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Research article

## War yesterday and today: The image of Russia in British media discourse

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### Abstract

The paper focuses on diachronic framing analysis of Russia's images in British media discourse. The importance of the research is determined by a need to work out adequate linguistic foundations to counteract information war, generated by some foreign media and aimed at distorting Russia's history and eroding its spiritual values. Few scholars have drawn on any systematic research into analysis of Russia's images in foreign media discourses of different historical spans. The major objective is to compare Russia's images and their emotional charge in the British media in chronologically divided periods of war and peace under the influence of changing historical and ideological factors. The authors account for the mechanisms by which Russia's images are framed and transformed in the contexts of the largest war of the XX century and the information war of the XXI century. The material comprises 500 samples per period. The data covering two historical spans are investigated through a framing approach. The criteria for diachronic analysis are dominant diagnostic and prognostic frames, constituting the macroframe WAR. The significant difference in Russia's images in war- and peacetime consists in their emotive load: Russia's contemporary negative images are contrasted to positive images activated in the retrospective period. The findings support the idea that British media discourse focusing on Russia is subject-centered: Russia's image is determined by the geopolitical situation, Great Britain's political priorities and objectives, and the bilateral relationship between the countries. The results can be used to further develop the linguistic basics of war theory.

**Keywords:** *British media discourse, information war, framing theory, diagnostic frame, prognostic frame, diachronic analysis*

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## Война вчера и сегодня: образ России в британском медиадискурсе

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### Аннотация

Статья посвящена диахроническому анализу образов России в британском медиадискурсе. Актуальность работы обусловлена необходимостью создания лингвистических основ противодействия информационно-психологическому воздействию со стороны зарубежных СМИ, направленному на искажение истории и размывание российских духовно-нравственных ценностей, а также дефицитом в теории языка диахронических исследований, посвященных сопоставлению образов России в зарубежных медийных дискурсах разных исторических периодов. Цель работы – установить зависимость медиадискурсивной репрезентации образов России и их эмоциональную нагруженность от исторических и идеологических факторов в военное и мирное время. Сопутствующие задачи исследования: проследить трансформацию медиа образа России в контекстах крупнейшего вооруженного конфликта в истории XX столетия и информационных войн новейшей истории начала XXI века; выявить и сопоставить особенности фреймирования образа России в британских медиа периода Второй мировой войны и через 75 лет после ее завершения. Текстовый материал британского медиадискурса (объемом 500 контекстов в каждом хронологическом срезе) изучен с опорой на достижения теории фрейминга. Критериями диахронического сопоставления дискурсивных образов России выступают диагностические и прогностические фреймы, репрезентирующие макрофрейм «ВОЙНА». Сопоставительный анализ произведен с учетом экстралингвистических факторов конструирования образов России в избранных хронологических ракурсах. Устанавливается, что моделирование образов России британскими СМИ в военный и мирный периоды существенно отличается с точки зрения реализации их эмотивного потенциала: негативизация образа России в новейшей истории противопоставлена мелиоративности медиа образов в ретроспективном срезе. Авторы приходят к выводу о субъектоцентричности медийного дискурса о России. Доказывается, что регулярно используемые модели дискурсивной актуализации образов России детерминированы расстановкой сил на международной арене, интересами и целями Великобритании, характером двусторонних отношений. Результаты работы могут представлять интерес для дальнейшей разработки теории языка войны в лингвистике и широком кругу социально-гуманитарных исследований.

**Ключевые слова:** британский медиадискурс, информационная война, теория фрейминга, диагностический фрейм, прогностический фрейм, диахронический анализ

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### 1. Introduction

May, 8, 1945 marks the end of World War II in Europe, May, 9, 1945 – in Russia. As mankind approached the important remembrance year of 2020, which marks 75 years after the end of World War II, the notion of war gave much food for reconsideration of global conflicts, determining a drastic change of the essence of

war. The concept of war, at large, continues to shape peoples' vision of the world and of others to the present day. The problem is mainly discussed from a European historical perspective (Beevor 1999, Keegan 2002, Lightbody 2004, Mawdsley 2009, Morgan 2008, Müller & Ueberschär 2002, Overy 2006).

Arguing that Russia contributed much to the collapse of the Nazi regime and prevented many crimes against humanity, the authors try to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of war and its transformation on the time axis. The paper introduces a non-European discourse analyst's perspective. The major objective is to reveal discursive aspects of the image construal of Russia in the British media during the six-year-lasting conflict of World War II and compare them with the current representations, labelled as information war. Under information war the authors mean a media-related aspect of reporting and distribution of information in order to manipulate readers' opinion.

There has been a scarcity of studies that have utilized a framing approach and diachronic analysis to examine the notion of war and the image of Russia in its background. Our theoretical interest is to examine images of Russia, generated in the British media, to assess their emotive aspects and compare the use of frames, constituting a macroframe WAR in two historically distant periods, and to consider whether there are significant differences.

The objectives of the paper are threefold:

- 1) to reveal the most conspicuous frames, organizing and determining public opinion about war in general, encompassing the past and the present perspectives;
- 2) to deepen understanding of how the semantics of war has changed since WWII and what media reality is projected to communicate the image of Russia at present;
- 3) to specifically highlight the image of Russia as represented in the British media of the WWII period.

