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Regional Media Production Management in the Context of Active Military Confrontation: Ukrainian-Russian Case Study

Abstract

The article examines important aspects of the regional military confrontation, as well as the role and place of the media in the context of escalating hostilities. The paper examines the factors that influence the development, production and distribution of propaganda media products in the context of the transformation of economic, social and ideological relations in the regional information environment. The study identifies and analyses global trends in the development and management of local media. In addition, the budgetary expenditures of NATO countries and the size of their armed forces are compared with similar indicators of Ukraine, Russia, Israel and other countries that demonstrate different trends in military operations. The publication also assesses the capabilities of member states to diversify information and ideological confrontation, in particular at the border.

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1 Introduction

The beginning of the twenty-first century was marked by unprecedented rates of digitalisation in the global economy and, at the same time, by the intensification of political and economic conflicts, both major and minor, and by the disregard of agreements, treaties and understandings that had long been "effectively functioning". The media business has become particularly indicative in this regard, as the owners of newspapers, magazines, social networks and other mass media have had a significant impact on the so-called polarisation of national society in some cases, and its consolidation in others. The global media, whose information reports had been trusted for decades, also contributed to this confrontation. However, despite the efforts of leading international institutions, the process of increasing so-called media literacy has not only failed to accelerate, but in some cases has slowed down significantly. Significant changes also occurred in the age differentiation of readers, Internet users, subscribers, major news agencies, etc. These factors facilitated the rapid dissemination of blocks of information in different directions, at

different levels and within different systems of temporal and spatial coordinates. The active use of cloud technologies and, more recently, artificial intelligence is directly encouraging powerful media corporations to create new types of media products, including singular ones, the full extent of whose impact on global society has not yet been fully explored.

In today's world, the problem of war and peace, as well as the objective reflection of events and their representation in media systems, is extremely acute. The hybrid actions of the warring parties are now preceded by powerful propaganda campaigns about the so-called "historical justice" of territorial claims. In the hands of experienced propagandists, political scientists, economists, media specialists, social psychologists and the hybrid strategies they develop, these "achievements" quickly turn into a powerful weapon that allows manipulating a large part of society, leads to the absence of good neighbourly relations and negative attitudes towards other nations, and sometimes entire civilisations become the battleground. There is little time between the implementation of annexation strategies and

Keywords

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the transition from the "cold trend" of ideological confrontation to direct military action. However, these declared direct and indirect confrontations can be of an intersystemic and interdisciplinary nature. Therefore, it is likely that the confrontation between the views of researchers and the real instruments of modern geopolitics used by governments will intensify. This includes various local confrontations (Wargent, 2021), new spatial ideas of harmonisation (Branch, 2017), territorial depoliticisation within the framework of contemporary localism theories (Franke, 2021), ideas of new localism (Corry, Stoker, 2002) and localised socio-economic policies (Cleveland, 2008). At the same time, the aforementioned studies can also have a multi-structured nature, with the dominance of selective geopolitical approaches aimed at specific objectives (Kearns, 2017).

However, important trends in interdisciplinary research, both past and present, remain issues of military economics and logistics, within which questions of strategic management in the media (Küng, 2008) are intensively discussed. On the one hand, the limits of press freedom and aggressive propaganda (Mercier, 2005) are debated, and on the other, the possibilities of sectoral outsourcing are explored (Moore, 2017). Particular attention is also paid to the nature and structure of the changes that have taken place in the media themselves, including new editorial policies. Much of the information has moved into the virtual sphere, and modern media products, for example, are no longer limited to national television or Internet networks, but are produced in one system and freely transmitted to others. However, it is crucial to adapt to local conditions, especially in terms of technology and psychology, in order to fully preserve traditional management (Mitchell, 2009), communicative tools (Scannel, 2008) and national preferences as well as trust in specific regional and national formats (Wagner, Maclean, 2007). Nevertheless, many media innovations, by their very nature, continue to play an important role, as they have an important diffusion function (Rogers, 2003).

Numerous conflicts, border provocations, threats, misunderstandings and, ultimately, open state terrorism have become characteristic features of the present day, and military operations in the countries of the former Soviet Union (Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine) serve as a vivid confirmation of this. However, both in terms of duration (since 2014) and the number of casualties and military equipment lost, the Russian-Ukrainian war has no analogues since the end of World War II in 1945. Regional differences play a significant role in this context. If ten years ago it was an artificial language dispute, over time it has been compounded by unfounded accusations of neo-fascism by the Russian Federation.

