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Confuse and Normalise: Authoritarian Propaganda in a High-Choice Media Environment during Russia's Invasion of Ukraine

Maxim Alyukov[a,b,c], Maria Kunilovskaya[d], Andrei Semenov[e]

[a]Department of Russian and East European Studies, University of Manchester

[b]King's Russia Institute, King's College London

[c]Public Sociology Laboratory

[d]Department of Language Science and Technology, University of Saarland

[e]Department of Political Science and International Relations, Nazarbayev University

Introduction

Russia's invasion of Ukraine amplified scholarly interest in strategies of authoritarian propaganda in saturated media environments. With more than 40% of Russians relying on less censored online sources to receive political information (Levada Center 2023), a wealth of evidence suggests that state propaganda still managed to rally the public for the support of the invasion (Alyukov 2022). This success of state media manipulation taps into a more general question: why and how does authoritarian propaganda remain effective in a media environment saturated with alternative narratives?

Modern autocrats constantly update their propaganda repertoire in response to socio-political and technological challenges (e.g., Roberts 2018). Among the latest inventions are disinformation accusations: borrowing the vocabulary of 'fake news' and 'disinformation', autocrats pre-emptively label criticism of their rule as false claims spread by hostile actors (Fang 2022) and frame disinformation as an important societal threat to justify repressive legislation (Neo 2022). Simultaneously, modern autocracies demobilise the public (Gerschewski 2023) by projecting the image of governmental competence through propaganda (Guriev & Treisman 2022). Russia's invasion of Ukraine is an ideal case study to explore these strategies in detail: since the beginning of the war, the Kremlin actively engaged in labelling any criticism of the regime as 'information warfare' against Russia (Alyukov, Kunilovskaya, & Semenov 2022a). Normalising the war as a new given of everyday life has become another prominent strategy. Following the initial increase in ideological messaging at the start of the invasion, state-controlled television decreased the number of war-related messages, downplaying the war but making it a part of the information environment in everyday life (Goode 2023).

Using Russia's wartime propaganda as a case-study, we argue that in a saturated media environment, authoritarian propaganda has to rely on more proactive strategies to curb potential discontent. Being unable to fully control the information flows, state media invest resources in discrediting alternative accounts of events as 'disinformation' and demobilising citizens by presenting extraordinary circumstances of war as being on the path towards normalisation. In addition, the regime adjusts its strategies tailoring communication to different audiences across a multi-platform information space. When a platform is already pro-regime, it is enough to target it with politicised frames without time-sensitive relevant messages. For a more polarised platform, propaganda has to be more time-sensitive.

The study aims to address two research questions: How does Russia's authoritarian regime frame the war in media and social media communication? What is the cross-media and cross-platform division of labour between state-controlled media and major social media platforms in advancing major framings of the war? We rely on the WarMM-2022 dataset (Alyukov, Kunilovskaya & Semenov 2023), a unique corpus of media and social media messages retrieved from hundreds

of media outlets, TV channels, and social media platforms in 2022, merged with an additional social media dataset (Rumiantseva & Otlan 2023).

We find that while dependence (lack of Ukraine's political agency) and dehumanisation (labeling Ukrainians as fascists and Nazi) frames set the context for all war-related communication, disinformation and normalisation frames also constitute its significant part. State media and state-controlled accounts across social media form a division of labour. While television and online media target more passive audiences with the normalisation frame, the disinformation frame is used more across social media platforms, which serve more active audiences. Lastly, a comparative analysis of war-related messages across three major Russian social media platforms reveals a complex structure of the pro-regime social media ecology, with regime propaganda adopting different strategies to target regime supporters via Odnoklassniki and more polarised audiences outside of the pro-regime core via Telegram.

Authoritarian Propaganda in Saturated Media Environments

While an increase in the availability of information was initially seen as a threat to authoritarian rule, autocrats increasingly adapt to this challenge. Propaganda has become much more sophisticated, taking diverse forms that are often difficult to associate with traditional techniques used by the dictatorships of the past. Scholars have identified a variety of effects of authoritarian propaganda. Propaganda can *legitimise* authoritarian leaders (Guriev & Treisman 2022) and policies (Neo 2022); *distract* citizens from relevant political information by flooding the information space with irrelevant news (Roberts 2018); *confuse* citizens by presenting contradictory messages (Paul & Matthews 2016); *demobilise* citizens by demonstrating regime strength (Huang 2015); and *instil political cynicism* by demonstrating that no objective reporting is possible (Shields 2021).

