



New features of media imperialism: The South African online media and the coverage of the Ukrainian war

AUTHOR(S)

Mandla Radebe

University of Johannesburg

ORCID: 0000-0003-0329-9776

PUBLISHED ONLINE

Volume 41 (2) December 2022

Pages 75-89

Submitted August 2022

Accepted October 2022

DOI

10.36615/jcsav41i2.1407

ISSN

0259-0069

Abstract

The coverage of the war in Ukraine has unravelled inherent biases within the South African online commercial media. These biases are largely driven by its location within the global capitalist power structures, thus confirming continuities of media imperialism. By relying on Western sources, this media invariably exports Western norms, standards, hegemonic narrative and worldview. This paper employs content analysis to examine the coverage of the war by five South African online publications (*News24*, *IOL*, *TimesLive*, *Citizen.co.za* and *BusinessTech*) between January and February 2022. The coverage was largely negative because of concerns about the impact on global markets. The West's dominant views are discernible due to the chosen sources, with over 80 per cent coming from its newswires. Similarly, the opinions of Western political and business leaders and their business and economic analysts are prevalent. While it is expected for stories to be framed from a conflict perspective, it is the economic consequences frame that also drives the coverage, with Russia blamed, as reflected in the predominant theme "Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine". While there have been fundamental developments since the concept of media imperialism emerged, this coverage points to some continuities. It is precisely for this reason that the South African media should develop partnership beyond the West, more so, in the context of the growing importance of BRICS.

Keywords

media imperialism, media frames, online media analysis, critical political of economy, Ukraine war, Russian invasion

INTRODUCTION

The way the South African online media reports on the war in Ukraine evokes the old saying "truth is the first casualty in war". Headlines such as "Russia's 'brazen' attack on Ukraine 'will not go unpunished'" in *IOL* of 24 February 2022 and "With Ukraine under large-scale attack, West ramps up sanctions on Russia" in *News24* of 25 February 2022, reduce this media to an unlikely platform for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) propaganda. However, this coverage must, inter alia, be understood in the context of media and cultural imperialism, where there is "unequal news exchange relationships imposed by western international news agencies on national agencies" (Boyd-Barrett, 2014:2). In this regard, "transnational media industries of the developed nations exercise dominance over the cultural/information sphere of their developing counterparts" (Ndlovu, 2003:302). Apart from exporting their norms and standards to the Global South, developed nations also disseminate media commercialisation at the expense of public interest by advancing capitalistic worldviews (Lee, 1979). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018:100) invokes the concept of a "metaphysical empire", developed by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), to locate how cultural imperialism works "on the minds of the colonized in the process adversely affecting the entire mental universe of the colonized." Scholars such as Ashdown, Dixe and Talmage (2021) define cultural imperialism as a process that renders the control of local cultural capital to "outsiders", thus compelling local people to comply with the outsiders' culturally-based worldviews. Media imperialism regards the meaning produced – as

distributed by the media and the political-economic process that sustain them – central to the ongoing process of imperialism (Boyd-Barrett, 2014).

Fuchs (2021) perceives cultural imperialism as disrespectful because, among its many characteristics, it diminishes other voices through its asymmetric power of attention and visibility. In the context of news media, the views of one group are privileged at the expense of others. In this conflict, the South African online media has relied heavily on Western sources to frame the discourse. This has not only ensured that it parrots the views of the former colonisers, but the audience is also subjected to a binary perspective of the global capitalist hegemony. In this regard, the South African media continues to construct hegemony on behalf of the dominant global capitalist interests (Radebe, 2020). However, it is useful to note the emerging notion that US media imperialism, for example, is on the decline and thus the accumulation patterns of the US-led capitalist hegemony are not related to that media (Ranger, 2022). Fundamentally, apart from the ability of audiences to read news text in an antithetical way (Radebe, 2020), there are moments where commercial media have demonstrated the ability to resist corporate media power in their quest to uncover the truth (Freedman, 2017). Furthermore, various theorists have argued that sometimes, audiences actively interpret, negotiate and even resist some media content (Chadha & Kavoori, 2000).

While South Africa has been lauded for its freedom of expression and promotion of quality, ethics and diversity, when it comes to ideologically-laden discourses, its media has been found wanting (Radebe, 2020). Nevertheless, this media does play a pivotal role in contributing towards a culture of democracy due to, inter alia, its watchdog role in ensuring the accountability of those in power (Wasserman, 2020). However, on international news, the South African media perpetuates the dominant views of global superpowers. This position should be anticipated, since numerous studies have demonstrated that the media is biased in framing ideological discourses and marginalising counter-hegemonic voices (Radebe, 2020; Radebe & Chiumbu, 2022). Nevertheless, not many have analysed the South African online media's representation of international news by employing media imperialism theories. Thus, this paper analyses the impact of media imperialism in the representation of international conflicts, such as the current war in Ukraine.

To achieve this objective, the article analysed South Africa's online media coverage of the Ukrainian war between January and February 2022. As reflected in Figure 1, the highest levels of coverage peaked during this period as the war talk escalated. The analysis includes issues of tonality, sources and themes used to frame the story. Five of the biggest online news media platforms, *News24*, *IOL*, *TimesLive*, *Citizen.co.za* and *BusinessTech*, were analysed. These publications are important, as their coverage, amongst other things, set the tone by influencing the attitudes and public opinions. To an extent, public opinion is crucial in the formulation of policies in the country (Radebe, 2020). As reflected in the following sections, the war in Ukraine is having direct and material impact on the economies of developing nations such as South Africa. Evidence demonstrates biased coverage that favours the Western hegemonic narrative. Again, this is predictable, since critical political economists of communication posit that media imperialism has become more rampant and exacerbated by the global market power of major US-based technology companies (Fitzgerald, 2019). Therefore, the coverage of the Ukrainian war in countries like South Africa should be understood in this context.

This paper is organised as follows: Firstly, the South African media landscape is presented in the context of growing digitisation and online news media. This is followed by a summary of media imperialism theories, particularly in the digital era and in the context of critical political economy. The content analysis methods critical to this study are presented, followed by the findings on the online news media's coverage of the war. In the findings, the sources of news, emerging frames in the coverage and the four major themes are discussed to unravel the nature of the coverage. In the concluding remarks, I argue that there is a case to consider South-South media relations in order to counteract media imperialism.

SOUTH AFRICA'S MEDIA LANDSCAPE AND SHIFTS TO ONLINE PLATFORMS

The South African news media has come a long way from the apartheid days of repressive state regulation (Wasserman & De Beer, 2005). The 1994 democratic breakthrough ushered in media freedom and

freedom of expression among the rights enshrined in the country's constitution (Radebe, 2021). However, the post-apartheid media reconfigured along a liberal "consensus which emphasised the independence of the media from government and a freemarket environment in which the media should conduct its business" (Wasserman & De Beer, 2005:37).

This reconfiguration consolidated the capitalist stranglehold on the media through ownership and content. While there has been transformation in the ownership patterns, with some media houses now controlled by black players, the allocative control of this media still rests with the powerful corporations interlinked with global capital (Radebe, 2017). Fundamentally, the South African media, like many corporates that control the economy, is still run by whites through their top management structures (M&G Data Desk, 2019). This also extends to advertising, which remains untransformed in the South African context. It is primarily the ownership patterns and advertising that locates the South African commercial media in the economic base and societal context in which it is produced (Curran, Gurevitch & Woollacott, 1982). Furthermore, this media has remained concentrated and stuck in the apartheid economic logic through its control by four dominant conglomerates: Media24, Arena Holdings, Sekunjalo Independent Media, and Caxton (Radebe & Chiumbu, 2022). Govenden (2022) posits that even by the C4 measure of concentration, the South African media sector has remained consistently concentrated at a relatively high level.