Any war requires significant funding, which, in turn, leads to a reduction in allocations for social needs and an increase in spending on promoting the dominant ideology, which is conveyed to the audience through the media. The influence of the media during a conflict is extremely important and can hardly be overestimated. This is especially true in localised areas where "ideological diversity" is accompanied by increased military activity. Not only shells are torn apart, but also family relationships that previously went unnoticed in regional divisions. However, the belief in one's own superiority is not long-lasting.

2 Transformation of Economic and Ideological Relations in the Media Environment during the War

The process of global media transformation in the modern world, in authors' opinion, takes place at several levels: corporate, local, sectoral and structural. As a rule, the main goal of such changes is to increase the competitiveness of a particular source of information. This is achieved through economic or ideological influence and continuous improvement of organisational management. However, during active hostilities, the situation can undergo dramatic changes due to the intensification of mass propaganda, the formation of negative images of the enemy and their virtual projection in time and space. The battle is for people's minds, beliefs, tastes, preferences and expectations. Naturally, all of this requires additional funding for new media projects, which, despite the patriotic or pseudo-patriotic intentions of their developers, can hardly be called creative. Meanwhile, peaceful life coexists with everyday worries, the entertainment industry, numerous TV series, talk shows, local TV and radio programmes that focus their audience's attention on regional issues, development trends and personal preferences. This is what not only ensures the actualisation of the identified regional image, but also preserves the memory of all the transformation and mobilisation processes that have taken place in the region throughout history, attitudes towards them, regional experience, and pleasant or unpleasant memories. The comparisons and juxtapositions that arise in this process are integral elements of the consciousness of local residents, as well as of the territory in which they live and which they rightly consider their own.

An important trend in the development of modern society is its extremely high dynamism, which affects all stages of media production and is caused by a number of factors, the most important of which are the following:

- The potential ability of a media company to quickly adapt to new conditions that may be

triggered by military operations or other conflict situations.

- Loss of a significant portion of revenue due to limited airtime allocated for advertising messages. Advertising accounts for about 90% of the media company's total revenue.
- Strengthening of ideological content in news broadcasts, censorship of TV and radio programmes and social media content in accordance with wartime laws.
- Diversification of information sources for media consumers, rapid changes in the tastes, moods and preferences of the local population, and the emergence of new online leaders by taking into account the opinions of supporters of different formats.
- Increased competition between corporations, which leads to constant changes in their media products. This necessitates a radical change in the perception of medium- and long-term diversification planning strategies, the purchase of new technological equipment, personnel changes, and increased requirements for the efficiency of media professionals.
- The emergence of a new information and entertainment hierarchy, which, on the one hand, is clearly identifiable within the traditional vertical structure (global corporations, national broadcasters, local media), and, on the other hand, is distinguished by diffusion into new media locations that are expected to become hubs, platforms and clusters. Promising models that look technologically deterritorialised and globally localised in terms of their operation and concentration of creative labour are likely to take the lead.
- The global standardisation, sectorisation, unification and securitisation of newly created media products will make the most successful of them ("America's Got Talent", "Dancing with the Stars", "Britain's Got Talent", "The X Factor") popular "bestsellers" around the world, easily adaptable to any information environment, including countries engaged in active military action. However, it is important to remember that the topics of war, protection of civilians, exchange of prisoners of war and victims, and repatriation of children illegally taken from Russia will often take on a dominant character.

The aforementioned factors have significantly influenced the nature and structure of the modern global media market not only for countries engaged in active military operations, but also for those indirectly (politically, economically, morally) involved in them, in particular, by supplying weapons to one of the warring parties or providing financial assistance to one or another state.

It is crucial to understand that the military sphere, like any other, is part of the global market, where cutting-edge weapons systems are developed

and where export-import operations and technology exchanges (sales) take place. It should also be noted that over the last 25 years, powerful American transnational corporations such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman (Hartley, 2003) have dominated the arms market, together with European companies (EADS, BAE Systems, Thales, MBDA), whose influence on the global production of military technology, arms and dual-use products is difficult to overestimate.

