

Abstract

Remembering in Russia is increasingly performative and actualised, as shown by the Russian government and media's conflation of the Ukraine Crisis with the Great Patriotic War. By presenting the Great Patriotic War as a frame through which to understand events in Ukraine, the media and government guide domestic political perceptions of the contemporary crisis and encourage participative shared remembering as a bulwark against threats to Russian national identity and historical legacies. Across several sources, similarities in the frame's thematic content, sequencing, and presentation demonstrate a concerted and sophisticated effort to exploit the Ukraine Crisis for political positioning and identity construction. As part of these attempts, the media and government present patriotic models for emulation, appropriating cultural memory in order to merge respect for the past with allegiance to government policy.

Introduction

Russian state media – and political discourse more widely – is increasingly studied as part of Russia's securitisation approach (Gaufman, 2015; Kuzio, 2015), with the media an active participant in hybrid warfare (Darczewska, 2014, 2015; Khrebtan-Hörhager, 2016).

Memories of war, conflict and crisis have been especially susceptible to 'weaponisation' by the Russian media and politicians. With the politicisation of the past a near-constant feature of Russian political and media discourse, I have selected an especially notable example for analysis: the conflation of the Ukraine Crisis (February – May 2014) with the Great Patriotic War (GPW). I am using the term Ukraine Crisis to denote the period between former President Yanukovich's departure and the election of a new President, Petro Poroshenko (further information on this period can be found in Andrew Wilson's excellent study thereof (Wilson, 2014)). Unlike other works that track memory politics by detailing, or comparing,

commemoration or historiography (Paez et al., 2008; Rohdewald, 2008; Wood, 2011), this paper concerns how history was used to contextualise political events in the present.

As opposed to a briefer analogy, I describe the sustained conflation of past with present as a type of ‘historical framing’, a meta-narrative whereby certain facets of events that occur in the present are highlighted and linked to a supposed historical precedent (Baysha and Hallahan, 2004; Entman, 2004, p. 5). ‘Historical framing’ here denotes the media framing of events within an historical schema, rather than the history of how an event has been framed. A variety of different approaches have been used to analyse the instrumentalisation of history in the Ukraine Crisis and elsewhere by the Russian media (Edenborg, 2017; Siddi, 2017) but framing provides the approach best suited to analysis of process. I have adopted Cacciatore, Scheufele and Iyengar’s clarified approach to media framing (Cacciatore et al., 2016), with renewed emphasis on equivalence framing and the importance of pre-existing schema, often culturally dependent, all of which make framing analysis well-suited to exploring media coverage where familiar – and mythologised – versions of history function as the schema¹. This familiarity is further entrenched by the employment of Socialist Realist devices to narrativize both the UC and the GPW. In discussing framing, I am referring to the way in which the historical frame works as a meta-narrative and I use Somers’ (1993) definition of narrative, namely that it is composed of the following: 1) relationality of parts, 2) causal emplotment, 3) selective appropriation, and 4) temporality, sequence, and place.

¹ Myth here is described using Cassirer’s definition of myths: ‘We must find in these forms themselves the measure and criterion for their truth and intrinsic meaning. Instead of taking them as mere copies of something else, we must see in each of these spiritual forms a spontaneous law of generation; and original way and tendency of expression which is more than a mere record of something initially given in fixed categories of real existence’. (Cassirer, 1946)

Russian media's instrumentalisation of the GPW as a method for interpreting the Ukraine Crisis has been well documented. A number of studies consider the significance of the GPW to political and media discourses on the Ukraine Crisis, and also its purpose as a means of securitisation (Edenborg, 2017; Gaufman, 2015, 2017; Kuzio, 2015; Marples, 2016; Pasitselska, 2017; Siddi, 2017; Walker, 2017). Building on the concepts and findings of these works, I aim to contribute new knowledge by focussing on how historical framing erodes the boundary not only between past and present but also between political allegiance and national identity. To do so, I focus on several significant techniques that facilitate the conflation of the UC with the GPW, whether through adding to the familiarity of the schema, as with the use of Socialist Realist features and the updating of the class consciousness paradigm into one of patriotic performance, or by facilitating the conflation, as with hyper-representation.

Theoretical approach

Judith Butler first addressed performativity, underlining its inherently repetitive nature and calling it an 'aspect of discourse that ...through a certain kind of repetition and recitations...has the capacity to produce what it names' (1997; Osborne and Segal, 2003). Although Butler's research mainly concerns gender, Hutchings and Rulyova (2009) and Oushakine (2013) use her theory to analyse performativity in Russian memorialisation of the GPW. They find an increasing preference for actualising the past as an event of immediate relevance through the use of symbols and television coverage. Often this conflation is achieved by mimesis, such as the broadcasting of documentary footage from the war during live memorial parades, recalling concepts such as collapsing of the past (Hoskins, 2004) and remediation (Erll and Rigney, 2012, p. 4) established within discussions of the mediation and mediaisation of cultural memory.

In historical framing, the objective of conflating past with present is not aimed at immersing the viewer in the past so much as at making the past relevant to current events. It could arguably be seen as a cross between hypermediacy and remediation (Erll and Rigney, 2012, pp. 4–5). To acknowledge this differentiation, I describe the technique whereby direct comparisons are buttressed with montages of past (GPW) and present (UC) to blur the two in the audiences' mind as 'hyper-representation'. This method takes inspiration from the historical conflation and references to past glories that informed the GPW itself, as the class consciousness paradigm of Socialist Realism was updated to encourage a national patriotic awakening (Beevor, 2012, p. 196; Dovzhenko, 1939; Eisenstein, 1939, 1945).

'Collective remembrance is the matter of activity' (Winter, 2006, p. 28) and a 'central function of remembering the past within the framework of collective memory is identity formation' (Erll, 2011, p. 170). As such, in actualising the relevance of the GPW, making it a template for interpreting the UC, the objective was not only to colour the audience's view of current events; it also related to the more symbolic realm of national identity construction. The performance of allegiance with Russian government policies towards Ukraine was simultaneously depicted as a defence of the true memory of the GPW. Although the spark for protest was the former, political, aspect, the secondary element of 'performing memory' (Wood, 2011), itself imbued with political subtexts, fused interpretation of the Ukraine Crisis with national belonging. Presenting certain individuals as heroes for emulation, the media depicted active demonstrations against Maidan or for the Russian government as affirmations of a type of 'cultural consciousness'. This term denotes a constructed idea - a way for the media to present the alleged effects of its own frame – rather than an actual surge in patriotic insight or feeling, though clearly such emotions did occur.

Cultural consciousness was presented as being achieved by demonstrating one's cultural sense of Russian-ness (*russkost'*) and an awareness of Russian historical myth. The

state of mind must be performed to signal attainment of cultural consciousness. As opposed to historical awareness, cultural consciousness was not focussed on establishing fact, but rather on re-engaging with historical and cultural myths and positive stereotypes of Russians (as martyrs, heroes, etc). It was about feeling that pro-Maidan Ukrainians were *banderovtsy*, or that the GPW legacy was under threat more than truly believing it (Edenborg, 2017; Kangaspuro and Lassila, 2012), a characteristic reflected in the emotive, even hysterical, coverage. Audiences were encouraged to indulge this sentimentality and affirm their shared remembering of the GPW through copying heroes, held up for emulation, in Socialist Realist style (Mathewson, 2000; Robin, 1992), by wearing St George Ribbons, sending money to East Ukraine, attending anti-Maidan protests, or even by fighting in East Ukraine (Poslednie Novosti, n.d. 17.33; Tkanchuk, 2014). The ritualised methods of resistance repeated across the media were emphasised as grassroots phenomena, organised by individual citizens, in support of (and supported by) the state.

Methodology

All the sources included in the findings were published between 22nd February and 25th May 2014 unless otherwise stated. The decision to focus on these dates was influenced by two key points: 1) they constituted a structural unit from the loss of one President to the election of another; 2) this was a reasonably early stage in the development of events from protests into conflict, making it a critical time for the development and installation of media frames. This decision was further justified when my research findings illustrated that the frame decreased towards the end of the period (from 18th May onwards) and increased dramatically from 22nd February onwards, although this does not mean that the frame was not present elsewhere in the depiction of the UC.

