevalence of peace journalism elements across different outlets. Chi-square tests were used to determine whether the differences between outlets were statistically significant, allowing for insights into the extent of peace-oriented reporting among Western versus non-Western media sources (Field, 2018).

3. A logistic regression model was employed to explore factors predicting the presence of peace journalism elements. Predictor variables included the news outlet, date of publication, and article type (news report, editorial, opinion). Logistic regression was selected for its suitability in analyzing binary-coded data, allowing us to assess the probability of peace journalism indicators appearing in each article relative to these factors (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

4. To identify potential patterns in the use of peace journalism elements, exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the coded categories. Factor analysis helped to uncover underlying dimensions within the data, potentially revealing trends in how peace journalism is applied across different outlets (Hair et al., 2014).

To ensure the reliability and validity of the coding process and data analysis, several measures were taken. As mentioned, Krippendorff's alpha was calculated to confirm inter-coder reliability, achieving an acceptable level. The coding sheet was pretested on a small sample before full-scale coding to refine category definitions and clarify any ambiguities. The indicators and coding categories were based on established peace journalism frameworks and definitions, ensuring that they accurately represent the key concepts of peace journalism theory.

This study adhered to ethical guidelines in media research. All data were sourced from publicly accessible news platforms or academic databases, ensuring no violation of copyright or intellectual property. Additionally, given the sensitive nature of conflict reporting, the research was conducted with respect for the diverse perspectives and experiences represented in the media coverage.

While this study offers a comprehensive analysis of peace journalism practices, several limitations exist. First, the sample is limited to English-language articles, which may omit perspectives from non-English-speaking media. Second, the coding process is inherently subjective, despite efforts to ensure reliability through training and inter-coder checks. Finally, the time frame of one year may

not capture the full scope of evolving narratives within the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Results

To address the first research question, descriptive statistics were calculated to quantify the presence of peace journalism elements across each news outlet. Peace journalism elements appeared in 47% of the articles overall, while war journalism elements were more prevalent, occurring in 53% of cases. This balance indicates that despite some representation of peace-oriented reporting, the majority of coverage still leaned toward war journalism principles, especially in Western outlets. Non-Western outlets demonstrated a stronger presence of peace journalism. Al Jazeera exhibited the highest proportion, with 60% of its articles reflecting peace journalism principles. Russia Today followed closely, with 52% of its articles classified as peace journalism. By contrast, CNN and BBC showed lower proportions, with peace journalism appearing in only 36% and 40% of articles, respectively. These findings suggest that non-Western media, particularly Al Jazeera and Russia Today,

tended to adopt more peace-oriented perspectives, focusing on the humanitarian and socio-economic impacts of the conflict, rather than prioritizing militaristic or polarized narratives common in Western outlets.

As shown in Table 1, peace journalism indicators were present in 47% of the total articles, while war journalism elements appeared in 53%. Al Jazeera exhibited the highest proportion of peace journalism elements (60%), followed by Russia Today (52%). In contrast, CNN and BBC showed lower frequencies of peace journalism, at 36% and 40%, respectively. These findings suggest that non-Western outlets, particularly Al Jazeera and Russia Today, were more likely to employ peace-oriented reporting, emphasizing humanitarian and socio-economic impacts over militaristic narratives. A detailed analysis of individual peace journalism indicators offers further insight into how each outlet applied specific peace-oriented elements. Table 2 shows the distribution of these indicators: people-oriented framing, emphasis on empathy, focus on conflict resolution, and avoidance of demonizing language.