## 2. Theoretical framework

A framing approach has proved an adequate methodological tool for analyzing how the media construct a meaningful, comprehensible reality for the audience, how they select and organize ideas for the public to interpret. Framing theory has been taken up by sociology (Gamson & Modigliani 1987, 1989, Goffman 1974), psychology (Bartlett 1932), linguistics and discourse studies (Lakoff & Johnson 1981, Tannen 1979, van Dijk 1977), economics (Ileri et al. 2019, Kahneman & Tversky 1979), communication and media studies (Papacharissi & De Fatima Oliveira 2008, Tuchman 1978, Scheufele 1999, van Gorp 2005, 2007), political communication and policy studies (Entman 1993).

Defining frames is rather problematic, a fact which stems from a lack of consensus on how to describe frames in the news (Ileri et al. 2019: 5). In general, a frame is defined as a central idea, describing how people organize experience. Frames set parameters "in which citizens discuss public events" (Semetko & Valkenburg 2000: 94). Cappella and Jamieson have introduced four criteria that a

frame should meet: 1) a news frame must have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics; 2) a frame should be commonly observed in journalistic practice; 3) it must be possible to differentiate the frame in a reliable manner from others; 4) a frame must possess the property of representational validity and not represent a fragment of a researcher's imagination (Ileri et al. 2019: 5).

The present study mainly draws on seminal work on framing theory (Entman 1993, Brüggemann 2014, Godefroidt et al. 2016, Ileri et al. 2019, Scheufele & Iyengar 2017, Van Gorp 2007).

Fundamentally, the studies which focus on frames elaborate on Entman's definition: to frame means "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman 1993: 52). The idea of intentional selection and representation has proved relevant in contemporary research. Journalists can select some features by means of the choice of words, set phrases, repetitions, visuals, culturally marked symbols, thus, shaping the issue in a particular manner and influencing public opinion (De Vreese 2005, Godefroidt et al. 2016, Kushneruk 2018, 2019, Kushneruk & Kurochkina 2020, Larina et al. 2020, Ozyumenko 2017, Ozyumenko & Larina 2021, this issue).

Frames are complex in nature, which is why the demarcation line should be drawn between *generic frames* and *issue-specific frames* (Semetko & Valkenburg 2000). Issue-specific frames apply to a certain issue, subject or topic, while generic frames describe general features of news that can apply across different topics, times and cultural contexts (Godefroidt et al. 2016: 781).

As we focus on media representation of war and the discourse portrayal of Russia in two historically separate periods, the identification of a macroframe WAR seems relevant. In the suggested term, the morpheme *macro-* designates a conceptually complex structure, containing generic and issue-specific elements, which are textualized in the British media in both periods of time – the WWII period and the contemporary time span.

As a generic conceptual structure, it highlights: 1) a state of armed hostile conflict between states or nations; a period of armed conflict; the art or science of warfare; 2) a state of hostility, conflict, or antagonism; a struggle or competition between opposing forces or for a particular end (The dictionary by Merriam-Webster).

As an issue-specific structure, it can have several constitutive frames and subframes. They are context-specific, i.e. they depend on historical, political, ideological, international aspects of the news coverage and domestic angles in news reporting about Russia. In Sections 4 and 5, it will be demonstrated that issue-specific frames can be diagnostic and prognostic. Diagnostic framing presupposes assignment of blame or causality to someone or something. Prognostic framing is about giving solutions to the problems raised in the media (Godefroidt et al. 2016: 783). Prognostic frames can also be viewed as central organizing ideas, general

schemas for interpreting the future, which are rooted both in past and present trends, extending forward, interacting with one another, shaping new possibilities and patterns of behavior in the process (Solopova & Chudinov 2019, Chudinov & Solopova 2015).

In cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, political linguistics, cultural studies, and other fields a growing body of literature recognizes the importance of the diachronic dimension in research on conceptualization of our world, which can be explained by the temporal and dynamic dimensions of conceptualization.

The diachronic aspect of conceptual changes is a classic problem in “the history of concepts” (Begriffsgeschichte) (Konersmann 1999, Reichardt 1998, Koselleck 1983), in “the history of mentalities” of Continental Europe (l’histoire des mentalités) (Blumenberg 1998, Le Roy Ladurie 1973), and in pragmatically oriented British, American, Finnish, and Dutch research (Hampsher-Monk, Tilmans & van Vree 1998, Pocock 1971, Pulkkinen 1999).

In Russia, the past decades have seen the rapid development of new areas of diachronic research in conceptology (Bogatyreva 2009, Kolesov 2018, Kondratieva 2011), cultural linguistics (Larina, Ozyumenko & Kurteš. 2021, Sazonova & Borozdina 2010, Shaklein 2009), comparative conceptology (Bogatyreva 2011, Kuznetsov 2007), metaphor studies (Allan 2008, Budaev & Chudinov 2020, Cánovas 2015, Díaz-Vera 2015, Geeraerts 2010, 2015, Kövecses 2005, 2009, Solopova 2015, 2020, Solopova & Saltykova 2019, Solopova & Chudinov 2018, Trim 2011, 2015, Chudinov, Budaev & Solopova 2020).

Though manifold, the foci of diachronic studies may be incorporated into a single focal point – researching the historical evolution of concepts, metaphors, schemas, frames, etc. through the ages or over a certain time span and explaining the reasons of the processes that changed a previous conception for a new one or, vice versa, accounted for their constancy.