Sources

Rossiiskaya gazeta (RG); Komsomolskaya pravda (KP); Kremlin.ru; Voskresnoe vremya (VV); Vesti nedeli (VN); Pervyi kanal; Rossiya-1.

I selected the sources above for the fact they are all state-owned, or aligned to the interests of the state, enjoy high audience reach and cater to different viewer and reader types (Khvostunova, 2013; Von Feilitzen & Petrov, 2011; Media International Russia, 2015; Beard et al, 2014). My approach is detailed below:

- 1) I read every article relating to the Ukraine Crisis on RG and KP, watched every episode of VN and VV and noted all government statements on the UC provided in RG, KP, VN, VV and Kremlin.ru during the period in question (22nd February to 25th May). From this, I collected all references conflating the GPW with the UC to show the frequency and chronology of references, reducing the references to keywords. One article or broadcast could, and frequently, did contain more than one reference.
- 2) I analysed the broadcasting schedules of Pervii Kanal and Rossiya-1 from 22nd February to 25th May, noting all television programmes (excluding the actual news, which lay beyond the scope of this study and was partially covered by analysis of the discussion programmes) that referenced the frame or the GPW, although I did not collect keyword references.
- 3) To deconstruct the frame, I adapted the cluster formulation applied in Etling et al's *Public Discourse in the Russian Blogosphere: Mapping RuNet Politics* (2014) to group the references collected. Whereas Etling et al (2014) used clusters to identify types of user and blog, I used the same cluster technique to group references by keywords. In so doing, it became apparent that the keywords could themselves be grouped according to theme, with four themes altogether: internal enemies, external enemies, war and destruction, victory.

- 4) In analysing the frame references, I identified several Socialist Realist concepts that had been used to employ the frame. To provide a comprehensive overview of the historical frame, I outlined these concepts using examples from the references, Soviet journalism and literature concerning Socialist Realism. I also noted similarities in rhetoric and presentational technique across all sources.

In total, I analysed 488 articles, 33 broadcasts and 188 days' worth of television schedules. I was the only researcher and coder; as such, to ensure reliability I implemented a system, whereby each article was checked twice for keywords and keywords were verified three times for their sub-narrative affiliation. One of the main issues when analysing media and government statements for references to the GPW was how to decide which references were indeed to the GPW. I adopted a position that erred on the side of caution, omitting, for example, the word '*fashist*' as it is too nebulous to be considered a definite reference to the GPW (Kryuchkov and Tabachnyk, 2008). I made the location of direct, overt references a pre-condition for including the word, phrase or image as a GPW frame reference.

Findings

Evidence of frame repetition

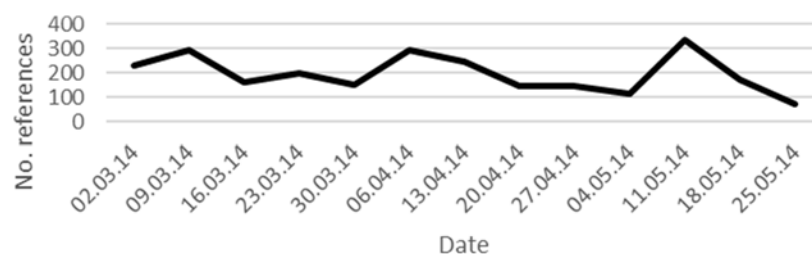


Figure one: total number of references

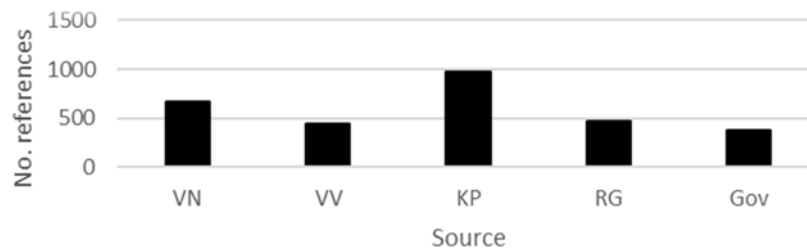


Figure two: comparative number of references by source

The sheer number of repeated references to the GPW in the context of the UC was the most basic persuasive element of historical framing. There were 2559 individual references across five sources (see Figures one and two) as well as ample evidence of the frame beyond the sources, including in popular literature, series and films at this time (see bibliography for details). Repetition is an essential element in the performance and construction of identity; by repeating references to the Great Patriotic War, the audience was encouraged to view the UC as a direct representation of the GPW and, separately, was made to ‘remember’ the GPW together. As respect for the GPW legacy was presented as a cultural dividing line between pro-Maidan Ukrainians and Russians (Bas, 2014a, 2014b; Prezident Rossii, 2014a), this passive shared remembering simultaneously assumed both political and patriotic associations in media coverage. The presence of symbols (St George Ribbons) and rituals (attending anti-Maidan protests and 9th May parades) among these repeated references then provided examples of how to remember actively (Khrebtan-Hörhager, 2016), with such actions presented as being conscious of one’s Russian culture (Kuznetsov Aleksei, 2014, 01.06.56; Poslednie Novosti, 2015a, 00.56.06).

The references to the GPW frame were tracked in this study from 22nd February, and Figures one and two show the total references by week ending and the reference breakdown by source. Once the shock at President Yanukovich’s departure began to settle, the frequency of GPW references sharply increased and the comparisons became more detailed and complex (Skoibeda, 2014a; Makarychev, 2014). The quick assumption of the frame must be

viewed in historical context: Zhurzhenko (2015) notes the conflation of the 2005 Orange Revolution with the GPW in Russian coverage, albeit not on a similar scale to that witnessed during the 2014 Maidan revolution. Further back, references to Ukrainian nationalist crimes and collaboration during and after the GPW has been a frequent method of undermining Ukrainian claims for independence both under the USSR and since (Fedor et al., 2017; Marples, 2007).

The initial historical frame references were continued throughout March and April, decelerating for a sustained period only in the final half of May, when a marked decrease demonstrated a departure from the frame, which had achieved its political and cultural objectives of defining the UC within connotations of patriotism and in terms supportive of the government. Its continued use beyond 25th May would also have risked the frame's delegitimisation, given that Ukrainian elections would prove the country was not in the grip of *banderovtsy*². The frame was replaced by a similarly identity-based narrative of defending compatriots, particularly popular in newspapers such as *Zavtra* and *Vzglyad*, associated with the architect of new Eurasianism, Alexander Dugin (Laruelle, 2016). This evolution confirmed the presentation of East Ukrainians as culturally Russian, following their frequent employment by the media as culturally-reawakened Russian patriots held up for emulation. The emergence of a clear beginning and end allowed for the treatment of conflationary GPW references as an integral and distinct device with time limits. After 25th May, there were still references to the GPW but they do not approach the frequency or sophistication employed during the research period.

What constitutes the frame?

² A term denoting followers of the controversial Ukrainian Nationalist fighter Stepan Bandera who fought both the Nazi and Soviet forces during World War Two but also collaborated with the former. For further information on Stepan Bandera, the OUN-UPA and a general history of this time, please see (Berkhoff, 2008; Rossolinski, 2014)

Initial analysis of historical frame references in *VV*, *VN*, *KP*, *RG*, and *Kremlin.ru* revealed similarities of content that made it possible to talk of a shared framing schema, albeit not a collective narrative. By distilling the collected references to keyword(s) and grouping them by similarity of theme, I identified that all conflationary references, across all sources, belonged to one of four themes: internal enemies, external enemies, war, victory. These four thematic groups described the UC but they also corresponded in content to different phases of the GPW. When organised by date, the sequence of the four main themes reflected the chronology of the GPW myth: elements from the beginning of the GPW were used to reference the early stages of the UC, while elements from the Great Victory were used to conflate the two events as the Ukrainian Presidential elections approached. Increased use of SN4 began as Victory Day approached and this holiday no doubt influenced the increase in SN4 usage, although I have not included references exclusively related to the holiday without connection to the UC. This does not invalidate the findings regarding SN4 so much as show how Victory Day was itself instrumentalised to contextualise the UC by the Russian media (Azayeva, 2014; Shkel' 2014c).