The South African media is characterised by a three-tier system of public, commercial and community media (Wasserman, 2020). Although its audience is broad and diverse, as reflected in the country's socio-economic challenges such as inequalities in income and wealth (Francis & Webster, 2019), it is experiencing a thoroughgoing shift to online platforms. In the context of the country's inequality, access to online and digital platforms remains a challenge. Thus, the counterbalancing role of community media remains pivotal to providing access to information for the marginalised section of society that may not be on the agenda of big commercial media (Wasserman, 2020).

The community media is ably complemented by the public media such as the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), which has a public mandate. Notwithstanding challenges such as political interference (Qhobosheane, 2018) and a recent "massive retrenchment" of staff (Cohen, 2021), the SABC remains the country's most accessible and popular broadcast medium with more than 18 radio stations broadcasting in over 11 official languages (Daniels, 2013) and 3 television channels. Although the emergence of the commercial free-to-air television channel etv and some radio stations have improved the public media, the commercial media remains concentrated and controlled by big conglomerates (Chiumbu, 2016; Rumney, 2015; Wasserman, 2020).

An important dimension of this media has been its inability to remain afloat, resulting in a job bloodbath (Mndebele, 2019). Creeping digitisation is arguably one of the primary reasons for its shift to online platforms, which has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. In the context of the rising numbers in internet and social media users in the country (64 per cent and 49,2 per cent respectively) and a mobile connection penetration of 168,5 per cent (Kemp, 2021), the shift to digital publishing by many traditional media houses was inevitable. Notable is an overlap between online and print news media. There are only a handful of online-only news platforms that are forced to compete with far better resourced outlets controlled by the legacy media houses (Rumney, 2020). Nevertheless, online news platforms experienced an upsurge by about 72 per cent during the Covid-19 pandemic (Rumney, 2020), largely induced by a need for reliable information. Challenges associated with this type of news include the rise in disinformation and misinformation, or the colloquial fake news (Shirish, Srivastava & Chandra, 2021). Nevertheless, such news websites are crucial as verification sites for reliable news.

Over and above the online news platforms linked to traditional media owned by the four dominant conglomerates, South Africa has four major "non-profit online-only" platforms: amaBhungane, the Bhekisisa Centre for Health Journalism, GroundUp and New Frame, with the Daily Maverick identifying as "a membership-based organisation" (Rumney, 2020:6). The 2021 Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) South Africa Narrative report reveals that, as far as the online news media footprint is concerned, 24.com is the largest online publisher with a combined readership of 18,30 million unique browsers across its

online news publications, followed by Arena Holdings (8,67 million), Independent Online (7,31 million), Broad Media (6,62 million) and Caxton CTP (5,91 million).¹ This demonstrates that monopolistic features and concentrated media power have visibly migrated to online news (Radebe, 2022).

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION: MEDIA IMPERIALISM IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Media imperialism

For over five decades media scholars have been theorising media imperialism. The initial focus was on the control of ownership structure, distribution or media content in other countries by Western powers (Boyd-Barrett, 1977; Schiller 1969/1992), and later evolved to reflect the reality of media globalisation (Boyd-Barrett, 1977, 1998; Schiller, 1969/1992; Sparks, 2007; Thussu, 2006, in Fuchs, 2010). The Frankfurt School characterised mass media as a tool of "mass deception" that advanced commercialised interests (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972) while at the same time exposing the domination of American-based cultural flow transmitted through media, which found expression mainly in the developing countries. It was argued that this not only manifested in cultural homogenisation but, fundamentally, also in spreading consumerism as an ideology (Herman & McChesney, 1997; Mattelart, 1983; Ritzer, 1996; Schiller, 1976, cited in Neyazi, 2010). Initially, the concept emerged as an idea where the powerful countries were perceived to have unmitigated influence over less powerful countries. Although it has evolved over the years, the media is an important component of cultural imperialism due to its influential role in society through representation, et cetera (Boyd-Barrett, 2018).

Critics of media imperialism have pointed out that as an analytical concept, it is "vague" and "overly simplistic" (Fejes, 1981:282; Straubhaar, 1991:39). Sparks (2012) bluntly states that the theory of media and cultural imperialism has been largely discredited. Nevertheless, the broad definition that describes media imperialism as "the processes by which modern communication media have operated to create, maintain and expand systems of domination and dependence on a world scale" (Fejes, 1981:282) remains useful. In this regard, the powerful media industries in the Global North, and the US in particular, dominate those in the Global South (Demont-Heinrich, 2011:668). Part of the problem with media imperialism is its binary approach in painting the global south as a perpetual victim. It assumes that the Global South "only imports media produced in the Global North" and ignores the counterflow of media information the opposite way (van Staden, 2019:179). Currently, the debate continues as some scholars argue that a post-imperialistic empire has emerged that contests the existence of imperialism (Hardt & Negri, 2000, 2004; Negri, 2008; Panitch & Gindin, 2004, 2005; Robinson, 2004, 2007; for a discussion of Hardt & Negri see Buchanan & Pahuja, 2004; Callinicos, 2003b, 2007; Laffey & Weldes, 2004; Žižek, 2004b cited in Fuchs, 2010). On the other hand, some scholars postulate the transition to a new imperialism (Callinicos, 2003a, 2003b, 2005, 2007; Harvey, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007; Wood, 2003; Zeller, 2004a, 2000b, cited in Fuchs, 2010). In the middle are scholars who advance a more nuanced notion on imperialism: that it has preserved some of its old features while developing new ones as capitalism develops and evolves (O'Byrne, 2005; Sklair, 2002, in Fuchs, 2010). Scholars like Enfu and Baolin (2021) advance a notion of neo-imperialism as a late phase of imperialism arising against the backdrop of economic globalisation and financialisation.

But, is it useful to discount media imperialism as a framework to comprehend contemporary media power and the marginalisation of counter-hegemonic voices? In an era where the US is desperately trying to reassert its global hegemony in the context of China rising as a global superpower (Khan, Ali & Hammaduddin, 2021), media imperialism is not only relevant, but critical to the analysis of international media studies (Nordenstreng, 2013). Of course, the rise of China, for example, has enabled numerous critics of the term, such as Sparks (2012), who argues that cultural imperialism no longer depends on a

¹ See <https://mybroadband.co.za/news/internet/418356-south-africas-most-popular-news-websites-revealed.html> [accessed, 20 March 2022].

single global centre with the emergence of competition between different states. Of course, a concept such as coloniality of knowledge in media studies (Chiumbu & Radebe, 2022) denotes the dominance the Western knowledge system attained, *inter alia*, through colonisation and “persistent intellectual and cultural imperialism that has marginalized and, in some cases, eradicated alternative knowledge systems, social structures, organizations and ways of working and organizing” (Manning, 2021:1208) – precisely the reason why the decolonisation discourse within the field of media studies remains pertinent. Some scholars argue that “white supremacy” is still “embedded in academic spaces and academic culture” and that academia generally “is organized around whiteness and the Global North, demonstrating the importance of decentring whiteness in these fields” (Mohammed, 2022:7). Contemporary media must contend with the rise of digital technologies that have become critical for information dissemination. However, this has opened a gap for a re-emergence of media imperialism. Acholonu (2011) argues that transnational media corporations are using this shift as a “ploy of information free flow to perpetrate their dubious intentions in their exploit of the developing countries”. In this regard, this “has led to vulgarity in African culture” with the “technologically advanced nations now make the developing nations a dumping ground for their media products” (Acholonu, 2011:4).

Critical political economy

At the heart of media imperialism are critical political economy of the media (CPEM) theories that are useful for analysing the economic base and the superstructure that shapes media practices (Radebe & Chiumbu, 2022). This has been the basis of the argument that the media propagandises on behalf of the powerful societal interests that control and finance them. Scholars such as Herman and Chomsky (2002:3) have demonstrated that this is not achieved in a crude manner, but through, amongst other things, the clever “selection of right-thinking personnel and by the editors’ and working journalists’ internalization of priorities and definition of newsworthiness that conform to the institution’s policies.” Subsequently, the bourgeoisie uses its economic strength within the capitalist system to ensure that public information flows in a manner that is consonant with their interests (Murdock & Golding, 1999). However, in employing critical political economy theories, it is important to guard against uncritically expropriating Western theoretical models for the African experience. As Nyamnjoh (2011) posits, there must be some flexibility in applying these theories in specific realities, nevertheless theories from the Global North must be “modified” and “domesticated” to help us explain African media experiences (cited in Chuma, 2019).