### 3. Material and methods

The first step in analysing the evolution of frames, constituting a macroframe WAR, means interpreting them in detail within a specific time period, i.e. synchronous and retrospective analysis. The initial stage is parceling discourse into discrete time periods. The present research is based on focus fragmentation, understood as the process of dividing discourse into minor segments on the basis of the chosen perspective (e.g. major political events) for their further diachronic comparison: it provides a diachronic analysis of frames that highlight images of Russia in British media discourse of the World War II period, and 75 years after its end.

There exist several reasons for our focusing on the British media: Britain is one of the leading European countries; the direction of Anglo-Russian relations through ages was one of animosity to alliance and back to animosity, this fact seems relevant for studying images of Russia in the WWII period and in contemporary world when the bilateral relations are at their most strained point since the end of the Cold war. In the retrospective time span the years of WWII were deliberately

narrowed to the period of 1942–1945 when the countries were allied. The time span was chosen to analyze whether the alliance of the two countries in the war against Nazism affected the perception of Russia / the Soviet Union in the British media.

The intentionally compiled dataset includes 1000 texts (500 samples per period). The contexts from the current British media were retrieved from an online corpus (News on the Web), encompassing national and local magazines and newspapers, based on quality and having high circulation rates: Prospect, the Economist, the Daily Mail, the Daily Telegraph, the Guardian, the Independent, the Irish News, the Scotsman, the Sunday Post, the Telegraph, The Times, Verdict. Any context, containing the following tokens, was considered eligible for inclusion in the sample: *war, Russia, Russian, Russians, Russian-backed, Russian-operated, Russian-made*.

The source of the material for retrospective data is a digital archive from the British Library's collection (the British Newspaper Archive). The BNA search engine combines several powerful options: it allows for searching hundreds of millions of documents by a keyword, name or title and watch results appear in an instant. In the study the corpus was derived from all newspapers available in the BNA database. The search terms included "war, USSR, Russia, Soviet" in the 'Exact Search' checkbox (searching all the words within the text). Other options that narrowed the selection included the publication date range (1942–1945), with 'articles' and 'illustrated articles' chosen among article types. The documents matching the search query comprised 2238 texts. They were sorted by relevance; the first 500 texts made up our corpus. The periodicals containing the entries are Aberdeen Press and Journal, Belfast News-Letter, Birmingham Daily Post, Daily Record, Daily Herald, Dundee Courier, Illustrated London News, Liverpool Daily Post, etc.

The first step in understanding any document is its origin. The methods of source study comprise those of identifying and describing historical documents. When working with historical sources, the focus is on the origin of the document and its context. Sourcing includes stating the author's name, title of the article, page numbers, journal, magazine or newspaper title, volume and issue number, publication date and place (publishing house and publishing city if available).

After being retrieved from the corpora, all the documents are then manually searched for framing structures. As the research utilizes both contemporary and historical sources, the quality of the processed text of the retrospective time span greatly depends on the physical condition of the original source, paper quality, color, fading and damage defects, etc., which makes the researcher forgo automated data processing in favor of a manual selection method.

We have opted for the inductive approach, which enables us to reveal the array of frames constituting the macroframe WAR on synchronic and diachronic axes in two time periods. As frames are embodied in natural and cultural experience, their activity in discourse depends on a great number of factors that influence and alter their use.

Thus, interpreting the data in any diachronic research employs both a cognitive and discourse-based method and culture-specific analysis. They help to evaluate diagnostic and prognostic frames, constituting the macroframe WAR, through a comprehensive analysis of both political events and cultural peculiarities. Interpreting frames within the historical and cultural contexts in which they unfolded, locating them in time and place and understanding how these factors shaped them allows for deep understanding and interpreting of conceptual changes.

In section 4, we will concentrate on textual codifications to reveal the main war-related frames, constituting the macroframe WAR and contributing to the image construal of Russia during the current (the latest) historical period.

#### 4. The Image of Russia in the British Media, 75 Years after the End of World War II

In this part of the research, we try to answer the questions: *What thematic frames are applied in the contemporary British media with reference to Russia? Which diagnostic and prognostic frames contribute most to the image of Russia 75 years after the end of WWII?* Fundamentally, the macroframe WAR is applied in current British news stories about Russia. We argue that the frames, structuring it, limit the country's image construal. These frames are singled out on a thematic principle. Thematic framing brings to the fore the most important issues related to Russia as represented in the British media of the present. The perception of Russia is primarily limited to World Wars, Russia's Soviet past (Cold war), and wars of the recent past in Georgia (2008), Syria (2011), Ukraine (2014). Besides, Russia's image is media-projected in relation to conflicts, such as information war and proxy war. The former is a struggle over information via communication technologies, including cybersecurity issues. The latter is a war fought between opponents (groups, countries) that represent the interests of other larger powers, and may have help and support from these. Thus, the following frames have been established (hereafter they are highlighted in bold type): **World Wars, Cold War, War in Ukraine, War in Syria, Information War**. Less textualized are the frames **War in Georgia, Proxy War**.

The **World Wars** frame reports current political situations in terms of devastating global war conflicts. In (1), covering the talks of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine in Paris (9.12.2019), aimed at ending the conflict in Ukraine, *The Politico* journalist generally describes World War II as "blood-soaked", though the outcome, provided by the Red Army's breakthroughs, is given less prominence than the D-Day landings. Following the professional norm of objectivity, he refers to the frame indirectly – through citing the spokeswoman of the Russian foreign ministry Maria Zakharova:

(1) ...the spokeswoman of the Russian foreign ministry, said: «The Normandy landings were not **a game-changer for the outcome of WWII and the Great Patriotic War**. The outcome was determined by the Red Army's victories – mainly, in Stalingrad and Kursk» (*Politico*, 10.12.2019).