I have outlined the four sub-narrative threads (or themes) below:

Sub-narrative	One	Two	Three	Four
Main keywords	<i>Bander-, OUN-UPA, Galichina</i>	<i>Natsist-Gebbel's, Gitler</i> (in noun and adjective form), <i>svastika</i>	<i>Velikaya otchestvennaya voina/VOV, vtoraya mirovaya voina, genotsid, Khatyn', kontslageri</i>	<i>Pobeda, osvobozhdenie, pamyatnik, gorod-geroi, 9 maya</i>
Theme	Internal enemies	External enemies	War and destruction	Reclamation of identity, liberation and victory
Period of most frequency	22.02.2014-23.03.2014	09.03.2014-06.04.2014	06.04.2014-04.05.2014	04.05.2014-25.05.2014
Corresponding GPW theme	The Soviet focus on 'internal enemies' predating the GPW (Zagladin, 2017)	The Nazis, Nazi ideology, and the invasion and occupation of the Soviet Union	The fighting and destruction entailed in the USSR's battles against the Nazis during the GPW	The Soviet victory over the Nazis and the end of the GPW
Examples	Aslamova, 2014a; Sapozhnikova, 2014; Zamakhina, 2014a; Petin, 2014; Poslednie Novosti, 2015b; Aliev, 2014; Shkel', 2014a.	Dunaevskii, 2014; Zadornov, 2014; Grishin, 2014a; Ved'tychev, 2014, TV 2014, 01.06.34; Likhomanov, 2014a.	Danil tedeti, 2014, 00.58.43; Dmitrakova, 2014; Valentin Okulov, 2014, 00.15.00; Likhomanov, 2014b; Chernykh, 2014; Ryabtsev, 2014.	Novosti i politika segodnya, 2015a, 00.16.23; Staraya vest', 2014, 00.15.11; Azaeva, 2014, Shkel', 2014b; Rossiya-1, 2014; Shamir, 2014.

Figure three: table detailing sub narrative characteristics

Structuring the performance

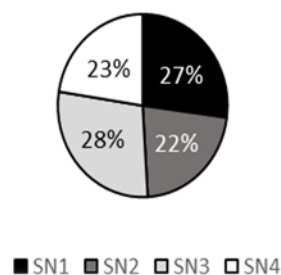


Figure four: total sub narrative breakdown

The purpose of a frame is to suggest a context (schema) within which complex news and information can be understood. In this study, the schema of the frame was an historical event, using past equivalents to conflate 1941-1945 with the 2014 UC. Although the frame's objective was to simplify and control discussion of the UC, this does not imply that the frame itself was not a sophisticated media device, as demonstrated by analysis of the structure of this GPW historical frame, which is comprised of four sub-narratives. Each of these sub narratives contained between 22-28% of all frame keywords, producing a near even distribution when the sources are considered together (Figure four). The period within which the references (then distilled to keywords) were collected was 22nd February to 25th May 2014, with fewer references at the beginning and end of this period delineating the use of the frame. Between these two points, the GPW frame depicted events during the first phase of the UC, with a timeline provided below:

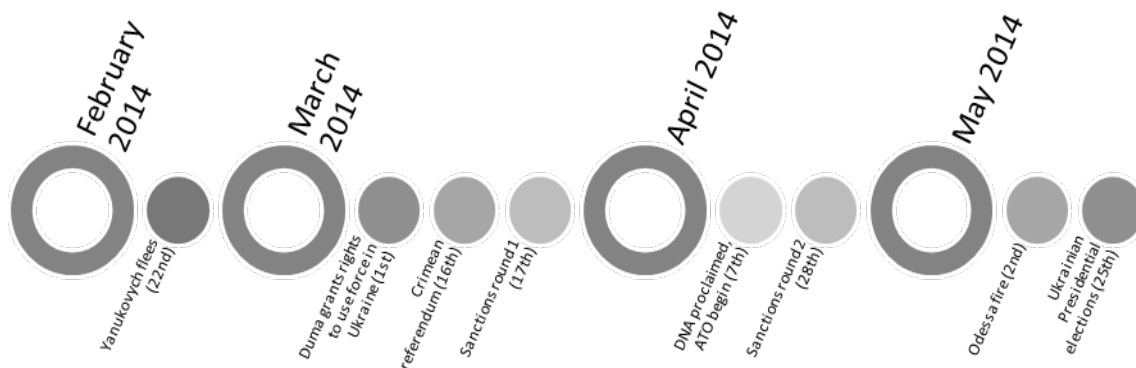


Figure five: timeline of the Ukraine Crisis

The events noted in the timeline above were all addressed by the frame, which conflated them with elements of the GPW myth, reminding the audience of earlier equivalents to blur the temporal distance between the two events. This merging of two unrelated and temporally distant events was facilitated not only by the frame's content but also by the structure of its

sub narratives, which were sequenced to resemble the chronology of the GPW myth. By cross-referencing the date of the GPW reference and the theme to which it belonged, it became clear that the themes not only shared their content with the GPW myth but were also sequenced in the same order. The ‘representative’ events in Ukraine were emplotted within a sequence that belongs to the ‘represented’ history of the GPW, as depicted in Figure six below:

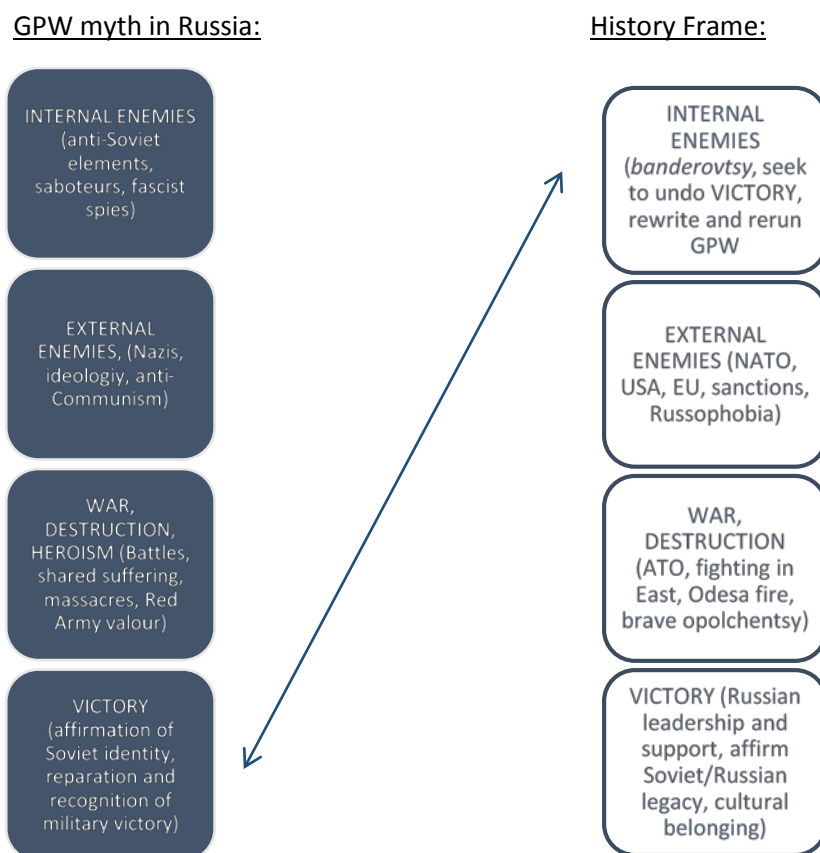


Figure six: outline of GPW and UC themes

The thematic crossover between the GPW myth and the frame resulted in structural borrowing as the GPW conveniently provided journalists and broadcasters with a pre-existing sequence to which events in Ukraine could be moulded. To explore the role of chronological mirroring further and substantiate my discussion thereof, I plotted the emergence and use of these sub narratives by date, tracking which keywords were most prevalent at different times

throughout the research period and the theme to which they belonged. As the sources had varying output levels in terms of references, I expressed the presence of sub narratives in percentages. Figure seven shows the findings considered in their totality across all sources, demonstrating the chronological mirroring of the GPW. As already discussed, SN1, internal enemies, which was also chronologically the first part of the GPW myth, was most prevalent at the beginning of the period. Correspondingly, SN2, external enemies, dominated from the early to early-middle period of research (from 9th March). SN3, war and destruction, assumed prevalence in the middle of the period, enjoying ascendancy until it was replaced by SN4, victory, as the research period and frame closed towards the end of May.