Russia under Vladimir Putin is a critical case that illustrates the scope and limits of contemporary propagandistic repertoire. The extant literature suggests that the Kremlin's control over media narratives helped to maintain the regime's stability throughout the past decade (Greene & Robertson 2022) and contributed significantly to rallying the public around the president after the annexation of Crimea (Sirotkina & Zavadskaya 2020). In 2022, the regime propaganda used a variety of justifications for the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, such as narratives framing Ukraine as completely dependent on the West and labelling Ukrainians as 'ukrofacists' and 'nationalists' (Alyukov, Kunilovskaya, & Semenov 2022a; 2022b). At the same time, authoritarian propaganda rarely presents a one-size-fits-all message and instead adjusts messaging to different audiences. Authoritarian audiences can vary widely depending on political engagement and the degree of oppressiveness of authoritarian regimes (e.g., Alyukov 2024; Toepfl 2020). Existing research finds that while those who rely on state-controlled TV tend to uncritically reproduce major regime narratives about the war, less TV-reliant regime supporters tend to distrust TV propaganda and actively seek other, both critical and supportive of the state, narratives (PS Lab 2023). Propaganda can also differ widely within the social media space across platforms and within one platform. For instance, our prior analysis suggests that the regime prioritises *Odnoklassniki* (OK), a more pro-regime platform, to reinforce the beliefs of the regime supporters as compared to *Vkontakte* (VK) and *Telegram* (TG) (Alyukov, Kunilovskaya & Semenov 2022b).

In this study, we focus on the disinformation and normalisation frames in regime propaganda regarding the invasion of Ukraine. While the use of disinformation accusations to deflect critical reporting on regime policies can be traced back to the Cold War (Tolz & Hutchings 2021), recently it has become a popular tool in authoritarian regimes like China (Fang 2022), but also widespread among populist leaders in the West (Hameleers & Minihold 2022). Following this worldwide trend, the Kremlin has fully embraced it following the invasion. At key moments of the war, references to 'fake news' in the Kremlin-controlled media became a common way to debunk criticism of regime policies as disinformation (Alyukov & Zavadskaya 2024). At the same time, regime propaganda attempted to downplay the extraordinary nature of the invasion by normalising it. Scholars argue that except for relatively few cases, most contemporary autocracies rely on demobilisation of citizens (Gerschewski 2023). Propaganda plays an important role in this process: shortly after the invasion, the Kremlin quickly developed several strategies to communicate the impression that the war did not affect ordinary citizens in Russia, such as adopting the euphemism 'special military operation' instead of more existential 'war' to convey the message that the invasion would not affect ordinary citizens (Alyukov, Kunilovskaya & Semenov 2021a). While there was an initial surge in the amount of war propaganda, it decreased rapidly throughout the first year of the invasion (Alyukov,

Kunilovskaya & Semenov 2021a) and continued to fade throughout 2022 and 2023, being almost absent on regional television. This low-intensive presence made communication about war a part of the new normalcy (Goode 2023).

Research Design

We identify propaganda strategies with the help of the concept of framing. According to Entman's definition, to frame is to 'select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication context, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described' (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Given the human mind's limited capacity to process information, it is essential to present information as 'easy-to-understand interpretative packages' (Kim et al. 2002, p. 8). These interpretative packages evoke specific interpretations of reality, underscoring the potency of framing in political communication.

At its core, framing involves the selection or omission of particular aspects of reality, enabling the media to convey specific interpretations. Framing is also reinforced by overt elements such as word choice and rhetorical devices. These overt elements allow scholars to detect frames using quantitative methods. Building on previous research, we identify the following frames employed by Russian state propaganda:

1) *Dependence frame:* This frame underscores Ukraine's dependence on the West, positing that Ukraine is under full Western control. Russia's inability to achieve its military objectives is attributed not to its own weaknesses but to fighting against a Western coalition rather than Ukraine.

2) *Dehumanisation frame:* Ukraine is depicted as governed by a fascist regime. The adversary is portrayed as cruel, influenced by Nazism, and willing to torture innocent individuals.

3) *Disinformation frame:* This frame accentuates the information war waged against Russia by Ukraine and the West. Ukrainian, Western, and oppositional Russian media are portrayed as a network disseminating false information about Russia's actions in Ukraine to destabilise the political situation in Russia.

4) Normalisation frame: This frame portrays the normalisation of life following the onset of the war, highlighting the stabilisation of the economic situation in Russia and the restoration of normalcy in both Russia and the occupied regions of Ukraine.

The first two frames have been established as dominant in prior research on Russian propaganda's coverage of the invasion (e.g., Alyukov, Kunilovskaya & Semenov 2022a). To identify frames, we utilised BERT language model combined with semantic textual similarity (STS) measure. Based on our reading of propaganda communication, we constructed textual prototypes (paragraphs of about 30 words) that captured the key idea of each frame and selected their manifestations in actual news articles (see Table A4 in the Appendix). We used cosine similarity to calculate STS between the prototypes and sentence-level pre-processed corpus to identify frames in messages (see Sections A2 and A3 in the Appenix for more details on STS, model selection, and validation).

We rely on the WarMM-2022 data[1]. The corpus comprises messages published on the websites of Russian TV channels and online news media from February to September 2022, as well as messages retrieved from social media platforms from July to September 2022, focusing solely on the Russia-Ukraine war. The corpus includes a broad selection of messages extracted from 415 websites of media outlets, 25 websites of TV channels, and 85 social media platforms (N = 1,742,900 messages). We merge it with the corpus of political Telegram channels released by Rumiantseva and Otlan (2023) to expand our Telegram subcorpus (see A1 in the Appendix).