From a subjective non-European perspective, the role of Russia as a ‘game-changer’ in WWII is underestimated. Objectively, Russia and Britain look at the same events and see different ‘second-hand’ realities.

In (2), the **Cold War** frame offers explanations for political instability in Europe. The reference is to the times of confrontation between the Soviet Union and the USA. The semantics of confusion, intrusion and dominance are expressed by the lexemes *overshadow* (becloud, blur), *incursion* (hostile entrance), *dictate* (impose, specify authoritatively):

(2) *The United States and Russia overshadowed the EU leaders’ summit on Thursday – an unplanned and unwelcome incursion by the old Cold War rivals. <...> The intense focus on Moscow and Washington served as a curious throwback to Cold War days when the superpower capitals dictated the global policy agenda* (Politico, 23.03.2018).

Framing is never neutral (Scheufele and Iyengar 2017).

Presumably, in (2) the flashback to the past, when the superpowers, associated with two political camps, formed a bipolar world, serves to make the readers think more of instability of the relations between the present Russia and the Western world.

Arguably, once the ontological situation related to Russia becomes epistemologically relevant in British media discourse, it acquires subjective media interpretation. First, it is ‘diagnosed’ – recognized by signs and ‘symptoms’, then, it is evaluated, and, finally, is given prognoses and recommendations. With this in mind, we specify the pragmatic aspect of framing and distinguish between **diagnostic** and **prognostic frames**, issue-specific in nature.

**Diagnostic frames** in contemporary British media

- assess and reassess the role of Russia in the wars of the past (1), (3);
- identify and examine causes of the problems facing British, European people, and the West in general as a result of Russia’s military activities in the Cold War and post-Cold war world (2), (4), (5).

In (3), a diagnostic **World Wars** frame gives salience to Russia as a historically powerful opponent, which proved aggressive in the past and poses real danger for the West at present. The traditional metaphor (*a bear*) is employed:

(3) *Although Britain and Russia have not been to war often, we in Britain have often seen a rampaging bear on the horizon. In the 19th Century, imperial rivalry over India, Afghanistan and Central Asia led to risky decision-making in London and almost to war. How has Russia been important to Britain in the past?* (The Sunday Post, 14.09.2019).

The image of Russia is dramatized in the context of today. The metaphor, though conventional, connotes negative evaluation, saturating the image with such features as surly, uncouth, burly, shambling, enraged, violent, attributed to the wild animal.

In (4), references to wars in Ukraine and Syria diagnose a problem, called ‘the Russian threat’, which is the ideological prism through which the British media see and regularly represent Russia to the readers:



(4) *While such debates are no doubt necessary, Europe hasn't found a way to move beyond them. Time is running short. Russia, after its incursions into Ukraine and involvement in Syria, continues to sow chaos on Europe's doorstep* (Politico, 16.02.2020).

The metaphor, expressed by the verb 'to sow' in combination with the lexeme 'chaos', enhances the semantics of disseminating, scattering, dispersing disorder and confusion. Due to this trope, the situation in Europe is represented as psychologically stressful. The image of Russia is highly negativized.

A negative image construal is also objectified in (5). Frame **Information war**, found to be common in the British news, contributes to the image of Russia as a political aggressor, striving to divide and polarize Europe, undermine the cradle of European democracy and its basic societal values:

(5) *Russia is simultaneously probing our defences and attacking our allies with repeated cyber forays. In this new cold war, they are just the tip of the iceberg. Simultaneously it is waging an information war, spreading disinformation that is designed to befuddle us so that we do nothing to confront Russian aggression, and using social media to divide and polarise our society, and corrupt our most precious asset and advantage – democracy* (Politics Home, 30.09.2018).

In the context, the frame **Information war** is manifest in the use of word combinations, such as 'cyber forays', 'new cold war', 'wage an information war', 'spread disinformation', 'Russian aggression'. Information war is referred to as a 'new cold war', which would indicate harsh confrontation between the sides, comparable to the Soviet times. The metaphor 'befuddle' makes explicit an expressive angle in the presentation of Russia as an aggressive offender, who tries to confuse the minds and thoughts of the Europeans.

**Prognostic frames** predict future and potential changes. They

- offer hypothetical situations about the future of Europe, Britain and the world, pushing forward the dangers, threats and risks, posed by Russia (6), (7), (8), (9), (10);
- prognosticate wars and conflicts (e.g. *a forthcoming war, an all-out war, a world war, world war three, war with Iran, nuclear war, a nuclear war with Russia, world war with the Russians, 21st century warfare*), (8), (9), (10).

(6) *The risk isn't just that Europe will be sidelined on the global stage, but that others – in particular Russia and China – will exploit those divisions for their own ends* (Politico, 13.02.2020).

Context (6) highlights that Russia and China will use Europe's weakness to their advantage, which implies real danger. The dark future of Europe is outlined in (7):

(7) *With Russia involved, any military intervention will have the crisis leave the Middle East, and quite possibly have bombs landing on any western city* (The Guardian, 21.08.2019).