3 Global Trends of Local Media

Contemporary military conflicts are often driven not only by specific regional and national confrontations, in which the concept of "historical justice" is invoked, but also by external factors, many of which have long-lasting effects. Hence, the binary structure of the media (international and national-local) plays a crucial role in times of war, with both positive and negative consequences. This process of media influence has similarities to the relatively under-researched phenomena of telemediation, culture of immediacy and deterritorialisation (Tomlinson, 2008, 156-158). However, some scholars link the intensification of military conflicts to the global challenges posed by imperialism and capitalism (Callinicos, 2008, 62-78). From these perspectives, it can be seen that the root causes of military conflicts, just as a hundred years ago, can be traced back to heightened territorial and ideological tensions between individual nations, stemming from fundamental economic, political, social and psychological inequalities. The Russian-Ukrainian war is no exception, as Russia's desire to preserve its 1914-style empire and expand it at the expense of other countries is an illusory act, albeit one that has a significant impact on Ukraine, which has its own aspirations for a European future (in particular, NATO membership, etc.). To some extent, this reflects the significant differentiation of the EU's production capability curve and the process of transformation of national military and political models along hypothetical coordinate axes (Figure 1).

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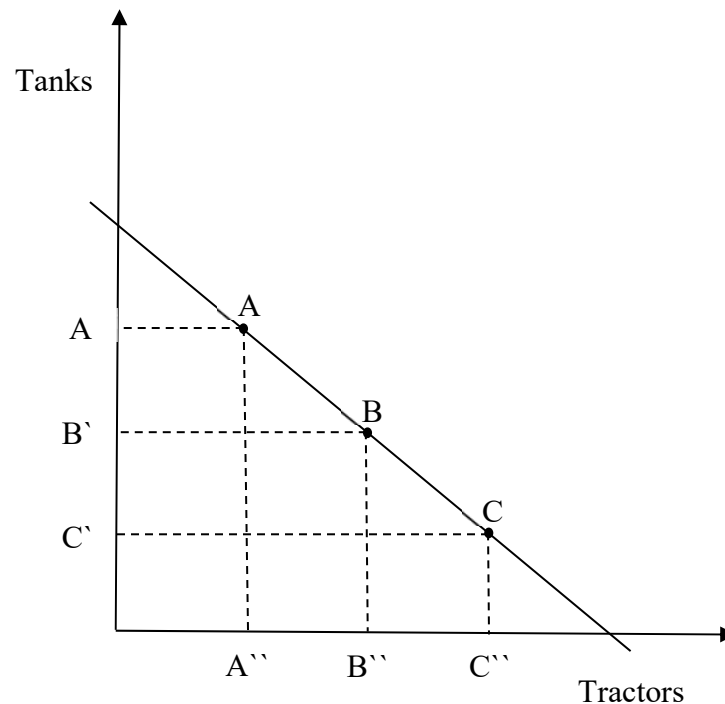


FIGURE 1 Curve of production capabilities for Ukraine
 Source: developed by authors

It should be noted that the traditional comparative categories of "guns or butter" in economics have been replaced by "tanks or tractors" due to the significant number of common components and assemblies contained in each finished product. In addition, tanks are considered offensive weapons, and their increased production leads to changes in military and political doctrines and a significant increase in state orders for this type of weapon. Such actions of the government clearly demonstrate the political elite's desire to seize new territories, both in neighbouring states and in territorially separate regions of other states (such as the Argentine-British conflict over the Falkland Islands/Malvinas).

The situation in the Soviet Union in the early 1990s is illustrated by the OSCC'' rectangle, which represents the dismantling of the existing defence model and a reduction in military and naval funding. Ukraine later renounced nuclear weapons under "conditional" guarantees from leading states. There was a rapid demilitarisation of the economy, but this did not lead to an upturn in production. Numerous changes in the arms market and further technological progress in NATO countries have significantly altered the defence parity of the first decade of the 21st century, which is graphically represented by the OVVV rectangle. The gradual increase in tank production and procurement was influenced by the introduction of new defence strategies by neighbouring countries, Ukraine's export commitments, and the beginning of modernisation of both defence production and the Ukrainian army. Finally, the third, modern phase, which began

after the 2014 aggression, has destroyed all hopes for conflict-free development. Significant resources have been channelled into arms production, army modernisation and training of soldiers and officers in the use of imported military equipment, as graphically depicted in the OA`AA rectangle.

The use of NATO weapons and the partial adoption of its standards has become an important area in Ukraine's defence sector. Nevertheless, regardless of the use of modern technologies and personnel training, the motivation of Ukrainian servicemen and the financing of military operations are of great importance. In this regard, the NATO budget and the number of military personnel are quite indicative (Table 1).