To this end, the concept of media imperialism remains useful as part of the political economy approaches to comprehend the continued spread of Western global hegemony. This is useful in deciphering the manner in which the South African online news media perpetuates the US-led hegemony through its coverage of the war in Ukraine. The South African commercial media largely consists of features of imperialism as manifested through its concentration and transnationalisation. Therefore, this media is subsumed by finance capital (Fuchs, 2010). CPEM approaches are fundamental in comprehending the ideological nature of capitalism and in exposing how the commercial media becomes a capitalist tool in its representation of ideologically laden discourses (Radebe, 2020). It is through this approach that it becomes possible to appreciate the impact of the correlation between media ownership, the concentrated media patterns and the embrace of neoliberalism, and content of news (Govenden, 2022).

METHODS: CONTENT ANALYSIS

To achieve its objective, this paper employed content analysis to examine the coverage of the war in Ukraine by the South African online news media. Qualitative content analysis approaches are useful for such studies, because they enable the researcher to probe other elements that are political and theoretical in nature (Brennen, 2012). In addition, thematic and framing content analysis is used to analyse and interpret data and thus gain further insights into the coverage of the war. Content analysis and thematic analysis is a combination of two prominent methods used for the analysis of message content (Neuendorf, 2018) due to similarities, including the involvement of codes and coding (Ahuvia, 2001). The

articles analysed in this study are based on a total population of 496 news articles sourced from five South African online publications (*News24*, *IOL*, *TimesLive*, *Citizen.co.za* and *BusinessTech*) during January and February 2022. According to the 2021 IAB South Africa Narrative report, the above are the biggest online news publications in South Africa.² The report revealed that *News24* (published by 24.com) had a readership of 12,5 million unique monthly browsers, followed by *IOL* (published by Independent Online) with 5,88 million unique browsers. *TimesLive* (Arena Holdings) was third with 5,58 million, followed by *BusinessTech* (published by Broad Media) with 5,32 million and *Citizen.co.za* (published by Caxton CTP) with 2,63 million unique browsers.

To find relevant articles within these publications, the key search phrase was "Ukraine war", which yielded 496 articles within the specified timeframe. Of the total articles, 198 were found in *News24*, 160 in *IOL*, 110 in *TimesLive*, 22 in *Citizen.co.za* and only 6 in *BusinessTech*. The analysis in this study was based on these articles. Further content analysis to test the framing of articles was done by selecting 10 per cent for a focused analysis. For this purpose, 20 articles in *News24*, 19 in *IOL*, 11 in *TimesLive*, 6 in *Citizen.co.za* and 5 in *BusinessTech* were analysed. This purposive sampling approach is in line with previous content analyses approaches interested in the representation on ideologically contested issues in the media (Cohen, Irwin, Newton-John & Slater, 2019). Indeed, qualitative content analysis is useful to probe other elements that are political and theoretical in nature (Radebe, 2017).

At the heart of this analysis was the role of journalists and sources as they are influential in deciding the newsworthiness of an event (Tuchman, 1978), and thus in framing the discourse. Undoubtedly this role can sometimes lead to selection bias (Ross, 2006). To unravel the framing of the discourse, the inductive and deductive approaches were employed. Because inductive approaches can be time-consuming for media content analysis, the deductive approach helped to identify the frames in the war coverage (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

On the other hand, in applying thematic approaches, articles were carefully read to identify emerging themes (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). It is apparent that themes and frames are not class neutral, but represent societal power dynamics. Inherently, they contain the "imprint of power" through the views of various actors and their representation explain class domination even in media text (Entman, 1993, cited in Carragee & Roefs, 2004). Therefore, thematic analysis allows for such a study to go beyond descriptive analysis and unravel the more subjective and latent meanings often embedded in a text (Radebe, 2020). Fundamentally, the themes found in this study exposed, in their representation and depiction, "stereotypes and symbolic or metaphoric elements" (DCU School of Communication, 2009:26). Notwithstanding the possibilities of biased conclusions inherent in this method due to its interpretive nature, the researcher's views and lived experience (Boyd, 2015; Radebe, 2020), this approach remains useful. To this end, reflexivity is always important to ensure that researchers continuously reflect on their engagement with data collection and analysis (Mackieson, Shlonsky & Connolly, 2019).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS: THE RUSSIAN INVASION

When the war between Russia and Ukraine eventually started with the first shot fired on 24 February 2022, there had been a steady media build-up to its coverage. As depicted in Figure 1, the coverage spiked in February. While early reports focused on the prevention of nuclear war by the world's biggest and most advanced economies including the United Kingdom, the United States, China, Russia and France, the subsequent coverage revealed growing hostilities. For example, the article "UK, US, China, Russia and France vow to prevent spread of nuclear weapons" in *News24* of 3 January 2022, reported that the five global nuclear powers pledged to prevent atomic weapons spreading and to avoid nuclear conflict. This tone of coverage changed swiftly after the war broke out with the focus now being on the

2 See <https://mybroadband.co.za/news/internet/418356-south-africas-most-popular-news-websites-revealed.html> [accessed, 20 March 2022].

impact of the war. This was characterised by articles like "Biden unveils new sanctions on Russian banks, businesses after Ukraine attack" in *TimeLive* of 24 February 2022.

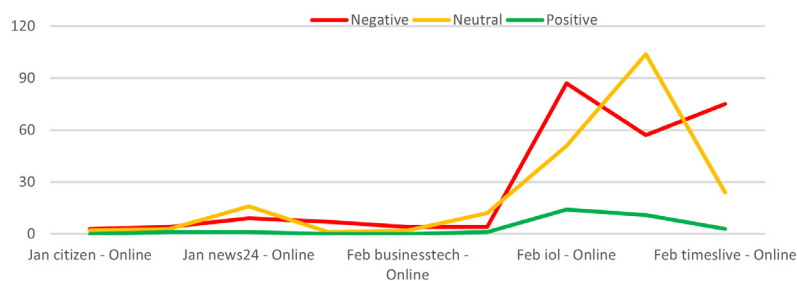


Figure 1: Coverage timeline and tonality per publication

As expected, most of the articles were negative, with the chosen economic frame that the war led to turmoil in the global markets and some economists predicting that it was unlikely to have a major impact on the broader growth of the South African economy. From the coverage, 50,4 per cent of the articles were negative, 43,3 per cent neutral and 6,2 per cent positive (see Figure 2). As reflected in the article "How Russia's invasion of Ukraine will hit South Africa" in *BusinessTech* of 28 February 2022, the coverage was driven by concerns of the negative impact the war would have on the economy. The sprinkling of positive coverage pertained to the initial reports of the purported meeting between Ukraine and Russia announced by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office. The article "Ukraine and Russia agree to talks 'without preconditions'" in *IOL* of 27 February 2022, regarded the mooted negotiation as welcome news that could lead to de-escalation.