The Russian involvement is assessed as a major threat to the West. In (8), the image of Russia as a dominant world power is closely associated with its cyber activity and spreading disinformation:

(8) *Some analysts believe **the world will look back on Russia's cyber activity** in decades to come and see it as the greatest intelligence operation ever conducted. Russia isn't some rogue state when it comes to disinformation; it's just the best – using it to settle old scores from the loss of the Cold War* (Herald Scotland, 02.12.2019).

The context emphasizes that cyber war is within the reach of Russian military art.

In headlines, prognostic frames often combine both aspects, specifying threats awaiting European people, and predicting conflicts, the most looming of which is a nuclear war:

(9) ***Threat of nuclear war** worst for 30 years, says House of Lords committee* (The Independent, 23.04.2019). ***Threat of nuclear war** is greater than at any time since World War Two* (The Daily Mail, 22.05.2019). *US-Iran crisis: are we heading towards **World War Three**?* (The Week, 13.01.2020).

In (10), the responsibility for a potential nuclear conflict is attributed to Russia. The Russian President is characterized as far-seeing:

(10) *Unfortunately **Putin holds all the cards** here, and he knows it. **Any escalation of this conflict could lead to a world war** in which nuclear and chemical weapons would be bound, sooner or later, to be used. **The threat posed by the nuclear deterrent** is being used to paralyze us. Does anyone have a clear idea of how **a world war would pan out in the twenty-first century**? It is unthinkable, but **Putin may well have thought it through*** (The Guardian, 21.08.2019).

The metaphor 'to paralyze' reveals negative evaluation of Europe as powerless and ineffective, opposed to Putin's political foresight and military efficacy of Russia.

Drawing a demarcation line between diagnostic and prognostic frames is conditional. In contemporary British media discourse, two types of frame are often simultaneously activated to assess and give interpretation of a political issue or a situation. Overall, both types contribute to the projection of a highly negative image of Russia.

In section 5, we will focus on the dominant frames, constituting the macroframe WAR, and examine images of Russia generated in the British media during the World War II period.

## 5. The Image of Russia in the British Media during World War II

Following our logic, in this part we will try to answer the following questions: *What thematic frames are applied in the retrospective time span with reference to Russia / the Soviet Union<sup>1</sup>? Which diagnostic and prognostic frames contribute most to the image of Russia / the Soviet Union during WWII?*

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<sup>1</sup> In the retrospective time span the USSR and Russia (Soviet Russia) were regarded by the British media as one and the same international actor on the world arena (Solopova, Chudinov 2019: 330).

In the WWII time span, the macroframe WAR is structured on the thematic principle, which reflects the tendency of journalists to base a causal theme on their stories about the war and the role of Russia in the events. The dominant frames are **Great Power**, **Military Strength**, and **Friendship**. Less frequent frames are **Leadership** and **Democracy**.

**Diagnostic frames** in the British media of the retrospective time span

- assess the role of Russia in WWII (11), (12), (13) and the bilateral relations (14), (15), (17);
- reassess the political system (20), (21), (22), the leader of the Soviet Union (18), (19) and the reasons for WWII (16).

The **Great Power** frame (11) is central to the macroframe WAR. This turns out to be a dominant idea that organizes both diagnostic and prognostic framing, regulates the audience's perception of the country on the whole and gives meaning to specific problems, events and situation Russia was involved in:

(11) *The U.S.S.R. has always been referred to by us as **the colossus of the North**. If for no other reason, its **immense territory and vast population warrant the use of the description 'colossus'**. **Three of the five Great Powers in Europe have disappeared ... We are, therefore, left with Great Britain and with Russia**. When we consider Russia's phenomenal rise within the past 25 years... With the others down and out, and **herself – the mistress of the Continent...** (Diss Express, 10.03.1944).*

In (11) the image of Russia is framed as “colossus”. The metaphor is bleached and conventionally used in public discourse to characterise countries viewed as oppressive and hostile (typical target domains in the British media are the USA and Russia (both Tsarist and Soviet)). The scholars stress that the metaphor evokes negative effects (confrontation, aggression, threat, isolation, distance from Europe), with the colossus image embodying both fear of and admiration for the colossal power [Chudinov, Budaev, Solopova 2020]. In the WWII time span the metaphor is highly positive, stressing Russia's enormous size, population, natural resources, ability, and expertise to exert its influence in the global conflict and on a global scale – key factors that make any country powerful. The metaphor “mistress of the Continent” seems to capture these notions as well, producing the image of the country that rules, directs, and dominates the Continent.

Being central to the macroframe WAR, the **Great Power** frame comprises a set of interrelated concepts that present a systematic view of Russia / the Soviet Union during the WWII period in the British media. This frame specifies relationships among other dominant frames that comprise further explanations of Russia's greatness, predictions of the outcome of the war, the future of the country and post-war world organization.

Since force has always been important in global politics, a **Military Strength** frame (2) referring to Russia is foregrounded in WWII media discourse. In wartime and in global conflicts, strength for war is always a test of a great power:

(12) *The most pregnant single fact relating to **the rise and fall of nations** which stands out to this war is **the emergence of Russia as a military power of the first magnitude**. More completely than any other nation is she **potentially self-supporting all the resources of economic strength**. Russia, if she desired to act in isolation, **would be militarily strong** enough to impose a settlement on the countries which **the Red Army** is on the way to liberate from the Germans* (Yorkshire Evening Post, 04.10.1943).