As can be seen from the table, NATO's military and financial potential is quite significant both in terms of expenditures and personnel, which allows it to withstand the armed forces of any other state that dares to engage in direct aggression. The natural extension of this in global practice is the share of GDP allocated to defence spending and the share of military personnel, which is the backbone of a country's army and usually correlates with the size of its population. However, there are other patterns that emerge directly from the data in this table:

Firstly, the EU countries' spending on military and defence needs is minimal, averaging less than 1.5% of GDP.

Secondly, NATO countries bordering potential aggressors usually allocate a share of military expenditures exceeding 2% of GDP (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia).

TABLE 1 NATO military expenditures (% of GDP, 2021) and military personnel (2019, NATO)

| N | Country | Most recent value | Armed forces personnel | N | Country | Most recent value | Armed forces personnel |
|-----|-----------|-------------------|------------------------|-----|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. | Albania | 1.4 | 8.000 | 17. | Luxembourg | 0.6 | 1.000 |
| 2. | Belgium | 1.1 | 26.000 | 18. | Montenegro | 1.7 | 12.000 |
| 3. | Bulgaria | 1.6 | 37.000 | 19. | the Netherlands | 1.4 | 41.000 |
| 4. | Canada | 1.3 | 72.000 | 20. | North Macedonia | 1.5 | 16.000 |
| 5. | Croatia | 2.7 | 18.000 | 21. | Norway | 1.8 | 23.000 |
| 6. | Czechia | 1.4 | 25.000 | 22. | Poland | 2.1 | 189.000 |
| 7. | Denmark | 1.4 | 15.000 | 23. | Portugal | 2.1 | 52.000 |
| 8. | Estonia | 2.2 | 7.000 | 24. | Romania | 2.0 | 126.000 |
| 9. | France | 1.9 | 304.000 | 25. | Slovak Republic | 1.7 | 16.000 |
| 10. | Germany | 1.3 | 184.000 | 26. | Slovenia | 1.2 | 7.000 |
| 11. | Greece | 3.9 | 147.000 | 27. | Spain | 1.4 | 199.00 |
| 12. | Hungary | 1.6 | 40.000 | 28. | Turkey | 2.1 | 512.000 |
| 13. | Ireland | 0.3 | 9.000 | 29. | UK | 2.2 | 149.000 |
| 14. | Italy | 1.5 | 342.000 | 30. | USA | 3.5 | 1388.000 |
| 15. | Latvia | 2.3 | 6.000 | - | World | 2.4 | ... |
| 16. | Lithuania | 2.0 | 37.000 | - | EU | 1.5 | ... |

Source: World Bank, 2021

Thirdly, the traditionally high military spending of the USA and the UK is due to their global mission to ensure global stability.

Fourthly, among other post-industrial states, the Russian Federation stands out sharply, spending 4.1% of GDP on military needs in 2021, according to the World Bank, with almost 1.5 million military personnel (for comparison, the United States spends 3.5% of GDP on military needs and has 1.4 million military personnel). Studying the dynamics, it becomes obvious that Russia has been preparing for war for a long time.

Fifthly, recognising the real scale of the confrontation and the extremely difficult political relations with the Russian Federation, Ukraine increased the share of GDP allocated to the military to 3.2%. The number of military personnel also increased to 311,000, which is almost 4.7 times less than the corresponding Russian figure. It was extremely difficult to withstand such conditions. Virtually all analysts, both Western and Russian, predicted Ukraine's imminent surrender. Nevertheless, this did not happen. The unshakable factors of the resilience of the Ukrainian people were their fighting spirit and courage, unprecedented volumes of weapons and military equipment, an active volunteer movement, the ardent support of the local population, and the inevitability of punishment for collaborators. The moral and financial support of the civilised world, which recognised the country's right to make its own choice, played a significant role. In addition, the new (post-Soviet) command of the army and the state's priority funding of defence measures played a crucial role.

4 Comparative Analysis of Media Transformations: Ukraine, Russia, Israel

The beginning of Russia's military actions against Ukraine (2014), which, by analogy with the Chechen war, can confidently be called the first Russian-Ukrainian war, was followed by a period of large-scale military operations from February 24, 2022. This period can undoubtedly be called the second stage of the Russian-Ukrainian war, characterised by unprecedented rates of escalation throughout the conflict zone and beyond. Naturally, national and regional media play a crucial ideological, orientational and propagandistic role in such conditions. However, the comparative analysis of media activities focused on the common and distinctive features of the two warring parties – Ukraine and the Russian Federation – also significantly reflects the processes of war and peace taking place in Israel, a country with a long-standing conflict with the Palestinians that periodically escalates.