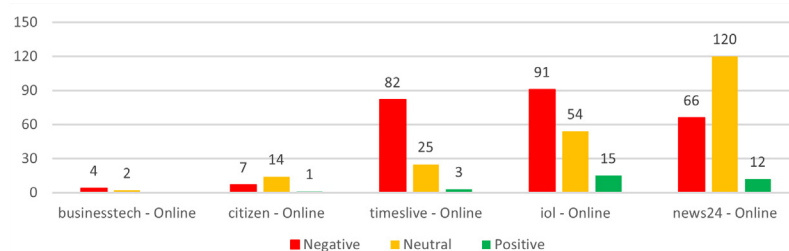


Figure 2: Number of articles and tonality per publication

Sources of news

The media reproduces definitions of the powerful in society through the sources of news (Radebe, 2017). The production of dominant societal views also takes place through the structure of news (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts, 1978). Linked to this is the routine practice of news organisations that forces journalists to meet tight deadlines, leading them to "rely on sources of information that are more readily obtainable and have been validated by other media, while avoiding sources that are less 'trusted' and require more validation" (Duncan, 2014:25). This practice ensures that there is little to no deviation from the agenda of capitalism (Harper, 2012). Since news organisations exist and develop within a broader socio-economic context and ideas develop within a particular historical context (Radebe, 2017), the ideological hegemony finds expression in a news production process that has both journalists and sources at the centre of this (also see Fishman, 1980; Gans 1979; Gitlin, 1980, 1983; Schudson, 1978; Tuchman, 1978).

The construction of the West's dominant views was discernible in these articles. From the sample of articles on which content analysis was done, over 80 per cent were sourced from the Western international

newswires such as Bloomberg, Reuters and Agence France-Press (AFP). In fact, of the total articles, 27,8 per cent were sourced from AFP. Less than 15 per cent of the articles on the war in Ukraine originated from the South African newsroom (see Figure 3). Even in articles focusing on South Africa, like "Rand drops sharply against the US dollar as investors dump riskier asset after Russia attacks Ukraine" in *IOL* of 24 February 2022, the data used for analyses were based on reports from Reuters.

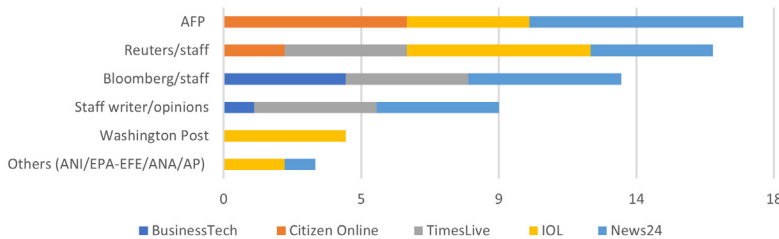


Figure 3: Origins of articles per publication

Linked to this are the sources of news that, predictably, are largely Western. Of the total sources of news found in articles, 58 per cent were of Western orientation and origin. This includes Western businesses and/or analysts (23,4 per cent), United States (15,8 per cent), European Union (10,0 per cent) and Western media (8,8 per cent) (see Figure 4). For example, the article "Oil soars above \$100 again as more sanctions on Russia spur energy crisis fears" in *News24* of 28 February 2022, sourced from Bloomberg, relied on sources such as the Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and academics from institutions like California's Middlebury Institute of International Studies. The United States sources included President Joe Biden, Jen Psaki (White House Press Secretary) and Linda Thomas-Greenfield (US ambassador to the United Nations). This was also the trend with European Union sources, which included people like Olaf Scholz (German Chancellor), Ben Wallace (UK Defence Secretary) and Josep Borrell (EU foreign policy chief).

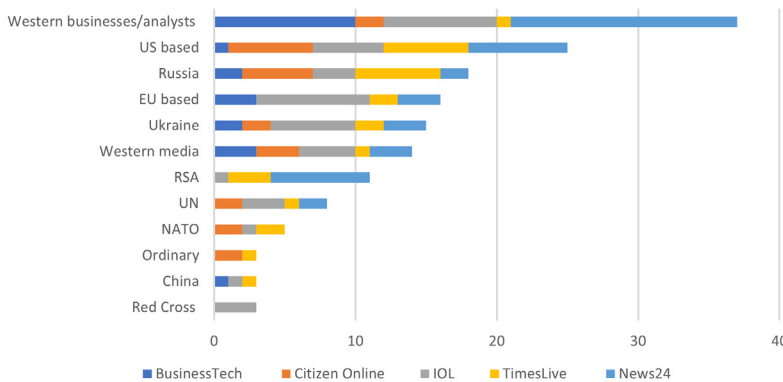


Figure 4: Sources of news in articles per publication

An interesting observation is the use of media organisations as sources of news. The article "Diplomatic flurry to avert Russia-NATO clash over Ukraine" in *IOL* of 7 February 2022, sourced from Reuters and Sergey Pivovarov, rely on the *Washington Post* and Fox news to access the views of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan. While, on the other hand, non-Western news organisations are mentioned in a disparaging manner, for example, the article "Putin and Biden both win, Ukraine loses" in *TimesLive* of 16 February 2022, written by Leonid Bershidsky for Bloomberg, describes Margarita Simonyan as "head of the RT propaganda network".

However, the reliance on Western news agencies like AFP and Western sources does not necessarily mean that all articles were overtly pro-West and anti-Russia. There were articles that portrayed Russia

favourably, such as the article “Russian region declares emergency over Ukraine refugees” in *IOL* of 19 February 2022. The article cited Russian news agencies quoting the pro-Russian governor of the Rostov region, Vasily Golubev, saying “Given the trend of increasing numbers of people arriving, we consider it appropriate to introduce a state of emergency.” According to the article, the leaders of two pro-Russian separatist republics in the eastern Ukraine on Friday ordered civilians to cross the border into Russia, accusing the Ukrainian army of preparing to try and retake the regions by force.

Emerging frames in the coverage

Relying on deductive approaches, four frames were identified from the coverage and the representation of the war by South Africa’s online news media (see Figure 5). These were based on common frames identified by Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992) in the news in the United States (see Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). From the content analysis of the sampled articles, the following frames emerged: human interest, conflict, morality, and economic consequence.

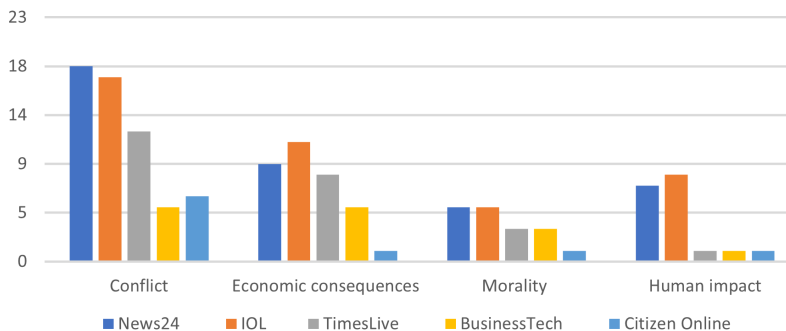


Figure 5: News frames in articles per publication

As expected, and indicated in Figure 5, most of the articles (45,6 per cent) were framed from a conflict perspective. This was followed by the economic consequences frame at 26,7 per cent, human impact at 14,1 per cent and morality at 13,3 per cent. The conflict frame, found to be the most common frame in the US news (Neuman et al., 1992), emphasised conflicts between role-players to capture the audience’s interest (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). This could be seen in articles such as “Bloodshed and tears as eastern Ukraine faces Russian attack” in *IOL* of 24 February 2022, and “Russian invaders ‘frustrated’ by stiff Ukraine resistance: Pentagon” in *News24* of 27 February 2022.

The human impact frame abounds in wars, as reflected in the article “Russia’s invasion of Ukraine: latest developments” in *IOL* of 24 February 2022, where the Red Cross was quoted as expressing fears about the possibilities of “massive casualty numbers”. The same article cited Poland opening nine reception centres along its border with Ukraine to prepare for an influx of refugees. On a few occasions, a historical perspective was considered, such as linking the current war to the 2014 fight, but this was largely done to portray a one-sided Ukrainian human impact. In the article “Putin’s gamble: the risks and rewards of invading Ukraine” in *TimesLive* of 3 February 2022, written by Marc Champion for Bloomberg, Svetlana Kondratenko, a 46-year-old clothes trader, Maya Shushalova (53), and Nikolay Ilkyv, a 49-year-old shepherd, were among the citizens used to tell their story on the impact of the war on their lives and their livelihoods.