Naturally, the UC was a live and ongoing story, from which the frame could not depart completely in pursuit of its own conflationary objectives. Thus, the sub narrative sequencing experienced some unexpected anomalies, such as the sharp temporary decline in the use of SN1 on the week ending 16th March. Nevertheless, Figure seven clearly identifies that the frame evolved in a sequence that broadly mirrors the GPW, moving from SN1 through SN2, SN3 and finally SN4. This pattern is further clarified when the sub narrative proportion is shown individually to demonstrate the period when each sub narrative was most active (Figures eight - eleven).

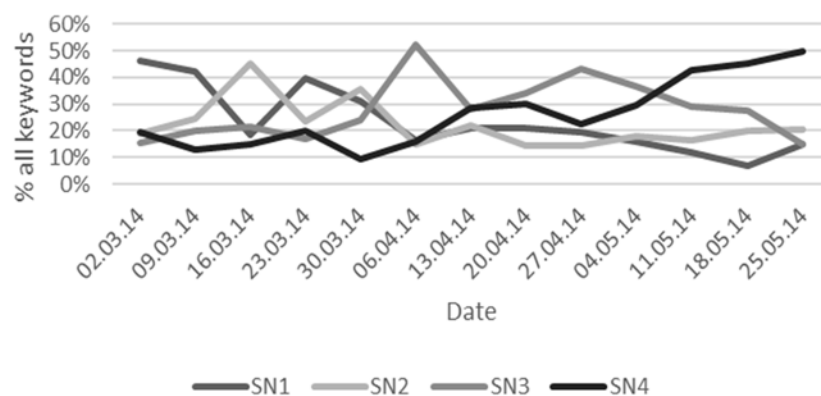


Figure seven: Comparative sub narrative distribution across all sources

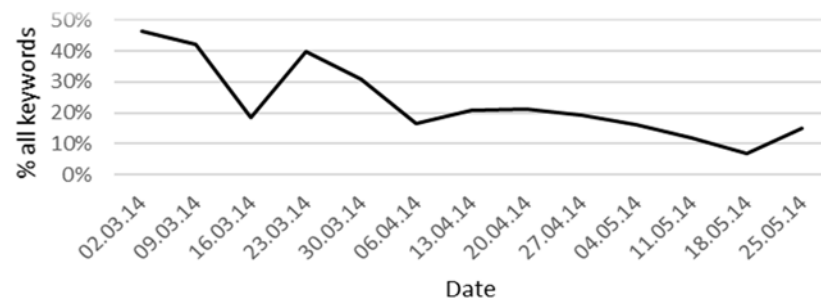


Figure eight: SN1 distribution across all sources

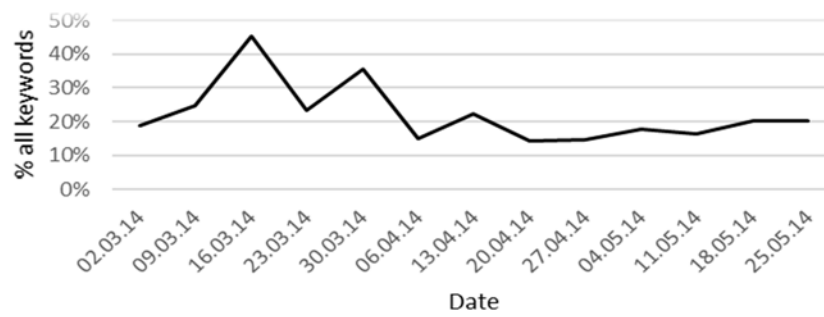


Figure nine: SN2 distribution across all sources

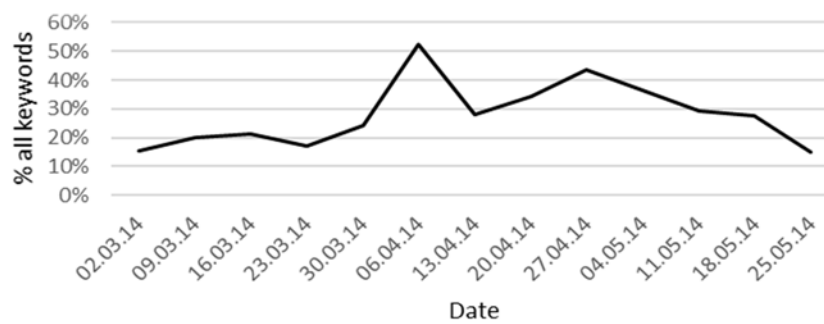


Figure ten: SN3 distribution across all sources

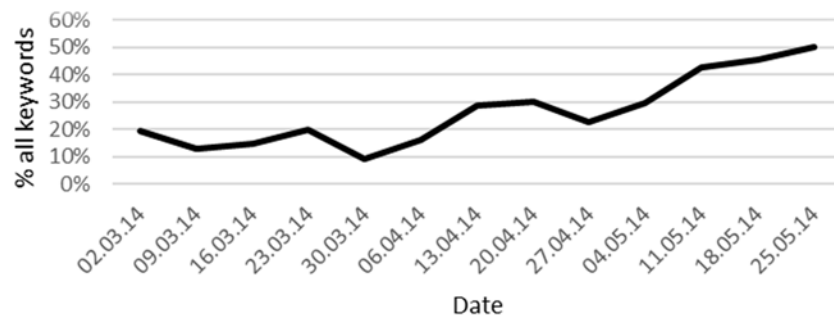


Figure eleven: SN4 distribution across all sources

By adopting not only the GPW theme but also the GPW structure, the conflation was more successful as audiences would anticipate that, if the UC were just like the GPW, events in Ukraine would develop along a similar sequence. By structurally entrenching the argument that the UC is a rerun of the GPW, historical framing as a media device revealed itself as a far more sophisticated mnemonic practice than *banderovtsy* insults or easy Hitler comparisons (although these do feature). The spark for the UC was presented as historical falsification (Zamakhina, 2014b; Prezident Rossii 2014b; 2014c). Following this logic, in threatening the legacy of the Great Victory, the final stage of the GPW myth, the Ukrainian nationalists relaunched the cycle of events that comprised the GPW myth. Such an interpretation was supported by comments from Russian ministers on the dangers of forgetting history and how this can lead to history repeating itself (Zor'kin, 2014).

The notion that this technique was consciously employed is supported by the Russian predilection for chronological mirroring in commemorative events as seen in the 2005 and 2011 Victory Parades (Oushakine, 2013; Rulyova and Hutchings, 2009). Likewise, the political objective of delegitimising the Maidan revolution supports the perception of chronological mirroring as a deliberate tactic, since the frame's sequencing also allowed it greater control over audience reactions by taking them through a familiar sequence. As such, when KP on 16th March (Kholmogorov, 2014a), depicted Russian anti-war demonstrators as

marching with Bandera and OUN-UPA flags in Moscow, this comparison was buttressed by the preceding emphasis on pro-Maidan Ukrainians as *banderovtsy* and the idea, taught in Russian History textbooks, that such internal enemies also emerged before the actual GPW. This way, the government was better equipped to combat the potential for a repeat of Maidan-style protests in Russia and alienate audiences from such causes. As further evidence of the political benefits of chronological mirroring, the frame's final theme of 'Victory' allowed for a sense of closure towards the end of May when the frame had outlived its usefulness and risked being delegitimised by the Ukrainian elections.

Socialist realism

The consistent selective appropriation from the events of the GPW affected all aspects of the UC's portrayal but, just as the GPW was used to inform the UC, so the GPW was itself informed by its own historical setting. Narratives, even artificially constructed meta-narratives, have their own lives and in employing the GPW myth, the agents of the frame borrowed, most likely unconsciously, Socialist Realist methods and concepts in use during the time of the GPW. Socialist Realism is frequently considered a literary narrative style or a general artistic one; however, it derives from public relations and journalism and is better understood 'not only as aesthetic but as a sociological phenomenon having broad cultural, national, and ideological implications' (Shneidman, 1979). Other researchers have also noted individual use of Socialist Realist motifs to narrativize their own experiences and memories, as with Voronina's findings on individual memories of the Leningrad Blockade (Voronina, 2012).