After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the media systems of the Russian Federation were subjected to various influences from both democratic and radical parties, as well as numerous fake news movements. While such influences were temporary in the 1990s, at the beginning of the 21st century there were calls for the return of censorship, the closure of some opposition channels due to their disloyalty in covering certain political events, and the formation of a new ideology of centralisation of power. One of the most significant symbols was the idea of a return to the Stalinist era with its sacramental

attributes – harsh repression, revocation of licences, persecution of individual journalists, and the creation of provocative propaganda shows. Repressive measures based on the new legislative framework of comprehensive bans began to play a significant role. Moreover, the new Russian media relied on state funding on the one hand and on substantial support from loyal companies on the other, which often became their owners and belonged to the so-called friends of President Putin: Yury Kovalchuk (National Media Group, First Channel, Russia's main TV channel, REN-TV, etc.), Alexey Miller (Gazprom Media), Konstantin Ernst (First Channel), Sergey Vasiliev (National Alliance of Advertisers), and many others (Shmagun, 2018).

Similar to the aforementioned transformations, the Ukrainian media underwent significant changes during the initial phase of information development. However, the content of local television in eastern and western Ukraine differed, sometimes quite significantly. Russia, of course, took full advantage of these regional differences. As in the neighbouring country, Ukraine witnessed an accelerated corporatisation of its domestic television and radio space, which was dominated by six well-known names and the media groups they created: Victor Pinchuk (Starlight Media), Ihor Kolomoyskyi (1+1 Media), Dmytro Firtash, Serhiy Lyovochkin, Valeriy Khoroshkovskyi (Inter Media Group). At the same time, the state retained control over 26 regional channels and several other specialised channels (UA: Culture, UA: Crimea, UA: Pershyi) as part of UA: PBC, as well as numerous pro-Ukrainian radio stations. During the revolutionary events, Ukrainian media behaved differently depending on their owners. However, there was an important dilemma of choosing between making high profits, primarily through advertising, which in Ukraine is difficult to control and often leads to conflicts between different norms of journalistic ethics. It is clear that such situations often arose in the period from 2014 to 2023 and significantly affected the ratings of channels and individual programmes, the popularity of which was determined by the Television Industry Committee and a number of other organisations. During the war, demand for newspapers and magazines dropped sharply, while demand for radio remained stable. However, internet networks and television continued to be the leaders in information programmes, as in the rest of the world. The "information famine" in late 2022 and early 2023 was felt across the country due to the impact of enemy shells on critical infrastructure. During this period, radio became extremely popular, with prices rising almost daily.

It is worth noting that media professionals were among the first to feel the signs of tension in Russian-Ukrainian relations, as they are more responsive to the information context than other

spheres of life. Table 2 illustrates the period from 2019 to 2021, which can safely be called a preparation for the full-scale information aggression in 2022-2023. As can be seen from the table, the TV channels 1+1, ICTV, Inter, STB, TRK Ukrayina consistently had the highest ratings, ranging from 18% to 63%. With the start of military operations, many of them united on one platform to shape the content of their news blocks and operated on a 24/7 basis.

The situation in the Ukrainian online environment was more contrasting, as exemplified by news services such as Google and Ukr.net. The expansion of services provided by social networks, increased competition between them, and active struggle for users' tastes, interests and preferences played an extremely important role in the context of the escalating military conflict. However, when analysing the events, one should not lose sight of the pre-conflict situation, which is quite informative in the above table.

As noted above, in the early days of Russia's large-scale offensive against Ukraine, a significant number of news channels merged, which allowed not only to diversify the content of individual media products, but also to significantly strengthen its targeting and sectoral focus within the framework of a new media conglomerate called the United News telethon. At the same time, it should be noted that TRK Ukrayina, which had a significant impact on the information space, ceased operations. Obviously, media research before and during the war can be quite controversial, as in the pre-war years, entertainment programmes dominated television, while during the outbreak of hostilities, viewers' interest in political and social news increased significantly. This pattern is also clearly evident in consumer preferences regarding the popularity of specific websites (Table 3).

The changes that occurred during the military conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly affected the nature of advertising and the perception of socio-political news by users, which naturally affected the advertising market's spending. In 2020, the largest segment of advertising expenditures was accounted for by the television sector (49.7%). It was followed by digital advertising (28.5%), print (5.8%), radio (3.0%), cinemas (0.1%) and other, including informal advertising channels (Media Influence Matrix: Ukraine).