After the conflict frame, the human interest frame was expected to be the next important and, possibly, the morality frame, due to the potential loss of life. Surprisingly, it was the economic consequences frame that proved to be the second most important issue to the Western media and its sources. Perhaps this gives away the real rationale behind the war, which others have argued to fundamentally be an economic war. The South African online media audience is thus subjected to this framing. In this regard, media imperialism theories, particularly when it comes to international conflicts, are as useful today as they were decades ago. In the context of the growing influence of digital platforms, some have argued that media

imperialism has returned with a vengeance (Fitzgerald, 2019). However, a detailed content analysis of the South African commercial media on various ideological discourses (Radebe, 2020; Radebe & Chiumbu, 2022) show that media imperialism has always been around.

Themes in articles

The following four themes (Table 1) were the most pervasive in the sampled articles with “Russia’s unprovoked invasion of Ukraine” and “concerns for the people” contained in 75,4 and 65,6 per cent of the articles respectively. The themes “economic impact (oil and gas)” and “sanctions against Russia” had a prevalence of 54 and 44 per cent respectively.

Table 1: Top emerging themes or frames on analysed articles

Themes	Broad definition
Russia’s unprovoked invasion of Ukraine	This theme contains articles that framed the war as the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
Economic impact (oil and gas)	Articles under this theme focused on the economic disruption and impact on the global economy
Sanctions against Russia	Articles focused on sanctions imposed by the Western powers against Russia for breaking “international law”.
Concerns for the people	Stories geared towards humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and refugees fall under this theme

Before the recent war in Ukraine, Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin, had been portrayed “as backwards, undemocratic, and as a threat to the US” in contrast to the characterisation of the US “as a united, modern and progressive nation” (Wiedlack, 2020:59). Numerous studies found that the Western media negatively portrayed Putin, Russia and the country’s policies (Šťovíčková, 2021). Therefore, Russia’s negative representation by South Africa’s online media as an “unprovoked” aggressor, which was informed by the Western media’s framing, is unsurprising. In the article “Unprovoked and unjustified’: World reacts to attack on Ukraine” in *JOL* of 24 February 2022, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida was cited saying “The latest Russian invasion shakes the foundation of the international order, which does not permit unilateral attempts to change the status quo.” Similarly, the article “Musk activates Starlink internet service in Ukraine” in *News24* of 27 February 2020, reported: “Zelenskyy visits Ukraine’s east for the first time since invasion” and in his reaction to billionaire Elon Musk’s tweets, Zelenskyy called on the billionaire “to address sane Russians to stand” against their government’s invasion.

Apart from the condescending tone, these articles, like many others, failed to present an alternative Russian view on the war. Instead, it presented, as a foregone conclusion, that Russia and Putin were to blame for the “unprovoked invasion” and that this was an act of insanity, unlike any action of the civilised West. The articles did not provide historical perspectives such as the expansionary role of NATO and its role in the tensions that ultimately led to the war. This Western perspective of events was fed to South African media consumers. Of course, this should not be misconstrued as suggesting that consumers cannot read media texts from an opposite perspective. Indeed, consumers do not inevitably and uncritically absorb media meaning from the West (Van Elteren, 2003).

Concerns for the people

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000: 95) posit that the human interest frame “brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem”. Of course, this is not innocent or an act of benevolence, but is tied to the media’s commercial interests of capturing and retaining an audience by

catering to their interests (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Within this frame, the “Concerns for the people” theme sought to put a human face to the story. This was also done to condemn Russia’s aggression and invasion, as enunciated in the previous frame. In these articles, sources such as the United Nations and International Red Cross were useful to drive a narrative that this senseless aggression was doing untold damage to a vulnerable section of society, such as women and children, and creating refugees.

Articles like “Over 100 civilians killed in Ukraine war, including seven children: UN” in *News24* of 24 February 2022, painted a picture of horror that “At least 102 civilians, including seven children, had been killed in Ukraine since Russia invaded five days ago”. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported 406 civilian casualties in Ukraine, while the UN refugee agency tallied the number of people fleeing the country as refugees, with many more displaced inside Ukraine. Without the other side, the story successfully painted a negative picture of Russia.

Economic impact (oil and gas)

Among common news frames were the economic consequences, which reported on issues on the basis of their potential economic consequences “on an individual, group, institution, region, or country” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000:96). As reported in previous sections, this was one of the most prevalent frames in this coverage and it is therefore not surprising that this emerged as a theme. This theme focused on the impact of the war on the global trade and markets, with the primary focus on oil and gas. Articles such as “As SA fuel prices hit record highs, AA warns of further pain due to Ukraine invasion” and “Russia’s isolation deepens as Ukraine resists invasion” in *News24* of 27 and 28 February 2022 respectively, analysed the global economy from an oil supply perspective. It was reported that “further military action by Russia in Ukraine could push oil prices even higher, causing more local fuel price pain.”

The article “Share markets nervous on interest rate hikes and Ukraine” in *IOL* of 31 January 2022, reported that “The UK FTSE lost £53 billion (R1.1 trillion) last Monday and European markets tumbled 3.8 percent, their biggest drop in one day in 18 months. The UK blue chip index ended last Friday 1.09 percent lower for the day after it had recovered during the week as the threat of a Russian invasion of Ukraine started to subside.” So, while the concern appeared to be about averting the war to prevent human catastrophe, essential among the primary concerns was the safeguarding of the global capitalist economy.

Sanctions against Russia

One of the weapons in the West’s arsenal are sanctions, which are used against ideological foes to force them to toe the line. The US employed this tactic against Cuba, using an embargo/blockade and economic sanctions (Hernández-Truyol, 2009). Economic sanctions are applied by the West and its allies to any country that refuses to follow their ideological line, such as Venezuela, Zimbabwe, North Korea, Iran and many others. Inevitably, this strategy was used against Russia and was one of the themes in the Western media’s coverage of the war. In the article “Putin ramps up Ukraine invasion” in *BusinessTech* of 27 February 2022, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s government was reported to have announced that apart from allowing weapons for Ukraine, it was throwing its weight behind European Union moves to exclude Russia from SWIFT. “Such a step would represent a significant escalation of the sanctions the EU, the US, the UK and others have already imposed on Russia, including on Putin and members of his inner circle, sending Russian stocks and the ruble tumbling”, reported the article. Indeed, sanctions are a central part of this war.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS SOUTH-SOUTH MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

The manner in which South Africa’s online media frames the war in Ukraine can be best understood in the context of media imperialism, which fundamentally denotes the operation of the modern media to create, maintain and expand systems of domination (Fejes, 1981). Media imperialism has been useful in articulating the manner in which global media systems operate as “transnational agents”, either as corporations or media industries, to direct the flow of media products on an international scale (Fejes,

1981). The significance of this study lies in unravelling that, while old features of media imperialism, such as the control of ownership structure and distribution by Western powers (Boyd-Barrett, 1977; Schiller 1969/1992) are waning, the emergence of platform imperialism (Fitzgerald, 2019), combined with a difficult economic environment, compels the local media to rely on Western news agencies for content of international news. Even for developments that are within the African continent, due to lack of financial resources, national news agencies are forced to rely on Western news agencies for content. This includes the use of Western media platforms such as its global networks, newspapers and newswires as sources of news. In this way, dominant Western views are perpetuated in the process to construct hegemony (Radebe, 2020). These are some of the new features of media imperialism that have been emerging in this study.