Many of the elements of Socialist Realism, from its focus on historical past glories to the preoccupation with 'internal enemies' are features of wartime media coverage around the world. It was, however, the historical frame's borrowing of highly-ritualised guidelines to

produce templates for living a good and productive Soviet existence (updated now to good and productive Russian existences) that differentiated it. The Socialist Realist elements that presented themselves within the frame largely dated from the 1930s and 1940s traditions, which would have been used to mediate the GPW; for example, the actors in the conflict were presented according to a typology of antagonists that borrowed from Socialist Realist approaches, particularly those of the 1930s, when internal and external enemies played an important role in instilling social cohesion and unification against perceived enemies (Literaturnaya gazeta, 1936; Pravda, 1940).

While Socialist Realist external enemies remained largely faceless, (Clarke, 1981, 186), the depiction of internal enemies drew on the Russian hagiographical tradition of comprehensive analysis of villains, providing a more detailed psychological insight. In the UC coverage, the internal enemies were the Ukrainian nationalists, presented as Nazi collaborators, while the external enemies were represented by NATO, the USA and EU (Snegirev, 2014). NATO were presented as a shadowy force (Sapozhnikova, 2014) in contrast to the detailed psychological portraits provided of the Ukrainian nationalists (Borisov, 2014; Novoselova, 2014; Araslanov, 2014). The insight provided into the protagonist heroes was also less thorough than that of the internal enemies (Bas, 2014c; Vasilev, 2014), as it emphasised their collective features and did not seek to explain their decisions, presenting them as logical and understandable (Egorov, 2014; Kots and Steshin, 2014a).

Like the GPW historical frame of the UC, Socialist Realism sanctified the present through conflation with a glorious past, harking back to the Civil War and October Revolution as a means of conferring glory on contemporary protagonists. In the 1930s, as the perceived number of potential enemies grew, themes from military history became common, as reflected in Soviet cinema's 1930s focus on the exploits of Aleksandr Nevskii and

Chapaev. In the UC coverage, direct comparisons with the GPW are buttressed with montages of past and present to blur the two in the audiences' mind (Kuznetsov Aleksei, 2014, 00.38.40), resulting in a more sophisticated continuation of techniques used during the Great Patriotic War itself, when history and historical images were put to propagandistic use, most notably in the *kinosborniki*, where earlier film plots were brought into the present day; for example, Shchors, the legendary civil war cavalry leader from Dovzhenko's 1939 film, leads his troops into struggle against the fascists (Short, 1983, 97).

The years following the collapse of the Soviet Union saw the adoption of a year-zero approach, with everything focussed on the 'now' (Pomerantsev, 2014); this has been replaced with a greater respect for history and legacy, a progression that mirrors the societal changes taking place in the early 1930s, as the revolutionary age sought its genealogy (Clarke, 1981, 136). Yet, Socialist Realist references to a heroic past were complemented by an aspiration to a greater future: The Communist utopia that would ensue from the sacrifices of the Soviet people and the correctness of Marxist-Leninism. This bright future was not an aspect of the UC coverage. Instead, the media coverage borrowed from its colleagues under Brezhnev, referencing shared suffering as a moral and emotional appeal to support Russia and its political positions (Evans, 2015). The ritualization of these appeals was present under Brezhnev, when the GPW was codified in its current guise, but drew on a tradition of symbolism and ritual that were integral to Socialist Realism throughout.

Cultural consciousness

The structuring force in the early Socialist Realist tradition was the spontaneity/consciousness dialectic that produced class consciousness, seen now as more of a literary trend but first introduced by a Pravda article (Kostelevskaya, 1919) on the two types

of Soviet heroes: the conscious (Krychkov) and the spontaneous (Chapaev). Consciousness here can be defined as activities guided by political forces, while spontaneity is unguided, anarchic actions or actions led by historical force. In a similar vein, the 2014 coverage described events in such a way as to depict the development of ‘cultural consciousness’ through Eastern Ukrainians affirming, or choosing, an ethnic Russian cultural identity that spanned language, history and political allegiances. By the term ‘cultural consciousness’, I am not arguing that this performance of memory truly signified a new frontier within Russian cultural identity. Rather I am outlining the way in which the media presented certain individuals as actively representing what it means to be Russian (to be culturally *russkii*) in opposition and contrast to other nationalities (just as class consciousness entailed developing an awareness of one’s class and the attendant class system). This representation was achieved by performing the historical frame (blurring anti-Maidan protest with defence of the GPW memory).

The element of class struggle was easily updated into one of national struggle. Cultural consciousness was depicted as being achieved through conflict with those who would seek to deny, negate or falsify Russian history, particularly the Great Patriotic War myth. The action focussed on a culturally Russian (*russkii*) understanding of the GPW, which was reinforced by the evolution of focus at the end of the frame to defending ethnic Russians in Ukraine. The specifically *russkii* character of cultural consciousness depictions was also part of an increasing tendency to focus on ethnic Russian-ness, as in Vladimir Putin’s discussion of the Russian (*russkii*) person (Poslednie Novosti, 2015c, 00.02.08) and references throughout to the Russian language (Shestakov, 2014a; Gasyuk, 2014; Grishin, 2014b) and to *russkie* rather than *rossiyane*, a tendency particularly acute in KP (Aslamova, 2014b; Ovchinnikov, 2014; Ivashkina, 2014a).

This ethno-cultural focus may have been in part a response to the Ukrainian nationalism that Russian media perceived as ‘othering’ Russian speakers, with the GPW memory a constant discourse between the two countries, causing reactions and retaliations. Indeed, the legacy of the GPW was also instrumentalised by the Ukrainian media during this same period (Klymenko, 2015; Yurchuk, 2017) and memory wars with Ukraine and other nations, especially the Baltics (Muiznieks, 2008) have helped Russian media and politicians to present those who remember differently as a direct threat to national security (Khrebtan-Hörhager, 2016). The affirmation of cultural consciousness was presented as self-defence against alleged offensive mnemonic warfare by other nations and its employment by Russian media must be contextualised within the wider dynamics of European memory discourse.

The process of attaining cultural consciousness, depicted through the example of East Ukrainians, varied but generally began with the defence of Soviet monuments during the *Leninopad*³, progressing to wearing a George Ribbon and/or waving a Russian or Victory flag, especially during a demonstration. Some pro-Russian Ukrainians did not progress further, while others continued their ascension through street fighting, acts of defiance and military resistance. This mixture of semi- and full- consciousness appeared designed to make the process more accessible to the audience, who could partake by affixing symbols of cultural consciousness, like the St George Ribbon, or participating in commemorative practice rituals, although the inference is that true Russians fight (Grishin, 2014b). Throughout, this path to cultural consciousness was opened half by accident (spontaneous), as a reaction to events on Maidan, and half through instruction (consciousness), as Russian-speaking Ukrainians decided to defend their history based on what they had been taught by school and family.

³ Sometimes translated into English as the Leninfall, this term refers to the removal and destruction of Soviet monuments, especially to Lenin, during and following the 2014 Maidan Revolution.

Although there was no end to the Ukraine Crisis, which instead developed into a conflict, May 2014 saw the demise of the frame, accompanied by a heightened focus on Victory and cultural consciousness, itself facilitated by the Victory Day celebrations. The concept of cultural consciousness, and the realisation or attainment thereof, functioned as the happy ending to convey a sense of victory and achievement where none existed. The media presented the performance of 'cultural consciousness' through individuals but outlined the guiding role of the state, much as the Communist Party was almost always presented as responsible for any military success, whatever the courageous exploits of soldiers or officers, in Socialist Realist war literature (Shpanov, 1939). Following such logic, the role of the culturally conscious performers was to show allegiance to the Russians government. Recent research suggests that using emotional approaches like these have been successful with even highly educated metropolitans citing greater emotional engagement with the state (Greene and Robertson, 2017; Robertson and Greene, 2017).

Hyper-representation

Studies of Russian commemorative and mnemonic practices have noted deliberate attempts to blend past into present. Hutchings and Rulyova (2009) identified the use of television to mimic the past and merge it with the present through Russian television's cumulative rather than subtractive editing of their Victory Day 2005 coverage, into which historical interludes were continually inserted. The insertion of 'real' historical GPW footage into the news facilitated the identification of the 'representing screen' (the GPW) with its 'represented double' (the UC), resulting in what I term 'hyper-representation'. This characteristic was integral to historical framing, with images from past footage and present-day filming montaged together. A similar characteristic was seen in television broadcasts; for example, the Second World War film *Goryachii sneg* (1972) broadcast on *Pervii Kanal* on 23rd

February was interrupted half-way through by news on the Ukraine Crisis, blurring the two stories into the same continuum.