British journalists lay particular emphasis on military force as one of the foundations of Russia's power. Its military strength in WWII media discourse is characterized as *supreme, of the first magnitude, the greatest on earth*, etc., all the lexemes and word combinations having the semantic components “highest in rank, authority, degree”, “of great size and extent”, “most prominent among others”. Though no country is great enough to solve the problem of global war alone, still Russia was presented to the British audience as having this capacity if it wished to exercise it.

Unlike modern European media, that almost always highlight the ideological zeal and fanaticism of the Red Army, the media of the WWII period stressed the major role it played during the years of 1942–1945 and expressed their profound admiration of its glorious record and victories:

(13) “*Ode To Red Army*”.

*Though flanks were turned and centre gone.  
You stood for home and struggled on,  
A star of hope within you shone.*

*You struggled through a shaking time.  
Enduring loss and grief and crime,  
Each making hope the more sublime.*

*Among your ruins and your dead,  
You stood and fought, or froze and bled.  
The hope still burned, the star still led.  
And now you reap reward, the line  
Comes west again, the foes decline.  
O, hope, burn on. O, star, still shine.*

(Aberdeen Evening Express, 23.02.1944).

It is worth noting that this poem was written for the occasion of the 26th anniversary of the Red Army by the Poet Laureate, Mr. John Masefield, sung at the Albert Hall in London, to music by Sir Arnold Bax, Master of the King's Music in celebration of Red Army Day on 23 February 1944, and published in more than ten newspapers and magazines, issued in different counties of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. Moreover, it must be noted that 1) the genre chosen by the author is an ode – a poem praising or glorifying someone or something, usually marked by exaltation of feeling; 2) “Ode to Red Army” centers on the symbol of the star, the red star symbolizing the Red Army and military service in Soviet heraldry (*a star of hope within you shone; the star still led; O, star, still shine*); 3) the metaphor of a star shining in the night, or a star of hope, symbolizes a grand and powerful force, divine guidance that helps people to go in the right direction, in the context of WWII – to victory. WWII media invariably highlighted the outstanding part Russia and its army played in breaking the Nazi tyranny.

In times of war, it is essential to mobilize international coalitions to address shared challenges and threats. A great power with its military strength makes a good

ally. In the news media of the WWII period the relationship between Great Britain and the USSR was characterized as one of solidarity and support, which is presented within a diagnostic frame **Friendship** (14), (15):

(14) *No doubt we shall have our differences and controversies, but as **friends** we can speak freely to each other and **in the spirit of friendship and comradeship** seek reconciliation* (Dundee Evening Telegraph, 23.02.1944).

(15) ***Russian Comrades**. To-morrow we shall pay a particular tribute to **our Russian comrades**, whose prowess in the field has been one of the grand contributions to the general victory / Daily Record, 09.05.1945. (GB).*

The international friendship between Great Britain and the USSR was based on things held in common – notably, shared goals and mutual motivation in the fight against the Nazis, common external enemy, armies, sacrifices, etc. The lexemes *friend*, *friendship*, *comrade*, *comradeship* with the semantics of amity, fellowship, and benevolence are used to achieve the desired effect on the audience: the primary focus here is on conceptualizing Russia as familiar rather than foreign, as friendly rather than hostile, as the country that deserved a significant degree of respect, admiration and trust. The concepts of trust / distrust within the frame **Friendship** play an active role in reassessing not only the USSR in its present and past, but also the reasons of the war (16), in shaping a new organization of global politics (17).

(16) *Looking back, and being wise after the event, a great many people have made the decision that **this war would not have happened if it had not been for the misunderstandings and distrust which divided us from the Soviet Union*** (Hastings and St Leonards Observer, 11.11.1944).

(17) *If history records Hitler as having been of any use whatever to the world, it will be because he destroyed **the distrust which had formerly existed between Soviet Russia and the rest of the civilised world**, and so opened the way to a new and more hopeful organisation of international security* (Liverpool Daily Post, 21.06.1943).

The alliance between Great Britain and the USSR influenced the way journalists framed almost all Russia-related issues in the WWII period: they demonstrated integrity, commitment, interdependence of the two countries – those foundational building blocks that make any friendship (both interpersonal and international) last.

Two more issue-specific frames textualized in the British media of WWII with reference to Russia / the Soviet Union are **Leadership** (18), (19) and **Democracy** (20), (21).

(18) *The Russians have been led by **a great soldier and a great strategist, one the greatest of all time*** (Birmingham Mail, 27 March 1944).

(19) ***Stalin is the greatest military strategist of this war, surpassing even Montgomery**, and the future of the peoples of the world depends on the peoples of Soviet Russia and Great Britain* (Rochdale Observer, 3 March 1945).

The head of the state is another attribute related to the state's power. A **Leadership** frame centered upon positive features of the Soviet Government and its leader. The British media stressed Stalin's outstanding quality as a military leader: the lexeme *great* and its superlative *greatest* in (18) and (19) present the Soviet leader as a skilled soldier and strategist markedly superior in quality and preeminent over others, including British Field Marshall B.M. Montgomery. It's worth mentioning that the latter was one of the most important and decorated military leaders of WWII, exceptionally popular with the British public.