The ongoing influence and domination of the Western media on news content in South Africa suggests that media imperialism is taking a different form. I argue that this new form of media imperialism in former colonies or locations in the Global South such as South Africa indicates continuities and discontinuities of media imperialism. Not that there is anything inherently wrong with using the Western media to understand global events, especially those that are inaccessible to the South African media; however, it is critical to ensure balance by presenting both sides of the story in a balanced manner. Balanced reporting would be in line with the values enshrined in the country's constitution, and this is where partnerships with non-Western media partners becomes important. For example, in the context of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) group of states emerging as a new geopolitical power bloc (Wasserman, 2015), China has sought to increase its investment in media platforms in Africa as a way of countering negative reporting by, inter alia, launching its state broadcaster, China Central Television (CCTV), opening bureaus in Johannesburg and Nairobi for the English-language edition of *China Daily*; and embarking on numerous "exchange programmes for media groups and journalists to visit China and vice versa have also been seen as a way to further extend its cultural influence" (Wasserman, 2015: 113). However, this media flow between China and Africa has not been one-directional: an example is the South African media company, Naspers, investing in the media platform Tencent in China (Wasserman, 2015). However, studies that portray the Chinese media expansion in Africa as countering media and cultural imperialism theories that perceive a "predominance of north-south axis of media circulation", essentially denude African actors of their agency (Jedlowski, 2019:192). While the agency of African actors is paramount, this study has revealed the continuation of the north-south flow of information.

Thus, not a single news article was framed or influenced by the presence of Chinese media in South Africa. Instead of seeking to build an alternative source of news, the South African media followed its Western partners in muting alternative views by banning Russia Television (RT). In South Africa, the channel was blocked by the country's major satellite television monopoly, Multichoice. Streaming platforms like TelkomONE also banned RT, leading to complaints to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA). The Independent Communication Authority of South Africa (ICASA) and organisations like the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) questioned Multichoice's arbitrary decision. A seasoned broadcaster, Paula Slier, called for media plurality since "there is value in people accessing a Russian channel that presents the Russian government's point of view – regardless of what one might think of those views." Importantly, argued Slier, apart from hearing the other side, people who may not like what is being said "can always switch off" (Slier, 2022).

Fundamentally, this ban, as well as the South African media's reliance on Western media sources, has implications for media freedom, freedom of expression and journalism. It not only obscures the truth while driving a single narrative and propaganda, but also demonstrates the continuous evolution of media imperialism. This is precisely why media scholars should enhance and update the theories on critical political economy of communication and media imperialism that remain pivotal to comprehending contemporary media in the digital age.

REFERENCES

- Acholonu, R. (2011). Mass media and cultural imperialism: The African experience. *Caritas University, Amorji-Nike, Enugu*.
- Ahuvia, A. (2001). Traditional, interpretive, and reception based content analyses: Improving the ability of content analysis to address issues of pragmatic and theoretical concern. *Social Indicators Research*, 54: 139-172.
- AFP Wire Service. (2022). "Diplomatic flurry to avert Russia-NATO clash over Ukraine" IOL, February 7, 2022. Accessed July 14, 2022. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/world/diplomatic-flurry-to-avert-russia-nato-clash-over-ukraine-efa5bfbb-398d-413f-87f7-1e66fdadfd0e>
- AFP Wire Service. (2022). "Russian region declares emergency over Ukraine refugees" IOL, February 19, 2022. Accessed July 14, 2022. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/world/russian-region-declares-emergency-over-ukraine-refugees-32e7f310-79d2-4e29-8077-ab50da5b5c5d>
- AFP Wire Service. (2022). "Russia's 'brazen' attack on Ukraine 'will not go unpunished'" IOL, February 24, 2022. Accessed July 11, 2022. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/world/russias-brazen-attack-on-ukraine-will-not-go-unpunished-f373da9f-53af-4aa3-ba5b-b7b79eb568f6>
- AFP Wire Service. (2022). "Bloodshed and tears as eastern Ukraine faces Russian attack" IOL, February 24, 2022. Accessed July 13, 2022. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/world/bloodshed-and-tears-as-eastern-ukraine-faces-russian-attack-b14238d7-6fd2-43d5-b4dd-3a15a19c2d01>
- AFP Wire Service. (2022). "'Unprovoked and unjustified': World reacts to attack on Ukraine" IOL, February 24, 2022. Accessed July 13, 2022. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/world/unprovoked-and-unjustified-world-reacts-to-attack-on-ukraine-79b8604e-44ce-471c-97c2-c6a87db51c53>
- AFP Wire Service. (2022). "Russia's invasion of Ukraine: latest developments" IOL, February 24, 2022. Accessed July 14, 2022. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/world/russias-invasion-of-ukraine-latest-developments-d7b9e28b-3e75-45f1-a687-ee32b58c8293>
- AFP Wire Service. (2022). "UK, US, China, Russia and France vow to prevent spread of nuclear weapons" News24, January 3, 2022. Accessed July 12, 2022. <https://www.news24.com/news24/world/news/uk-us-china-russia-and-france-vow-to-prevent-spread-of-nuclear-weapons-20220103>
- AFP Wire Service. (2022). "Russian invaders 'frustrated' by stiff Ukraine resistance: Pentagon" News24, February 27, 2022. Accessed July 13, 2022. <https://www.news24.com/news24/world/news/russian-invaders-frustrated-by-stiff-ukraine-resistance-pentagon-20220227>
- AFP Wire Service. (2022). "Musk activates Starlink internet service in Ukraine" News24, February 27, 2020. Accessed July 15, 2022. <https://www.news24.com/news24/world/news/musk-activates-starlink-internet-service-in-ukraine-20220227>
- AFP Wire Service. (2022). "Over 100 civilians killed in Ukraine war, including seven children: UN" News24, February 24, 2022. Accessed July 15, 2022. <https://www.news24.com/news24/World/News/over-100-civilians-killed-in-ukraine-war-including-seven-children-un-20220228>
- Areff, A. (2022). "As SA fuel prices hit record highs, AA warns of further pain due to Ukraine invasion" News24, February 27, 2022. Accessed July 15, 2022. <https://www.news24.com/fin24/economy/as-fuel-prices-hit-record-highs-aa-warns-of-further-pain-due-to-ukraine-invasion-20220227>
- Ashdown, B.K., Dixe, A. & Talmage, C.A. (2021). The potentially damaging effects of developmental aid and voluntourism on cultural capital and well-being. *International Journal of Community Well-Being*, 4(1): 113-131.
- Bershidsky, L. (2022). "Putin and Biden both win, Ukraine loses" TimesLive, February 16, 2022. Accessed July 13, 2022. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/world/2022-02-16-putin-and-biden-both-win-ukraine-loses/>
- Bloomberg news. (2022). "Putin ramps up Ukraine invasion" BusinessTech, February 27, 2. Accessed July 13, 2022. <https://businesstech.co.za/news/trending/563090/putin-ramps-up-ukraine-invasion/>
- Bloomberg news. (2022). "Oil soars above \$100 again as more sanctions on Russia spur energy crisis fears" News24, February 28, 2022. Accessed July 13, 2022. <https://www.news24.com/fin24/economy/world/oil-soars-above-100-again-as-more-sanctions-on-russia-spur-energy-crisis-fears-20220228>
- Boyd-Barrett, O. (1977). Media imperialism: Towards an international framework for the analysis of media systems. *Mass communication and society*, 116(135): 297-314.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. (2014) *Media Imperialism*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. (2018). Cultural imperialism and communication. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*. Accessed August 13, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.678>
- Boyd, I. 2015. "Being Heard: A Thematic Analysis of the Newspaper Media Response to the Jay Report and the Rotherham Child Abuse Scandal" https://www.herts.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/100964/mscdissertation-exam-no-183587.pdf
- Brennen, B. 2012. *Qualitative Research Methods for Media Studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Buchanan, R. & Pahuja, S. (2004) Legal Imperialism: Empire's Invisible Hand?, In *Empire's New Clothes: Reading Hardt and Negri*, pp. 73–93. Edited by Paul A. Passavant & Jodi Dean. New York: Routledge.
- Callinicos, A. (2003a) *An Anti-Capitalist Manifesto*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Callinicos, A. (2003b) Toni Negri in Perspective In *Debating Empire*, pp. 121-143. Edited by Gopal Balakrishnan. London: Verso.
- Callinicos, A. (2005) Imperialism and Global Political Economy. *International Socialism*, 2(108), Autumn.
- Callinicos, A. (2007) *Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Carragee, K.M. & Roefs, W. (2004). The neglect of power in recent framing research. *Journal of Communication*, 54(2), 214-233.
- Chadha, K. & Kavoori, A. (2000). Media imperialism revisited: Some findings from the Asian case. *Media, Culture & Society*, 22(4): 415-432.
- Champion, M. (2022). "Putin's gamble: the risks and rewards of invading Ukraine" TimesLive, February 3, 2022. Accessed July 13, 2022. <https://select.timeslive.co.za/world/2022-02-02-putins-gamble-the-risks-and-rewards-of-invading-ukraine/>
- Chiumbu, S. (2016). Media, Race and Capital: A Decolonial Analysis of Representation of Miners' Strikes in South Africa. *African Studies*, 75(3): 417-435.
- Chiumbu, S.H. & Radebe, M. (2020). Towards a decolonial critical political economy of the media: some initial thoughts. *Communicatio: South African Journal of Communication Theory and Research*, 46(1): 1-20.
- Chuma, C. (2019). Political economy of the media in Africa. In *Media Studies: Critical African and Decolonial Approaches*. Edited by Chiumbu, S. & Iqani, M. South Africa: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Cohen, T. (2021). SABC finalises massive retrenchment of 20% of staff. *Daily Maverick*, March 30, 2021. Accessed July 6, 2022. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-03-30-sabc-finalises-massive-retrenchment-of-20-of-staff/>
- Cohen, R., Irwin, L., Newton-John, T. & Slater, A. (2019). #bodypositivity: A content analysis of body positive accounts on Instagram. *Body image*, 29: 47-57.
- Curran, J., Gurevitch, M. & Woollacott, J. (1982). *The study of the*