A distinctive feature of domestic media is the presence of so-called philanthropic funding. They have an important humanitarian mission to further democratise society, implement civilised norms and rules, define global priorities and support socially significant media projects. Since 2009, the leaders in supporting journalistic initiatives have been National Endowment for Democracy (USA) (30 grants totalling 1,300,000 USD), The Sigrid

TABLE 2 TOP-10 Ratings of national media and Internet

| TV | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | Internet | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1+1 | 63% | 62% | 57% | 58% | 63% | 63% | Google News Services | 0% | 0% | 14% | 3% | 38% |
| ICTV | 31% | 28% | 33% | 33% | 32% | 43% | Ukr.net | 28% | 34% | 35% | 28% | 19% |
| Inter | 56% | 47% | 43% | 44% | 44% | 32% | Unian | 7% | 6% | 4% | 7% | 6% |
| STB | 34% | 38% | 36% | 33% | 23% | 25% | Yandex | 16% | 19% | 16% | 8% | 4% |
| TRK Ukrayina | 18% | 22% | 27% | 28% | 28% | 20% | 1+1 Website (1plus 1. ua) | 9% | 6% | 7% | 10% | 12% |
| 112 Ukraine | 14% | 15% | 15% | 18% | 20% | 19% | Fakty (fakty.ua) | 6% | 5% | 5% | 8% | 7% |
| Novyi Kanal | 12% | 18% | 15% | 15% | 13% | 13% | Obozrevatel (Obozrevatel.com) | 4% | 3% | 3% | 6% | 6% |
| 2+2 | 6% | 4% | 4% | 6% | 4% | 9% | Ukrainska Pravda.com.ua | 6% | 6% | 9% | 4% | 5% |
| 5Channel | 13% | 8% | 7% | 8% | 4% | 9% | Novyny Ukrainy (media.ua_com.ua) | 6% | 3% | 5% | 9% | 5% |
| 24Channel | 6% | 4% | 5% | 3% | 3% | 7% | Korrespondent (korrespondent.net) | 10% | 6% | 8% | 7% | 5% |

Sources: USAID – Internews Media Consumption Survey, 2021

TABLE 3 TOP-10 popular websites dedicated to socio-political news in Ukraine. September 2019

| Position | Source | Audience outreach | Owner |
|----------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Obozrevatel.com | 18% | Mykhailo Brodsky |
| 2. | 24tv.ua | 18% | Media Holding TRK Lux |
| 3. | Segodnya.ua | 16% | Media Group Ukraine |
| 4. | TSN.ua | 16% | 1+1 Media Holding |
| 5. | Rbc.ua | 15% | Yosyp Pintus |
| 6. | Znaj.ua | 14% | Znaj Media Holding |
| 7. | Unian (.net/info/.ua) | 12% | 1+1 Media Holding |
| 8. | Nv.ua | 11% | Tomas Fiala |
| 9. | Pravda.com.ua | 10% | Olena Prytula |
| 10. | Politeka.net | 10% | Znaj Media Holding |

Sources: Media influence Matrix: Ukraine. Internet Association of Ukraine, 2019

Rausing Trust (UK) (2 grants totalling 170,364 USD), Charle Stewart Mott Foundation (USA) (1 grant of 100,000 USD), Omidyar Network Fund, Inc (USA) (1 grant of 100,000 USD), Mama Cash (1 grant of 53,280 USD) (Media Influence Matrix: Ukraine Internet Association). The activities of many other programmes, including those of philanthropist George Soros, have contributed to the development of democratic journalism, its focus on the needs of the population and the democratic development of Ukrainian society as a whole. As a rule, such activities have always been supported by the Ukrainian government. An example is USAID's investment of 35 million USD in the framework of the Media Programme in Ukraine (2018-2023).

Based on the above data on the media in Ukraine, it can be argued that the industry is highly elastic to economic, social, political and military transformations. It is largely dependent on the advertising market, patronage, and targeted government and non-government funding. At the same time, domestic media face significant risks due to rapid changes in news trends, show business, social media preferences, etc. In this context, the experience of Israel, which has managed to maintain a balance between the defence of the

homeland, freedom of the press and the innovative development of its economy, is extremely important.