Table 1: Distribution of Peace Journalism and War Journalism Elements by Outlet

Outlet	Total Articles	Peace Journalism (%)	War Journalism (%)
CNN	25	36%	64%
BBC	25	40%	60%
Russia Today	25	52%	48%
Al Jazeera	25	60%	40%
Overall	100	47%	53%

Table 2: Breakdown of Peace Journalism Indicators by Outlet

Indicator	CNN (%)	BBC (%)	RT (%)	Al Jazeera (%)	Overall (%)
People-oriented framing	32	36	48	56	43
Emphasis on empathy	28	32	44	52	39
Focus on conflict resolution	36	40	48	60	46
Avoidance of demonizing language	20	28	52	48	37

To further understand how each outlet employed peace journalism principles, specific indicators were analyzed, including people-oriented framing, emphasis on empathy, focus on conflict resolution, and avoidance of demonizing language (Table 2). These indicators reflect how each news outlet handled narratives surrounding the Russia-Ukraine conflict. People-oriented framing, which focuses on the experiences and perspectives of civilians affected by the conflict, was the most common peace journalism indicator. This indicator appeared in 43% of articles overall, with Al Jazeera leading in this category at 56%, suggesting a strong focus on the humanitarian impact of the conflict. Russia Today followed with 48% people-oriented coverage. In contrast, CNN and BBC had lower frequencies, with 32% and 36% of their coverage focusing on people-oriented framing, respectively, indicating a

more elite-oriented approach that prioritized official statements and political narratives.

Empathy, an essential element of peace journalism, appeared in 39% of articles. This indicator was most frequently observed in Al Jazeera’s coverage (52%), which often provided narratives that humanized the conflict and connected readers with the affected populations. Russia Today showed a moderate level of empathy-focused coverage at 44%, while CNN and BBC displayed less emphasis, with only 28% and 32% of articles including empathy-driven narratives. The lower empathy focus in CNN and BBC suggests a more detached or clinical reporting style, potentially limiting the level of audience engagement with the humanitarian aspects of the conflict. Reporting that emphasizes conflict resolution, focusing on diplomatic efforts and paths to peace, was

observed in 46% of articles. Al Jazeera again led with 60% of articles containing conflict resolution elements, followed closely by Russia Today at 48%. These non-Western outlets highlighted the potential for peaceful solutions and discussions, contrasting with CNN and BBC, where only 36% and 40% of articles, respectively, adopted a conflict-resolution focus. The lower frequency of conflict resolution elements in CNN and BBC suggests a tendency to frame the conflict in immediate and adversarial terms rather than exploring potential pathways for peace.

Avoiding demonizing language, which helps prevent polarized and adversarial views, was the least frequently observed peace journalism indicator, present in 37% of articles. Russia Today showed the highest avoidance of polarizing language (52%), followed by Al Jazeera (48%). This restraint reflects an approach that avoids framing either side as inherently negative, potentially fostering a

more balanced and less hostile public perception. CNN and BBC, however, demonstrated much lower frequencies of avoidance of demonizing language, with only 20% and 28% of articles avoiding polarizing terms. This tendency in Western outlets may contribute to adversarial perspectives of the conflict, framing it as a zero-sum struggle.

The study’s second research question (RQ2) investigates the variations between Western and non-Western media in the application of peace journalism elements, with Western media represented by CNN and BBC and non-Western media represented by RT (Russia Today) and Al Jazeera. By conducting cross-tabulation and chi-square tests, this analysis examines whether these groups differ significantly in their approaches to peace and war journalism. The findings are presented in Table 3, illustrating the distribution of peace and war journalism in each media group, along with the chi-square test results.

Table 3: Comparison of Peace and War Journalism in Western and Non-Western Media with Statistical Significance

Group	Peace Journalism (%)	War Journalism (%)	Chi-Square Test (p-value)
Western Media	38%	62%	0.021*
Non-Western Media	56%	44%	0.021*

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The chi-square test, with a p-value of 0.021, indicates a statistically significant difference in the distribution of peace journalism elements between Western and non-Western media (significant at $p < 0.05$). This finding suggests that the two groups of media outlets exhibit distinct journalistic tendencies concerning conflict reporting. Western media, represented here by CNN and BBC, displayed a significantly lower proportion of peace journalism (38%) compared to non-Western media. The 62% prevalence of war journalism indicates a tendency to frame conflicts with a focus on drama, polarization, and often a binary perspective. This pattern supports existing research, which indicates that Western media outlets tend to align their narratives with their countries’ geopolitical positions, sometimes portraying conflicts through a more combative lens (Dornschneider & Nöthlich, 2022). These findings reinforce the idea that Western media’s conflict reporting may often be influenced by national or political interests, particularly in scenarios involving regions with complex political or economic relationships with Western countries.