Furthermore, the Soviet leader, whose dictatorship and totalitarian rule are greatly emphasized in contemporary media (e.g. the Guardian, 26.10.2019, the Daily Telegraph, 06.11.2019, BBC, 18.04.2019, etc.), was said to rule 'a free people' (20) in 'a democratic state' (21).

(20) *From a message to Marshal Stalin: You have demonstrated in all your campaigns what is possible to accomplish **when a free people** under superlative leadership and unflinching courage rise against the forces of barbarism* (Daily Herald, 09.05.1945).

(21) *The U.S.S.R. itself has by no means reached finality in constitution building. **The present stretch of its road to democracy** lies through a period of peaceful evolution towards that **personal liberty** which is **the hallmark of democracy*** (Western Mail, 18.11.1944).

In WWII media discourse, journalists developed a particular conceptualization of the Soviet leader, they reoriented the audience's thinking about Stalin by accentuating his ability to equip the Socialist State to meet the gravest external peril and to bring the country triumphantly through the years of invasion and devastation:

(22) *It must never be forgotten that **there was nothing in the whole world, nor could there have been created for several years any military organism which could ever have given the blow which Russia has given, or survived the losses which Russia has borne*** (Nottingham Evening Post, 09.11.1943).

Though diagnostic frames aim at identifying a problem in the present and at assigning blame or causality to someone or something, in WWII media discourse the frames did not connect the negative aspect of the war to Russia. Metaphorically speaking, Russia was not thought a problem, but a solution to the problem of the war with the Nazis.

**Prognostic frames** in the British media during the World War II period

- offer hypothetical situations about the future of Russia / the Soviet Union (23), (24), (25), Europe (25), (27), the world (25), the war (26), Great Britain (28), (29), the relationships of Russia and Britain (30), (31);
- prognosticate future instruments of international security and cooperation, highlighting Russia's important role in post-war world organization (30), (31);
- motivate readers to remember the lessons of WWII and Russia's role in the victory over Nazi Germany (31), (32), (33).

Although the line of demarcation between diagnostic and prognostic framing is relative, it is found that nearly every diagnostic frame identified in the

retrospective time span, has a formal prognostic counterpart. The British media invariably placed Russia among the countries that projected and would project its influence on the world stage. More importantly, Russia headed this list:

(23) *The Soviet Union will be an enormously powerful nation after this war* (Hastings and St Leonards Observer, 11.11.1944).

(24) *Shape of things to come (the title). Mr. Catterall said Russia was a power that had come into the world affairs to stay and to play an ever-increasing part* (Surrey Advertiser, 04.07.1942)

The dimensions of power fixed in the diagnostic frame **Great Power** (namely, the nation's geography and the inevitable consequences of that geography, its role in the ongoing war, its military strength, etc.) gave a strong advantage for Russia / the Soviet Union to be named a moving power of the future in the corresponding prognostic frame:

(25) *We won that war, said the speaker, but Europe would play a much less important part in world affairs than in the past. The moving powers of the future world would be Russia and America. If we had to have the United States of Europe with Russia in it, it would stretch to the Pacific, and yet one could not conceive the United States of Europe without Russia in it* (Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette, 08.10.1945).

In (25), the hypothetical United States of Europe, envisioned by the British media of the WWII period, necessarily included Soviet Russia as a Great Power that had a claim on all international arrangements anywhere, as Tsarist Russia would as a partner in the Concert of Europe. Russia in WWII, according to the British media, had great political clout based on its **Military Strength** that determined the future of the war (26), the future of Russia in the post-war organization (27), and greatly influenced the future of Britain itself (28):

(26) *Future of any race will be determined in Russia (the title)* (Portsmouth Evening News, 30.03.1942).

(27) *The supreme military power on the Continent of Europe is now Russia, and she will almost certainly remain in that position for a century at least. The military pre-eminence of Russia in Europe indicates the re-orientation which will inevitably take place in the post-war world* (Birmingham Mail, 21.08.1944).

(28) *In Russia lies our last hope of our continued national independence* (Hull Daily Mail, 09.03.1942).

The British media stressed the fact that the engine of German might and tyranny could not be beaten and broken, outfought and out-maneuvered without Russia, its valour, generalship, and science.

The **Democracy** frame (taken together with the **Leadership** frame as in (31)) is far scarcer when describing forthcoming changes, but it does occur:

(29) *Scotland is going to gain, in following in the path that Russia had set before us, far more in the way of democracy, as well as in breaking up Britain into a number of free states on the plan of the U.S.S.R.* (Stirling Observer, 29.06.1943).

In (29), the Soviet political system was framed as “democratic”, “far more democratic” than the British one. Moreover, the USSR was considered a model to follow: a socialist country consisting of free states, with the ideas of freedom and equality underlying its “democratic” institutions.

The **Friendship** frame in its prognostic perspective is textualized in (30), (31).

(30) *Friendship with the Soviet Union and close co-operation in the future would bring nearer realization of that great ideal of mankind, permanent and enduring peace* (The Lancaster Guardian, 03.12.1943).

(31) *It is the simple truth that without Russia to aid us in this war we would have been in desperate jeopardy. Without Russia we cannot plan a secure peace. It is neither sensible, wise, nor right to encourage criticisms of the good faith of the Soviet Government. **Russia, Britain. China or any of the other United Nations, should not be alienated** by intolerances or little criticisms of one against the other. **Divided, our nations would perish*** (Daily Record, 22.06.1943).