This tactic was particularly noticeable in SN3's use among the sources and among the televisual sources, VN and VV, where references to ATO or pro-Russian protests were followed by segments on, for example, the Volhynian massacre, or the Soviet liberation of Nazi-occupied Crimea (Novosti i politika segodnya, 2015a, 00.56.30). Hyper-representation relies on reinvented traditions, familiar rituals and stories that have been readapted for the present day, tailoring techniques from the media event, as described by Dayan and Katz (1992), for the news. The dominance of television in this attempt to persuade viewers of the historical frame was not coincidental or random, given that visual images are 'excellent in creating a sense of mythic reality and verisimilitude ... hard to check against other experiences' (Schopflin, 2000, 85). Much like montage (Bordwell, 1972), its objective was to lead the viewer to the correct interpretation through a series of associative images. In the historical frame, editing, montage and image association were used to collapse the temporal distance between the present and the past, thereby actualising the GPW and heightening its cultural importance by bringing modern audiences closer to a sacralised and heroic legacy.

The type of hyper-representation used naturally depended on the source medium, with the TV programmes utilising images as readily as words. Showing a discerning concern for structure that was evident throughout their portrayal of the UC, VV and VN frequently montaged images, using footage of the past and present blurred together, to create a two-fold reference, whereby the historical image not only recalled the frame in content but also in the way the present blurred into the past, making the montage part of the content. An example of this occurred on 30th March on VN, when images of Pravy Sektor and the factories they had allegedly occupied in Zaporozhye merged into historical footage, with accompanying

commentary explaining that ‘Zaporozhye was occupied by fascists’ during the GPW (Poslednie Novosti, 2015d, 00.59.16).

Elsewhere such edited images were used to reinforce even more explicit historical framing messages, such as the insertion of a nostalgic Soviet war film into footage of protesters in Slovyansk, bedecked in St George Ribbons (Kuznetsov Aleksei, 2014, 00.38.40). On another occasion (Poslednie Novosti, 2015c, 00.49.51), the viewer was shown footage and images of German rifles dating to World War Two found among the Ukrainian army before the camera moved to Mariupol demonstrators, zooming in to reveal these demonstrators were waving GPW Victory flags. As well as acting as a prop to the words of the correspondents, images were used to convey their own message, or to deliver a particularly emotive variant of the message. One such example was the historic documentary footage of the Nazi and Red Army air battles (Kuznetsov Aleksei, 2014, 01.27.00) and the 1944 Soviet liberation of Crimea (Novosti i politika segodnya, 2015a, 00.56.30). These documentary clips featuring German planes, soldiers and insignia followed directly from, or included comment on, the UC and those fighting the pro-Russian separatists. The associations were easy to grasp. A similar use was the presentation of St George Ribbon-attired protestors demonstrating by Soviet memorials, a frequent motif in both news discussion programmes’ coverage (Kuznetsov Aleksei, 2014, 01.06.56, Oleg Kravchenko, 2014, 00.35.36).

The clever use of editing to convey the historical frame was adapted in lexical form although less effectively. Across the sources, hyper-representative language was used to blur the line between past and present in three main ways:

- First, language was used to make a direct reference to the frame, such as Evgenii Popov’s comment on 11th May that the memorial he is showing is ‘not only to the soldiers of the GPW but also...to those who died on 2nd May’ (Osvobodim Novorossiyyu, 2014,

00.20.17). This was a reference to the Odessa fire on 2nd May 2014, caused by clashes between pro and anti-government protestors. This direct blurring of two temporally non-contiguous events by Popov was delivered seamlessly and without explanation, as if they were victims of the same conflict.

- Second, language was used to contextualise footage or images, or statements and news from outside the Kremlin's control. This was seen primarily in television and newspaper coverage, such as an opinion piece on 5th March in KP which argued that the pro-Maidan Ukrainians are mere extensions of the Nazis, with ample references to Hitler, the Abwehr, Kiev street walls 'covered in swastikas' and 'destroyed Jewish shops' (Skoibeda, 2014). This article was accompanied by images of Hitler and Goebbels.
- Third, discussion of the UC descended into historical monologues without any logical sequence, often unaccompanied by historical images or footage, such as Vladimir Putin's April speech on Crimea (Prezident Rossii, 2014d), which became a *tour de force* of past Crimean battles with special emphasis naturally reserved for the GPW. This speech then re-emerged into the present, with the words 'but it was already pretty clear to everyone what the ideological heirs to Bandera, Hitler's helper during World War Two, intended to do in the future'. This juxtaposition of the past with the present disregarded the temporal divisions of the two events.

Rhetorical devices

Given that the purpose of the frame was to collapse temporal distance, actualising the GPW through the UC to make its legacy more tangible, it was unsurprising that, across the sources, direct comparisons were preferred to analogies, which by their nature allowed a degree of remove. Standard comparative lines included 'exactly as' (Kholmogorov, 2014b), 'recalling' (Prezident Rossii, 2014b), 'Ukraine is witnessing a repeat' (Shkel', 2014b) and

other structures that presented the UC not just as *similar to* but *the same as* the GPW. Often the transitions leading to these comparisons were rapid non-sequiturs whose emotive impact masked the lack of logical reasoning. The imagery reiterated these direct comparisons, drawing on historical associations to emphasise death, massacres and uniforms. It was heavily symbolic, with swastikas and SS insignia (Snegirev, 2014; Prezident Rossii, 2014e) placed in opposition to the GPW memorials and St George Ribbons.

A further shared rhetorical flourish across sources was the personalisation of language ('we', 'our'), which frequently extended into the familial ('our fathers', 'our grandfathers') and the primordial with trips to graveyards and talk of 'our ancestors', 'the heirs to Bandera', 'offspring of veterans' (Aslamova, 2014c; Filmoshkina, 2014; Prezident Rossii, 2014d; Staraya Vest', 00.22.54, 2014). This rhetorical device facilitated the frame's objective of fostering a sense of national cohesion against the Maidan by linking the situation with a very personal version of the GPW, one told by grandparents. In this engagement with a more personal patriotism, there was a recognition by the Russian media and government that memory and patriotism are not exclusively top-down. The audience were invited into the discussion, encouraged to view moves to nationalise Ukrainian history as an attack on ('our') heroic grandparents (Vorobev, 2014; Poklonskaya, 2014). The purpose of such emotivity, as with cultural consciousness, was to encourage audiences to engage with the government's politicised invocations of the GPW. It also served as a constant reiteration that there is a 'them' and an 'us', asking Russian audiences to take sides between two clear binary opposites: the *banderovtsy* (those of today merged with past incarnations) and the pro-Russians (merged with Red Army soldiers).

Archives and veterans

The use of external contributors, that is the inclusion of comments or documents that did not originate from the publication or broadcaster, mirrored this emphasis on personalisation while also providing further insight into the concern for legitimacy in Russian political discourse. To enhance the conflation and legitimacy of the frame, the sources frequently used those with an ability to compare the situation as external contributors, such as GPW veterans. As there is a paucity of GPW veterans, their children and grandchildren, or even documentary footage from that time, were also used as substitutes. Children and grandchildren of veterans were used to express outrage at the dismantling and rewriting of the victory won by their ‘fathers’, ‘grandfathers’ or ‘great-grandfathers’ (Chinkova, 2014). This was a particularly inclusive style of externalising the frame, as the speakers regularly used the pronouns ‘we’ and ‘our’ to emphasised the shared history and struggle that were allegedly being (re)played in Ukraine. This inclusivity encouraged a personal response from the audience in recognition of their shared historical and cultural legacy with the residents of Eastern Ukraine. As such, it sought to act as a further spur to the performance of cultural consciousness.