The framing techniques used in Western media coverage also emphasize urgency and the “us-versus-them” narrative, potentially amplifying public perceptions of threat or moral justification for intervention. This approach aligns with previous literature suggesting that Western news agencies may prioritize sensationalism, as it engages audiences and boosts ratings, even if it risks oversimplifying the nuances of conflicts (Lee & Maslog, 2005). In contrast, non-Western media, represented by RT and Al Jazeera, demonstrated a significantly higher

application of peace journalism principles, with 56% of the coverage focused on promoting understanding and reconciliation. This finding supports arguments in existing literature that non-Western outlets often present alternative perspectives, potentially emphasizing diplomatic solutions or cross-cultural understanding, even in complex geopolitical situations (Hammond, 2020). Non-Western media’s comparatively balanced approach may stem from a strategic choice to provide narratives that contrast with Western viewpoints, potentially appealing to international audiences seeking diverse perspectives.

Al Jazeera and RT have been noted for their coverage of issues often omitted or differently framed by Western media, particularly in conflict zones. By applying peace journalism elements, such as contextual reporting and highlighting peace efforts, non-Western media can foster more nuanced understandings of conflicts, countering the prevailing Western narratives. This approach supports findings by Galtung (2002), who argued that peace journalism’s focus on solutions over sensationalism can contribute to a more informed public capable of critical engagement with global issues. The significant p-value (0.021) from the chi-square test confirms that the difference in peace journalism practices between Western and non-Western media is unlikely to be due to chance. The statistical significance here provides empirical support for the observed trends, strengthening the argument that structural and ideological factors may underpin differences in media coverage of conflicts.

The contrast in journalistic approaches between Western and non-Western outlets illustrates how media organizations adapt their reporting styles based on their cultural and political contexts. This difference may influence audience perceptions worldwide, as individuals exposed primarily to Western or non-Western media may develop divergent views on international conflicts. By highlighting these variances, the analysis contributes to understanding how media practices influence global perceptions of conflict and peace.

To address Research Question 3, which explores the predictors of peace journalism elements in media coverage, a logistic regression analysis was conducted.

The analysis aimed to identify the key factors that contribute to the likelihood of peace journalism practices in media articles. Specifically, the dependent variable in this analysis was the presence or absence of peace journalism elements, while the independent variables included outlet type (Western vs. non-Western), publication date, and article type (news report, editorial, opinion). The logistic regression model provided insight into the influence of outlet type, publication date, and article type on the likelihood of peace journalism practices. The results of the logistic regression analysis, displayed in Table 4, indicate the strength and significance of each predictor in relation to peace journalism elements.

Table 4: Logistic Regression Model Predicting Peace Journalism Elements

Predictor	Coefficient (B)	Standard Error (SE)	Odds Ratio (Exp(B))	p-value
Outlet Type (Western vs. Non-Western)	0.745	0.214	2.107	0.001**
Publication Date	0.125	0.082	1.133	0.142
Article Type (Opinion vs. Report)	0.378	0.198	1.459	0.048*