The formation of modern communication networks in Israel was based on the linguistic and ethnic principle, which provides free access to various sources of information mainly in Hebrew, Arabic, partly Russian and English. It is worth noting that, with the exception of television, which dominates the Jewish community, and social media, which prevails in Palestinian families, there are no significant differences in other media. However, television plays an important role in shaping the local information market, and the share of Hebrew-language and national channels in this media sector varies considerably. The leaders in the country's corporate structure are Channel 2, Channel 9 and Channel 10 (Media Influence Matrix: Israel). Nevertheless, the ratings based on the above-mentioned market share within the Hebrew-speaking environment are the same or slightly different.

The national and ethnic specificity of broadcasting in Israel can be seen as orthodox and conservative, covering numerous religious communities and neoliberal content that is becoming increasingly popular among both Jewish and Arab youth. Numerous statements by politicians from different

camps, often biased in their coverage of specific events or laws and government directives, often lead to real military confrontations and, in some cases, extremism. Unfortunately, even children are involved in these conflicts (the events in Jerusalem in 2022 may serve as a vivid example of the fragile peace in this turbulent region of the world).

5 The Phenomenon of Media Resistance in the Zone of Active Hostilities in the South-Eastern and Eastern Regions of Ukraine

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has significantly changed society's perception of the nature, structure and features of not only the national but also the global information space. As a result, the media landscape of many countries, including Ukraine, is quite asymmetrical, sectorally dynamic, technologically and psychologically dependent on numerous fakes, fabricated and unverified information, as well as a large number of staged episodes quickly edited by "ideological centres". Undoubtedly, the leading role in this activity is played by Russia, whose political, ideological, economic and information structures are top-down and have nothing to do with independent journalism. On the other hand, the current media system demonstrates several other characteristics, including:

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The national and ethnic specificity of broadcasting in Israel can be seen as orthodox and conservative, covering numerous religious communities and neoliberal content that is becoming increasingly popular among both Jewish and Arab youth. Nonetheless, numerous statements by politicians from different camps, often biased in their coverage of specific events or laws and government directives, often lead to real military clashes and, in some cases, extremism. Unfortunately, even children are involved in these conflicts (the events

in Jerusalem in 2022 can serve as a vivid example of the fragile peace in this turbulent region of the world).

The news programmes of the leading Ukrainian TV channels have been integrated into a powerful information pool since the start of hostilities, but they retain their specificity, branded visuals and media traditions. They show familiar Soviet films to a wide adult audience, recognise their presenters, who inspire personal trust in what is happening on the screen.

A significant portion of news TV and radio programmes are broadcast live, but they can be viewed at any convenient time on the Internet, which naturally increases user awareness not only through numerous repetitions, but also through the imposition of seemingly true pseudo-information messages, either directly or in a covert form.

During times of military conflict, there is a significant increase in interest in objective news coverage. On the one hand, this is due to global trends in the competition between television and the internet (Shaikh, 2017), mainly for advertising, audiences, users and innovative media technologies. On the other hand, it is the result of intense competition at the local level and the transition to a new model of income redistribution. This model determines the fragility of the military media hierarchy and the further development of the information environment.

Antagonism in the media coverage of the panorama of military events involves an increase in direct, hidden and biased funding of the information service, the formation of innovative ideological platforms, active confrontation in forms, methods, and most importantly, in the content of various military-political and ideological trends. This is a unique dynamic phenomenology of long-term confrontational processes that can significantly affect the course of hostilities.

6 Media Confrontation in the Russian-Occupied Border Regions of Ukraine

The occupied regions of southern and southeastern Ukraine are in fact grey zones of information confrontation between Russian and Ukrainian media, as well as local media in the pseudo-republics of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Regional TV channels supporting one or the other side of the conflict can also be considered part of this information confrontation. Therefore, the created information confrontation has a significant impact on the mood of the local population, its support for one side or the other, as well as on the dynamics of migration, which has reached a threatening scale in the current situation. The front line, which stretches from the

partially occupied areas of Luhansk and Donetsk regions to certain territories in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts, is of great importance. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, which was seized by Russian troops, provided a significant portion of the electricity in Ukraine's energy balance, and its disconnection from the Ukrainian power grid led to a nationwide blackout.

According to Ukrinform, Russia spent 1.9 billion USD on propaganda in 2022 instead of the planned 1.5 billion USD. However, according to the government, 50% of this money went to three selected companies: RT, BTTO and the Russia Today Media Group (Ukrinform, 2023). A significant part of these funds was allocated to ideological battles against Ukrainian media and the dissemination of Russian content in the information environment of the occupied territories, as well as to the dissemination of Russian television and radio broadcasts in the controlled territory, approximately within a 50-80 km radius. The zone of military-political confrontation has been transformed into an area of multi-directional "media sublimation" with active resistance between powerful propaganda systems, within which significant contradictions (linguistic, ideological, political, military and social) arise. As a result, the conglomerate created appears fragile and subject to significant changes over time.