Historical documents and footage, rather than speakers, were also employed as objective evidence to support the rhetoric; for example, VV compared a Nazi propaganda sheet to Ukrainian instructions (Maksim Sokolov, 2014, 00.10.00), going line by line to detail similarities and placing the two images next to each other. The positioning of the two images aimed to distract the audience from the fact the two documents share very little in common. This group also encompasses archival documents, many of which were newly released by the government and concerned Stepan Bandera, Ukrainian collaborators, and the Nazi occupation of Ukraine (Komsomolskaya pravda, 2014a). The media make references to archival material from Russia and other countries that is published during this period (Komsomolskaya Pravda, 2014b; Zabrodina, 2014) or already in the public domain, particularly during April and the beginning of May 2014, when the third sub-narrative, and its theme of war and destruction,

was most prevalent (Shestakov, 2014b). The insertion of archival evidence into discussions of the UC resembled the use of documentary footage screened during Victory Parades. Similarly, the carefully timed releases of archival evidence by the government merged historical fact with present propaganda.

Conclusion

The historical framing of the Ukraine Crisis was the collision of myth and 21st century propaganda. The role of myths is to strengthen understanding within community, rather than to establish intra-community discourse and communication (Schopflin, 2000). The specificity of the GPW references to Russian experience and understanding of that event mark the frame as one concerned with propagating its argument exclusively to ethnically-Russian (*russskii*) audiences. The choice of an event as well-known as the GPW made the schema especially familiar to audiences and easy to grasp. This accessibility was further entrenched by the use of chronological mirroring and Socialist Realist features. In facilitating the conflation of the UC with the GPW, the media and politicians were then able to harness the combined affective power of both events to present an image of a nation unified simultaneously by shared remembering and allegiance with government foreign policy.

Through analysing the specific application and features of historical framing as a media device, I have sought to demonstrate how the past not only played a significant role in media depictions of the UC but that it was made present, sown into the seams of current events. It was this same actualisation that allowed for the participative and performative aspects of the historical frame, as enacted by template heroes whose ‘active remembering’ is at least partly a media device to further ‘re-enchant’ the GPW myth, already of great significance to Russian identity⁴. Although it is difficult (and beyond the scope of this study)

⁴ (Khrebtan-Hörhager, 2016; Nesbitt-Larking and McAuley, 2017)

to assess to what extent the government and media were successful in mobilising audiences to perform shared remembering and demonstrate cultural consciousness, the efforts undertaken to present the UC as an assault on such an emotional cultural legacy demonstrate how the government is designating itself as the arbiter of Russian national identity.

With the correct remembering of the past thus equated to showing allegiance to government policy, it followed that disagreeing with government policy on Ukraine, would place you in opposition not only to the government but to the memory of the GPW and Russianness more widely. To a certain extent therefore, the pragmatic objectives of depicting cultural consciousness succeeded either way: even if it failed to encourage audiences to emulate the example heroes shown on screen or described in print, it created the impression that many other people were performing their patriotism within the context of the UC/GPW. This further stigmatised alternative, anti-government views. Indeed, the very conflation of the GPW with the UC was in part an attempt to divert audience attention from the real reasons for the UC, converting it into a cultural battle rather than protests against problems such as corruption, lack of democracy and nepotism that were also highly relevant to the political situation in Russia.

However, given that political communication exists on both the pragmatic and symbolic level (Sherlock, 2007), it would be amiss to understand the depiction of cultural consciousness as a structuring force within historical framing solely in terms of political de/legitimation. The ritualised presentations of active shared remembering evidently sought to construct not only an image but also the reality of a nation unified around defending a shared memory. As mentioned, in part this is demonstrated by the emphasis on familiarising the audience with the frame (presenting patriotism through an updated paradigm of class consciousness, chronological mirroring, repetition) but also by emotional appeals (personalised rhetoric) and the use of symbols and rituals. As such, the frame depicts its own

performance, which it then presents as simultaneous demonstrations of shared remembering of the GPW and support for Russia/the Russian government. Through positive characterisation, vilification of opponents and heavy use of symbols and ritualization, the audience were encouraged to demonstrate that they ascribed to this view, itself aligned with the government's, constructing a state-dependent type of cultural consciousness that placed the GPW legacy as central to Russian identity and perceived both as being in existential danger.

Figures

Figures

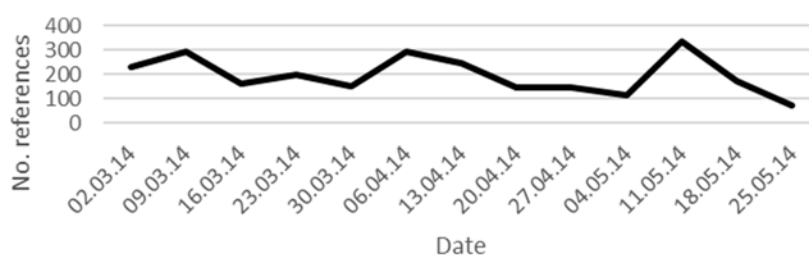


Figure one: total number of references

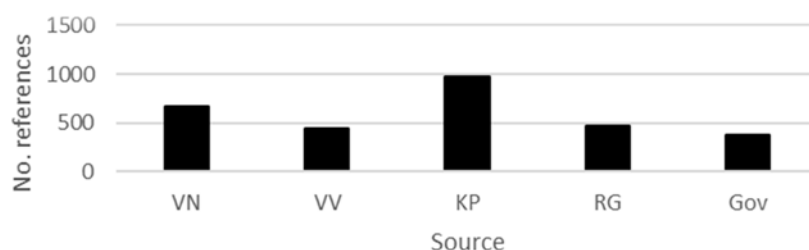


Figure two: comparative number of references by source

Sub-narrative	One	Two	Three	Four
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Main keywords among references	<i>Bandera, OUN, UPA, SS Galichina</i>	<i>Natsisty, Gebbel's, Gitler, svastika</i>	<i>Velikaya otchestvennaya voina/VOV, vtoraya mirovaya voina, genotsid, Khatyn', kontslageri</i>	<i>Pobeda, osvobozhdenie, pamyatnik, gorodgeroi, 9 maya</i>
Theme	Internal enemies	External enemies	War and destruction	Reclamation of identity, liberation and victory
Period of most frequency	22.02.2014-23.03.2014	09.03.2014-06.04.2014	06.04.2014-04.05.2014	04.05.2014-25.05.2014
Corresponding GPW theme	The Soviet focus on 'internal enemies' predating the GPW (Zagladin, 2017)	The Nazis, Nazi ideology, and the invasion and occupation of the Soviet Union	The fighting and destruction entailed in the USSR's battles against the Nazis during the GPW	The Soviet victory over the Nazis and the end of the GPW
Examples	(Aslamova, 2014b; Petin, 2014; Poslednie Novosti, 2015b; Sapozhnikova, 2014; Shkel', 2014a; Zamakhina, 2014b)	(Dunaevskii, 2014; Grishin, 2014a; Likhomanov, 2014a; Ved'tychelovek TV, 2014 01.06.34; Zadornov, 2014)	(Chernykh, 2014; danil tedeti, 2014 58.43; Dmitrakova, 2014; Likhomanov, 2014b; Okulov, 2014 15.00; Ryabtsev, 2014)	(Azaeva, 2014; Novosti i Politika Segodnya, 2015 16.23; Rossiya-1, 2014; Shamir, 2014; Shkel', 2014b; Staraya Vest, 2014 15.11)