- media: Theoretical approaches. In *Culture, society and the media*, pp.11-29. London: Routledge.
- Daniels, G., 2013. *State of the newsroom South Africa 2013*. Disruptions and transitions. A Report. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.
- DCU School of Communication (2009). Reading the Developing World. A Content Analysis of Irish Print Media Coverage. Final Report. Dublin: Dublin City University.
- Demont-Heinrich, C. (2011). Cultural imperialism versus globalization of culture: Riding the structure-agency dialectic in global communication and media studies. *Sociology Compass*, 5(8): 666-678.
- Duncan, J. (2014). South African journalism and the Marikana massacre: A case study of an editorial failure. *The Political Economy of Communication*, 1(2).
- Enfu, C. & Baolin, L. (2021). Five Characteristics of Neoimperialism Building on Lenin's Theory of Imperialism in the Twenty-First Century. *Monthly Review - An Independent Socialist Magazine*, 73(1): 22-58.
- Entman, R.M. & A. Rojecki. (1993). Freezing out the Public: Elite and Media Framing of the US Anti-nuclear Movement. *Political Communication*, 10: 155-173.
- Fejes, F. (1981). Media imperialism: An assessment. *Media, Culture & Society*, 3(3): 281-289.
- Fisherman, M. (1980). Manufacturing the News. In Schudson, M. (1989). *The sociology of news production. Media, Culture and Society*, 11(3): 263-282.
- Fitzgerald, S. (2019). Over-the-top video services in India: Media imperialism after globalization. *Media Industries Journal*, 6(2): 90-115.
- Francis, D. & Webster, E. (2019). Poverty and inequality in South Africa: critical reflections. *Development Southern Africa*, 36(6): 788-802.
- Freedman, D. (2017). 'Smooth operator?' The propaganda model and moments of crisis. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 6(2).
- Fuchs, C. (2010). New imperialism: Information and media imperialism? *Global Media and Communication*, 6(1): 33-60.
- Fuchs, C. (2021). Foundations of Communication/Media/Digital (In)justice. *Journal of Media Ethics*, 36(4): 186-201.
- Gans, H.J. (1979). *Deciding what news: A study of CBS evening news, NBC nightly news, Newsweek, and Time*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Gitlin, T. (1980). *The Whole World is Watching. Mass media in the making and unmaking of the new left*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Gitlin, T. (1983). *Inside Prime Time*. New York: Pantheon.
- Govenden, P. (2022). The Power of Neoliberalism: Transformation, Neo-Elitism and Class Continuities in the Post-Apartheid Media. *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society*, 20(1): 101-120.
- Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J. & Roberts, B. (1978). *Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state and law and order*. London: Macmillan.
- Hardt, M. & Negri, A. (2000) *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hardt, M. & Negri, A. (2004) *Multitude*. New York: Penguin.
- Harmse, C. (2022). "Share markets nervous on interest rate hikes and Ukraine". *IOL*, January 31, 2022. Accessed July 13, 2022. <https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/economy/share-markets-nervous-on-interest-rate-hikes-and-ukraine-442dd296-49e7-4ab0-a331-f31270929104/>
- Harper, S. (2012). *Beyond the Left: The Communist Critique of the Media*. Winchester, UK: John Hunt Publishing.
- Harvey, D. (2003) *The New Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2005) *A Brief History of Neo-liberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2006) *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*. London: Verso.
- Harvey, D. (2007) In What Ways is the "New Imperialism" Really New. *Historical Materialism*, 15(3): 57-70.
- Herman, E.S. & McChesney, R.W. (1997). *The global media: The new missionaries of corporate capitalism*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Hernández-Truyol, B.E. (2009). Embargo or Blockade -The legal and moral dimensions of the US economic sanctions on Cuba. *Intercultural Human Rights Law Review*, 4: 53-85.
- Holland, S. and Mason, J., (2022). Biden unveils new sanctions on Russian banks, businesses after Ukraine attack. *TimesLive*, February, 24, 2022. Accessed July, 11, 2022. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/world/2022-02-24-biden-unveils-new-sanctions-on-russian-banks-businesses-after-ukraine-attack/>
- Horkheimer, M. & Adorno, T.W. (1972) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Translated from the German by J. Cumming. New York: Seabury Press.
- Jedlowski, A. (2019). Media studies, globalisation and African realities. In *Media Studies: Critical African and Decolonial Approaches*. Edited by Chiumbu, S., & Iqani, M. (2019). Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Kemp, S. (2021). "Digital 2021: South Africa." Datareportal, February 11, 2021. Accessed August 15, 2021. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-south-africa>
- Khan, M.F., Ali, A. & Hammaduddin, H. (2021). The Rise of China: A Threat to US Hegemony. *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs*, 4(4).
- Laffey, M. & Weldes, J. (2004) Representing the International: Sovereignty after Modernity? In *Empire's New Clothes: Reading Hardt and Negri*, pp. 121-42. Edited by Passavant, Paul A. & Dean, Jodi. New York: Routledge.
- Lee, C. (1979). *Media imperialism reconsidered: The homogenizing of television culture*. London: Sage.
- Mackieson, P., Shlonsky, A. & Connolly, M. (2019). Increasing rigor and reducing bias in qualitative research: A document analysis of parliamentary debates using applied thematic analysis. *Qualitative Social Work*, 18(6): 965-980.
- Manning, J. (2021). Decolonial feminist theory: Embracing the gendered colonial difference in management and organisation studies. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 28(4): 1203-1219.
- Mattelart, A. (1983). Technology, culture, and communication: Research and policy priorities in France. *Journal of Communication*, 33(3): 59-73.
- M&G Data Desk. (2019). 'Who runs SA's media is a black-and-white issue' Accessed August 26, 2019. <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-01-04-00-who-runs-sas-media-is-a-black-andwhite-issue>
- Mndebele, M. (2019). "Journalist Workforce Halved from a Decade Ago". *New Frame*, 16 August. <https://www.newframe.com/media-retrenchmentssurpass-10-000-in-past-decade/>
- Mohammed, W.F. (2022). Bilchiinsi philosophy: Decolonizing methodologies in media studies. *Review of Communication*, 22(1): 7-24.
- Ndlovu M. (2003). The South African Broadcasting Corporation's expansion into Africa: South African Media imperialism? *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research*, 29(1): 297-311.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. (2018). Metaphysical empire, linguicides and cultural imperialism. *English Academy Review*, 35(2): 96-115.
- Negri, Antonio. (2008). *Reflections on Empire*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Neuendorf, K.A. (2019). Content analysis and thematic analysis. In *Research Methods for Applied Psychologists: Design, Analysis and Reporting*, pp. 211-223 Edited by Brough, P. Routledge: New York.
- Neuman, W.R., Just, M.R. & Crigler, A.N. (1992). *Common knowledge: News and the construction of political meaning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Neyazi, T.A. (2010). Cultural imperialism or vernacular modernity? Hindi newspapers in a globalizing India. *Media,*