In assessing the losses caused by Russian aggression in different regions of Ukraine, it is crucial to take into account the dynamics of human resources, especially those with a relatively high proportion of intellectual capacity. This includes journalists. According to Zn.ua (2023), 33 journalists were killed and 15 media workers disappeared during the second stage of Russia's aggression. However, statistical data on the media in the context of military operations can vary. The USP Agency (2023) provides a more complete picture, noting that from February 24, 2022 to May 24, 2023, Russia committed 514 crimes against the media in Ukraine, including 10 murders, 14 cases of disappearances of journalists, 21 abductions of journalists, 18 injuries, 16 attacks on TV towers, 37 attacks on journalists, 10 seizures and attacks on editorial offices, 27 shutdowns of Ukrainian broadcasting, 67 threats and intimidation, 51 cybercrimes, 9 online blocking of access to media, 233 media outlets ceased operations due to the war. Obviously, in addition to the list of crimes, the Ukrainian media have suffered significant material and moral losses, which can only be fully assessed after the end of hostilities. However, the grey media zone is a unique conglomerate of systemic confrontation characterised by the following features:

- High degree of military fluidity of territories, which can change hands many times;

- the accelerated territorial dynamics of media institutions, which moved rapidly, coinciding with fluctuations in the front line;
- regional disintegration, understood as a departure from the classical model of active warfare and a transition to points of local resistance, local concentration of military resources and places of important geopolitical decision-making;
- direct and indirect funding of ideologically oriented media, the presence of collaborators against whom local guerrillas are waging large-scale military operations;
- technological upgrades due to the destruction of the technical infrastructure of TV and radio channels, social networks, and print media; the introduction of total control over content in various formats in the Russian sector;
- diffuse deterritorialisation of economic and governance processes (partial occupation/incomplete liberation of the territories of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson oblasts, as well as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, which has turned from a recreational region of Ukraine into a kind of military transport hub);
- significant assistance to Ukraine in the form of weapons, military equipment, dual-use goods; training of soldiers and officers at NATO member states' bases. Significant financial assistance from the EU, part of which is used to rebuild infrastructure. Such large-scale assistance is assessed differently in the Ukrainian and Russian media. It is perceived most critically in regions where active hostilities are taking place, which are characterised by hyper-polarisation of ideological content in a hybrid war.

7 Conclusions

Hence, the intertwining dynamics of the military conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic have left an indelible mark on the landscape of media and information dissemination both in Ukraine and globally. The evolving media environment is characterised by asymmetry, industry dynamism and vulnerability to fake news, fabricated information and ideological manipulation. While Russia stands out as a leading propagator of such tactics, it is important to recognise that these challenges are not limited to any one country; they affect media systems around the world.

The media landscape in Ukraine, in particular, has undergone a significant transformation due to these factors. The emergence of digital media, combined with a resilient television sector and philanthropic funding, has created a complex ecosystem in which information is disseminated quickly and diversely. Nevertheless, this also exposes the media industry

to risks associated with changing news trends, evolving user preferences and external influences.

Israel offers a unique perspective, demonstrating a balance between defence, press freedom and economic innovation. The country's communication networks are built on linguistic and ethnic principles, providing access to information in many languages. But the media in Israel can also be characterised by orthodoxy, conservatism and the potential for political bias, which can lead to real conflicts.

In addition, in the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, media resistance in the southeastern and eastern regions has become an extremely important phenomenon. Information battles in these territories shape public sentiment, affect migration processes and energy infrastructure, leading to significant national consequences. Russia's significant financial investments in propaganda and its targeting of Ukrainian media demonstrate the seriousness of this ongoing information confrontation.

Unfortunately, the victims of this media conflict are human lives: journalists and media workers face threats, violence and even death. Statistics paint a grim picture of the risks faced by journalists in conflict zones. However, the media in Ukraine remain resilient, adapting to the challenges of a rapidly changing information landscape.

In conclusion, the complex interplay between the military conflict, media manipulation and technological advances continues to change the media landscape in Ukraine and beyond. These changes underscore the importance of preserving journalistic ethics, supporting independent media and fostering a critical and discerning public in the face of ongoing challenges to the free flow of information.

Disclosure Statement

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