Figure three: table detailing sub-narrative characteristics

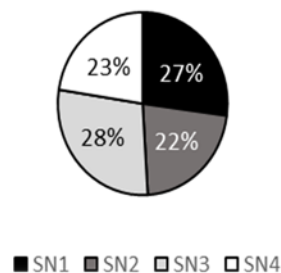


Figure four: total sub-narrative breakdown

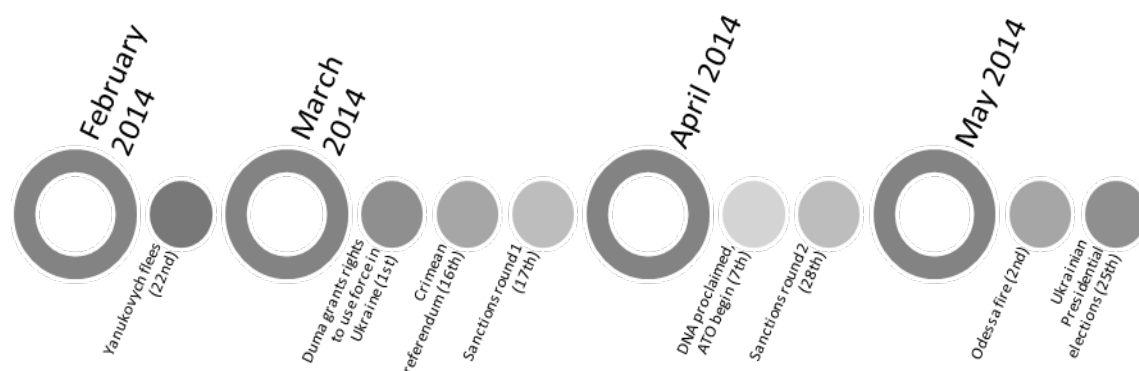


Figure five: timeline of the Ukraine Crisis

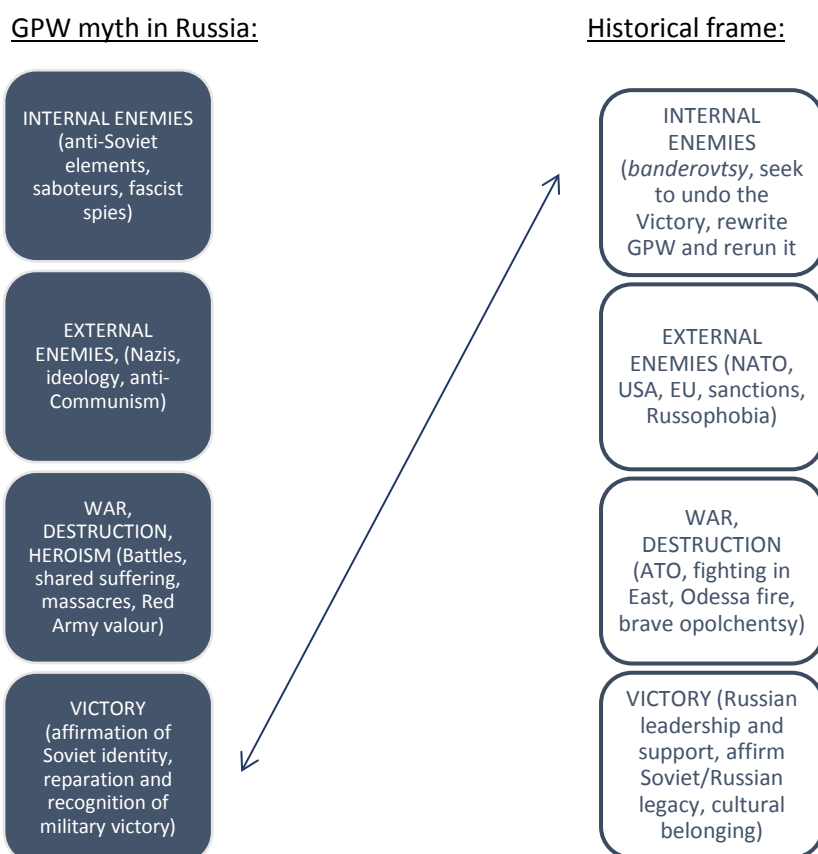


Figure six: outline of GPW and UC sub-narrative themes

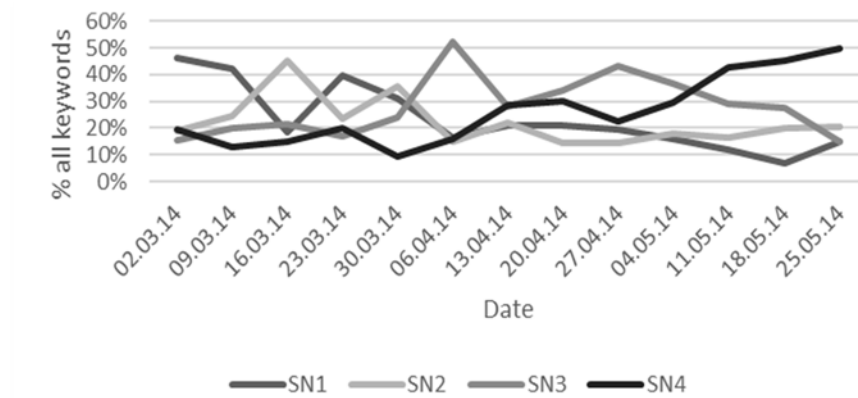


Figure seven: Comparative sub-narrative distribution across all sources

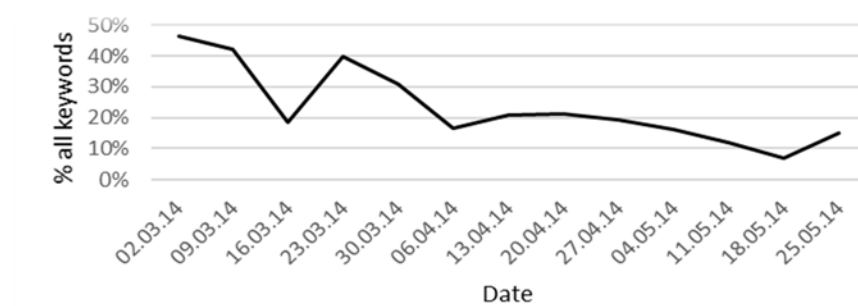


Figure eight: SN1 distribution across all sources

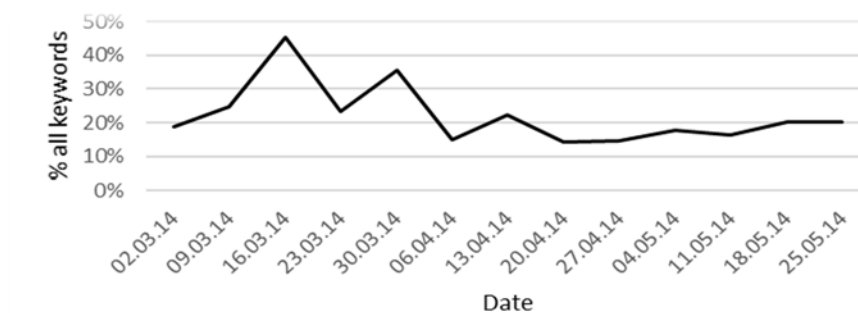


Figure nine: SN2 distribution across all sources

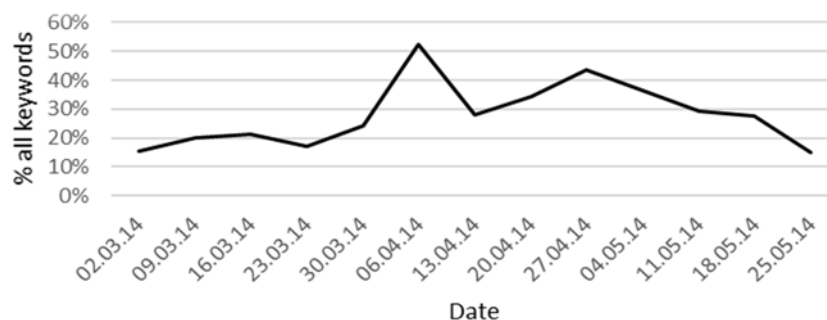


Figure ten: SN3 distribution across all sources

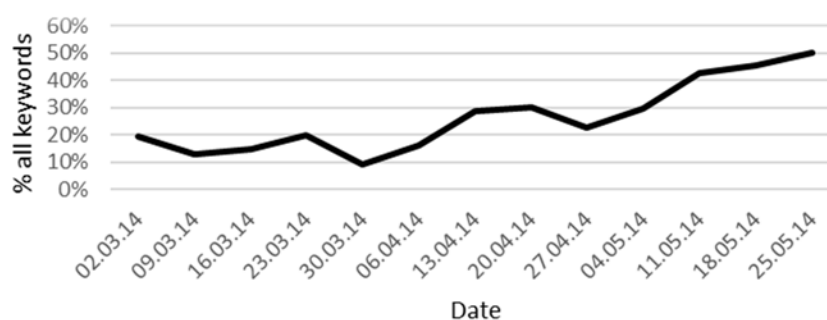


Figure eleven: SN4 distribution across all sources

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