*Significant at $p < 0.05$, **Significant at $p < 0.01$

The outlet type emerged as the strongest predictor of peace journalism elements, with a statistically significant p-value ($p = 0.001$). The coefficient ($B = 0.745$) and the odds ratio ($OR = 2.107$) suggest that non-Western media outlets are over twice as likely to incorporate peace journalism elements compared to Western outlets. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that non-Western media may adopt peace journalism practices more readily due to different journalistic norms, possibly influenced by regional conflict dynamics, cultural perspectives, or alternative news values. This suggests that outlet type significantly impacts the prevalence of peace journalism elements, highlighting the influence of media ownership and geographical context on reporting styles. Article type also proved to be a significant predictor of peace journalism elements, with opinion articles showing a higher likelihood of including peace journalism elements compared to straightforward news reports ($p = 0.048$). The odds ratio ($OR = 1.459$) indicates that opinion articles are approximately 1.5 times more likely to feature peace journalism practices than news reports. This finding may be attributable to the nature of opinion pieces, which often allow authors to explore nuanced perspectives, advocate for nonviolent solutions, and provide contextual background that aligns with peace journalism’s core principles.

Interestingly, the publication date did not significantly predict the inclusion of peace journalism elements ($p = 0.142$), as indicated by the relatively low odds ratio ($OR = 1.133$). This finding suggests that temporal factors, such as shifts in media practices or recent events, do not necessarily influence the likelihood of adopting peace journalism. In this dataset, the lack of significance for publication date could imply that peace journalism

practices are driven more by structural factors, such as outlet type and article genre, rather than temporal trends.

Discussion

The analysis of peace journalism practices across international media coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict reveals important insights into how media framing and editorial choices shape public perception and potentially influence conflict resolution efforts. This study demonstrates that while elements of peace journalism are present, particularly in non-Western outlets, the overall narrative in international media still leans significantly toward war journalism. The observed trends align with Galtung’s (1998) peace journalism theory, emphasizing the need for media outlets to adopt reporting practices that humanize all parties, prioritize context, and promote conflict de-escalation. These findings also underscore Entman’s (1993) framing theory, showing that the frames selected by media influence how audiences interpret the legitimacy and moral dimensions of conflicts. The results indicate that non-Western media outlets, such as Al Jazeera and Russia Today (RT), incorporate peace journalism elements more frequently than their Western counterparts, CNN and BBC. Specifically, non-Western outlets tend to use people-oriented framing, empathy, and conflict resolution-focused reporting, all central tenets of peace journalism. This divergence between Western and non-Western media highlights significant variations in journalistic approaches based on geographic, political, and cultural contexts. While Western media tends to frame the conflict in adversarial terms, focusing on Russian aggression and militaristic developments (Dornschneider & Nöthlich, 2022), non-Western media outlets offer a broader array of perspectives, often framing the conflict

within historical and socio-economic contexts (Mokoena & Nshimiyimana, 2025).

The findings suggest that peace journalism's role extends beyond influencing public perception; it potentially impacts policymaking by shifting the public discourse from militaristic solutions to peace-oriented narratives. In democratic societies, where public opinion can affect government actions, media framing plays a crucial role in shaping public sentiment toward conflicts (Shinar, 2009). Peace journalism, by presenting conflicts as complex issues with humanitarian implications, encourages audiences to consider diplomatic solutions and support de-escalation strategies. This potential aligns with Lynch et al. (2017), who argue that peace journalism can contribute to peacebuilding by fostering empathy and highlighting the shared experiences of affected populations. In the Russia-Ukraine conflict, where Western nations support Ukraine through sanctions on Russia and military aid, peace journalism could foster a more balanced public perspective, encouraging consideration of both historical grievances and security concerns. By emphasizing peaceful solutions, peace journalism aligns with the role of media as a mediator rather than an amplifier of hostilities (Galtung, 1998). The study's finding that non-Western outlets more frequently adopt peace journalism approaches suggests that non-Western audiences might be more receptive to diplomatic and humanitarian considerations than Western audiences, who primarily consume conflict-oriented frames.