- Culture & Society*, 32(6): 907-924.
- Nyamnjoh, F. (2011). Dewatering media theory to make room for African experience. In *Popular Media and Development in Africa*. Edited by Wasserman, H. London: Routledge.
- Nordenstreng, K. (2013). How the new world order and imperialism challenge media studies. *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique*, 11(2): 348-358.
- O'Byrne, Darren J. (2005) Toward a Critical Theory of Globalization: A Habermasian Approach. In *Critical Globalization Studies*, pp. 75-87. Edited by Appelbaum, Richard P. & Robinson, William I. New York: Routledge.
- Panitch, L. & Gindin, S. (2004). Global Capitalism and American Empire. *Socialist Register*: 1-42.
- Panitch, L. & Gindin, S. (2005). Finance and American Empire. *Socialist Register*: 46-81.
- Qhobosheane, L.A.M. (2018). *The impact of political interference in state-owned companies: A case study on SABC*. (Doctoral dissertation) University of the Free State, South Africa.
- Schiller, H.I. (1969). *Mass Communications and American Empire*. New York: Augustus M. Kelley.
- Schiller, H.I. (1992). 'The Context of Our Work' Société Française des Sciences de l'Information et de la Communication. Huitième Congrès National, Lille, 21 May, pp. 1-6.
- Schudson, M. (1978). The ideal of conversation in the study of mass media. *Communication Research*, 5(3): 320-329.
- Slier, P. (2022). "The mood in the Kremlin's international broadcaster as the lights go off". *Sunday Times*, 6 March.
- Radebe, M.J. (2017). *Corporate Media and the Nationalisation of the Economy in South Africa: A Critical Marxist Political Economy Approach*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Faculty of Humanities, School of Social Sciences). Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Radebe, M.J. (2020). *Constructing Hegemony: The South African Commercial Media and the (mis)representation of Nationalisation*. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Radebe, M.J. (2021). South Africa's post-apartheid media and democracy. In *Destroying Democracy: Neoliberal capitalism and the rise of authoritarian politics*, pp. 163-178. Edited by Williams, M. & Satgar, V. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Radebe, M.J. & Chiumbu, S.H. (2022). Frames and Marginalisation of Counter-hegemonic Voices: Media Representation of the Land Debate in South Africa. *African Journalism Studies*, 43(1): 89-106.
- Ranger, J. (2022). Review of the book *Spectacle and Diversity: Transnational Media and Global Power* by Lee Artz. *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society*, 20(1): 138-142.
- Reuters. (2022). "With Ukraine under large-scale attack, West ramps up sanctions on Russia". *News24*, February 24, 2022. Accessed July 11, 2022. <https://www.news24.com/news24/world/news/with-ukraine-under-large-scale-attack-west-ramps-up-sanctions-on-russia-20220225>
- Reuters. (2022). "Russia's isolation deepens as Ukraine resists invasion". *News24*, February 28, 2022. Accessed July 15, 2022. <https://www.news24.com/news24/world/news/russias-isolation-deepens-as-ukraine-resists-invasion-20220228>
- Reuters. (2022). "Ukraine and Russia agree to talks 'without preconditions'". *IOL*, February 27, 2022. Accessed July 11, 2022. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/world/ukraine-and-russia-agree-to-talks-without-preconditions-d836b6b8-7f95-528e-970b-589e5ccfa6c9>
- Reuters. (2022). "Rand drops sharply against the US dollar as investors dump riskier asset after Russia attacks Ukraine". *IOL*, February 24, 2022. Accessed July 11, 2022. <https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/markets/currencies/rand-drops-sharply-against-the-us-dollar-as-investors-dump-riskier-asset-after-russia-attacks-ukraine-7dd9dd4a-f1f2-5e03-a329-4a1bf5234613>
- Rice, P.L. & Ezzy, D. (1999). *Qualitative data analysis, Qualitative Research Methods. A health focus*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Ritzer, G. (1996). The McDonaldization thesis: Is expansion inevitable?. *International Sociology*, 11(3): 291-308.
- Robinson, W.I. (2004). *A Theory of Global Capitalism*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Robinson, W.I. (2007). The Pitfalls of Realist Analysis of Global Capitalism: A Critique of Ellen Meiksins Wood's 'Empire of Capital'. *Historical Materialism*, 15(3): 71-93.
- Ross, K. (2006). Open Source? In *Local Journalism and Local Media: Making the Local News*, pp.232-244. Edited by Franklin, B. London: Routledge.
- Rumney, R. (2015). 20 Years of changes in media ownership: Journalism now. *Rhodes Journalism Review*, 2015 (35): 66-69.
- Rumney, R. 2020. "Sanef's Covid 19 Impact on Journalism Report (Interim)." Edited by D. Balliah, June 1, 2020. Accessed July 27, 2022. <https://sanef.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SANEF-Covid-Impact-Research-Final-Report8.pdf>
- Shirish, A., Srivastava, S.C. & Chandra, S. (2021). Impact of Mobile Connectivity and Freedom on Fake News Propensity during the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Cross-Country Empirical Examination. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 30 (3): 322-41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0960085X.2021.1886614>
- Semetko, H.A. & Valkenburg, P.M. (2000). Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News. *Journal of Communication*, 50 (2): 93-109.
- Sparks, C. (2007). *Globalization, development, and the mass media*. London: Sage.
- Sparks, C. (2012). Media and Cultural Imperialism Reconsidered. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 5(3): 281-299.
- Staff Writer. (2022). "How Russia's invasion of Ukraine will hit South Africa". *BusinessTech*. February 28, 2022. Accessed July 15, 2022. <https://businesstech.co.za/news/finance/563176/how-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-will-hit-south-africa/>
- Straubhaar, J. (1991). Beyond media imperialism: Assymetrical interdependence and cultural proximity. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 8(1): 39-59.
- Štovičková, Z. (2021). 'Model Putin Forever': A Critical Discourse Analysis on Vladimir Putin's Portrayal in Czech Online News Media. *Central European Journal of Communication*, 14(28): 44-61.
- Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: The Free Press.
- Van Elteren, M. (2003). US Cultural Imperialism Today. *SAIS Review* (1989-2003), 23(2): 169-188.
- van Staden, C. (2019). In *Media Studies: Critical African and Decolonial Approaches*. Edited by Chiumbu, S. & Iqani, M. Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Wasserman, H. (2015). South Africa and China as BRICS partners: Media perspectives on geopolitical shifts. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 50(1): 109-123.
- Wasserman, H. (2020). The state of South African media: A space to contest democracy. *Publizistik*, 65(3): 451-465.
- Wasserman, H. & De Beer, A. (2005). Whose public? Whose interest? The South African media and its role during the first ten years of democracy. *Critical Arts*, 19(1&2): 36-51.
- Wiedlack, K. (2020). Enemy number one or gay clown? The Russian president, masculinity and populism in US media. *NORMA*, 15(1): 59-75.
- Wood, E.M. (2003). *Empire of Capital*. London: Verso.
- Zeller, Christian (2004a) Die globale Enteignungsökonomie. In *Die globale Enteignungsökonomie*, pp. 9-20. Edited by Christian Zeller. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.