Security and defense are areas where the interests of all the United Nations overlapped. The way the issue of friendship was framed determined how it was understood and, consequently, acted upon. The frame was embedded in a cognitive and emotional bond revolving around a shared idea of a secure and enduring peace that was unimaginable without Russia. Thus, future politics was supposed to be based on shared values and goals, on developing trust in relationships, keeping and maintaining friendships, promoting multilateral and multinational solutions in foreign policy, which needed loyalty and tolerance: putting up with differences and showing respect for other nations and ideologies.

A peculiar and a conspicuous prognostic frame, typical of the WWII media discourse with reference to Russia, is **Truth Not to Be Forgotten**, realized in (31), (32), (33):

(32) *Nothing less than **the utmost exertions of Britain, Russia, and the United States combined** sufficed to bring to naught the foul ambitions of the Hitlerite conspiracy that had trampled almost all Europe underfoot. **That is a truth we cannot afford to forget if we are to establish a lasting peace*** (Dundee Courier, 09.05.1945).

(33) *Russia, versus the might of Germany! May Almighty God guide them (the Russian people) to victory against the foul aggressor! Let us consider how we can **immortalise Russia's magnificent courage and endurance**. The idea of **a combination gift** from the peoples of our Empire and the U.S.A. is far from fantastic – one to which each and all of us ought to subscribe. May such an idea be included in the postwar plan! Russia is well deserving **some great token** from us and from the U.S.A.* (Dundee Courier, 13.10.1942).

The frame is prominent for the retrospective time span. It is based on the concepts of truth and remembrance. ‘The simple truth’ consists in the facts described in the media: the joint war effort of the Allied forces, the battles and events of the war, the losses and sacrifices of each nation. The concept of



‘remembrance’ implies bearing in mind the painful lessons of WWII, honoring the victors, cherishing and safeguarding peace to avoid repeating the tragedy<sup>2</sup>. Special place in the **Truth Not to Be Forgotten** frame is occupied by the Soviet Union and its remarkable efforts on the Eastern front, the greatest sacrifice in human history made by the Soviet people in fighting the Nazis and decolonizing the world. They ought to be *immortalized* in a *great token* to remember Russia’s contribution to the winning of WWII, which was thought a kind of moral obligation for every citizen of Great Britain and the USA (*each and all of us ought to*) and seen as a guarantee of the three countries’ friendship and mutual respect.

Both diagnostic and prognostic frames promoted a highly positive image of Russia / the Soviet Union in the retrospective time span. It was presented as a powerful state with great military strength that dominated and would dominate the world stage. Though ideologically different, Russia was considered an ally and a friend of Great Britain. The political system of the Soviet state was even seen as approaching democracy, and its ruler as the greatest military strategist of all time. The alliance between the two countries, the international issues of mutual interests, their shared goal to defeat the Nazis forged bonds of friendship, reinforced the meaning of amity and made the media select facts that construed positive images of Russia.

## 6. Conclusion

To tackle the problem of the image construal of Russia in the British media in historical periods, separated by seven and a half decades, the diachronic framing approach has been employed. It has enabled the authors to establish and typologize the main frames, organizing the media realities, representing Russia. The notion of a macroframe WAR has been introduced to denote a conceptual structure regularly objectified in the British media and constituted by Russia-related frames of the three types – thematic, diagnostic, and prognostic. Specific to the macroframe is the emphasis on expressive language means, which add to the emotional charge of Russia’s media image in chronologically distant periods.

The authors have revealed the main thematic frames, profiling issues, the most prominent of which at present zero in on Russia’s role in World Wars, the Cold War, the wars of recent history, information wars and cyberwars. 75 years after the end of WWII, Russia is presented as a powerful and aggressive opponent, an ideological and political adversary of the West. The systematic emphasis on Russia as war enactor and participant discloses a negative evaluation of the country and reveals a highly emotional impact on the readers. In contrast, in the WWII period the journalists primarily concentrated on Russia’s power, might, strength, support and friendliness, positively evaluated and glorified in the British press of the day.

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<sup>2</sup> The frame is alien to the contemporary British media discourse with reference to Russia. It could symbolize that both the lessons of WWII and the records of the victors of WWII are at risk of being forgotten, or even rewritten.

It has been proved that currently textualized diagnostic frames contribute to assessing and reassessing the role of Russia in the wars of the past and identifying the causes of the challenges facing Europe, preconditioned by Russia's involvement in global politics. The diagnostic frames of the WWII period assess and reassess the role of Russia in WWII, including its political system, the actions of the Soviet leader, and the causes of the War as interpreted by the media of the time.

The prognostic frames of the present British media represent hypothetical future situations, related to Europe, and prognosticate international conflicts that might occur because of Russia's political threat. The emotive perspective of coverage induces readers' highly negative visions of the present Russia and may be characterized as ideologically biased. The drastic contrast of the two media realities, becomes more apparent considering Russia-related prognostic frames of the retrospective time span, specifically focusing on international security, the advantages of cooperation with a powerful Russia in the post-WWII period.

The research has demonstrated that the media image of Russia has changed dramatically within decades. This state of affairs has developed out of strained international relations between the major political players and a lack of spirit of understanding on the global arena. Further investigation of the image construal in synchronic and diachronic perspectives with special focus on emotion-driven coverage might provide relevant knowledge for better understanding how political elites seek to frame issues in order to control and direct public opinion.

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