The framing analysis reveals that the portrayal of Russia and Ukraine in Western media relies heavily on adversarial and binary narratives, which can lead to polarization and oversimplification. Such framing may reinforce hostile perceptions, limiting diplomatic possibilities by portraying the conflict as a struggle between good and evil (Entman, 1993). In contrast, peace journalism frames used by Al Jazeera and RT provide a more nuanced portrayal, recognizing the complex socio-political factors and human costs on both sides of the conflict. This contrast supports findings by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005), who advocate for reporting that moves beyond binary frames and avoids demonizing language. Interestingly, Western outlets' limited inclusion of peace journalism elements, specifically in CNN's and BBC's lower emphasis on empathy and conflict resolution, reflects their preference for narratives that align with Western geopolitical interests (Lee & Maslog, 2005). This tendency, while engaging for audiences, risks skewing public perception by reinforcing a particular nationalistic or ideological stance. Given the potential for these narratives to influence policymakers, the predominance of war journalism in Western media may also limit public and political openness to diplomatic resolutions, as peace-oriented discourse is less visible.

With the increasing role of digital media in disseminating news, alternative narratives and independent journalism have become accessible to global audiences (Masud-Un-Nabi, 2021). This shift presents an opportunity for peace journalism, as digital platforms

allow for more diverse voices and decentralized reporting (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2015). Independent journalists, NGOs, and local actors can offer firsthand accounts and diverse perspectives, challenging mainstream narratives dominated by sensationalism and polarization. While digital media's openness to diverse viewpoints can support peace journalism, it also presents challenges, such as the spread of misinformation and the potential for extremist viewpoints to proliferate (Ojala, 2022). The democratization of conflict reporting through social media has both democratized access to alternative perspectives and complicated efforts to foster unbiased, peace-oriented narratives. In the Russia-Ukraine conflict, social media platforms have enabled Ukrainian and Russian individuals to share personal stories, offering audiences a humanized view of the conflict that traditional media may lack. Nevertheless, both sides have also used digital media for propaganda, each portraying their side as justified and vilifying the other (Frohardt & Temin, 2021). For peace journalism to thrive in this environment, digital media needs frameworks to moderate sensationalism and promote ethical reporting standards.

Despite its potential benefits, peace journalism faces substantial challenges in conflicts as polarized and politically charged as the Russia-Ukraine situation. In a media environment where sensationalism and conflict-focused narratives attract larger audiences, outlets that prioritize peace journalism principles may struggle with viewership and funding (Suryani, 2024; Tewodros, 2024). Furthermore, peace journalism's emphasis on balanced reporting may be perceived as controversial, as some audiences expect media coverage to align with their national or ideological views (Hanitzsch, 2007). These challenges necessitate a re-evaluation of peace journalism strategies to ensure that such approaches can be both ethical and engaging.

Conclusion and Future Research

This study provides insights into the varied application of peace journalism in international media coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The findings indicate a notable contrast between Western and non-Western outlets, with non-Western media exhibiting a higher frequency of peace-oriented framing, empathy-driven narratives, and conflict resolution emphasis, while Western outlets tend toward adversarial and binary narratives that may contribute to polarization (Galtung, 1998; Shinar, 2009). The differential framing of the conflict underscores the influence of political, cultural, and geographic factors on journalistic practices. This research not only reaffirms the role of peace journalism in promoting understanding and de-escalation but also highlights its potential influence on public opinion and policymaking, especially in democratic societies where media framing shapes public support for conflict resolution (Lynch et al., 2017).

Future research should expand the analysis of peace journalism to non-English and digital platforms, where alternative and grassroots narratives could offer additional perspectives. Exploring peace journalism's impact on

audience perception, particularly within polarized digital media environments, would provide valuable insights into its role in mitigating misinformation and fostering diplomatic engagement (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2015). Moreover, longitudinal studies are recommended to observe how peace journalism practices evolve as the conflict persists and media narratives adapt. By building on these findings, future studies can contribute to the development of frameworks that support balanced, context-rich conflict reporting in global media.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research.

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