[1] More information can be found in Alyukov, Kunilovskaya, & Semenov (2023). While data in the dataset is publicly available and can be retrieved, publishing the dataset still presents an ethical issue as expressing dissenting political views in Russia can be risky. It is available as a collection of links which can be used to recollect the messages.

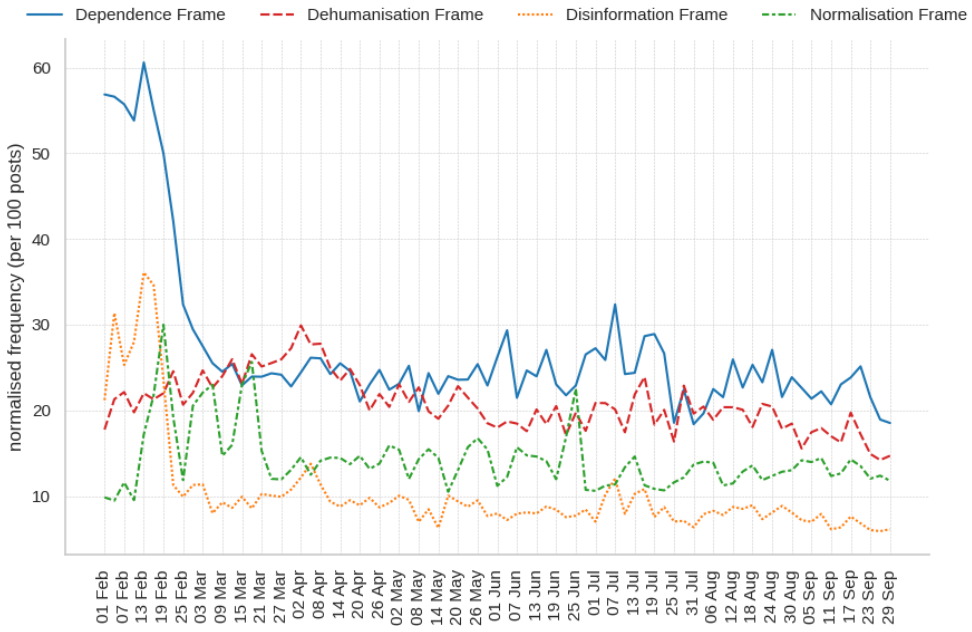
While the corpus provides a realistic snapshot of a segment of war-related state-controlled political communication in February-September 2022, it is important to note that messages were retrieved based on war-related keywords, and due to repressive legislation, monitoring systems in Russia do not capture content from the majority of outlets recognized as 'foreign agents' or 'undesirable organisations' by the regime. Hence, the corpus should be viewed as a sample of state-controlled political communication.

Results

Salience of Frames

After removing identical messages in social media, our dataset contained separate subcorpora for different sources, with each frame present in 7.2% - 34.6% of messages in each source (see distributions in Table A5 in the Appendix). We plot the frequencies of four frames across media outlets and television covering the period of eight months, February to September (Figure 1), and social media platforms covering three months (Figure 2). Figure 1 shows that all four frames are quite visible in war-related TV and online media communication, with frequencies ranging from a maximum of 60 per 100 messages for the dependence frame in February 2022 to a minimum of 5 per 100 messages for the disinformation frame in September 2022.

Figure 1 Four Frames in the Media Outlets and TV Subcorpus (February - September 2022, 3-day intervals)



To make sure the four frames are independent constructs, we take the first difference to remove the time trend and avoid spuriousness. The correlation ranges from 0.15 to 0.4, achieving statistical significance only for two pairs: dehumanisation and disinformation ($t = 3.74$) and dependence and disinformation ($t = 2.10$) (see full results in Figure A4 in the Appendix). In other words, the four frames represent distinct semantic entities.

As evident from the figures, frames vary in their visibility. The dependence frame is the most frequent, followed by the dehumanisation, normalisation, and disinformation. The prominence of the dependence and dehumanisation frames reflects long-standing narratives in Russian propaganda about Ukraine being a puppet of the West. The order of the disinformation and normalisation frames is more intriguing. Media outlets prioritise the normalisation frame - a frame aimed at creating the image of adaptation to the conflict and return to normal life - over the disinformation frame - a more mobilizational frame aimed at creating the image of an intensive information war waged against Russia. In other words, the rhetoric of media outlets aims more at pacifying audiences rather than mobilising them.

Also, there is a huge volume of all but the dehumanisation frame before and after the beginning of the invasion, followed by a gradual decrease over time. The results suggest state

propaganda increasingly attempted to justify the war during its peak moment (the beginning of the invasion). However, several months into the invasion, this oversaturation of the media sphere with propaganda led to shrinking audiences dissatisfied with a large amount of overtly biased political content (Alyukov, Kunilovskaya & Semenov 2022c).

Finally, the disinformation frame is characterised by two strong peaks in February 2022 (up to 40 out of 100 messages) and a lesser peak in April 2022, coinciding with the preparation and beginning of the invasion as well as massacres in Bucha, and becomes the least relevant in Fall 2022. These results point to the function of the disinformation frame as a strategy of propaganda. In February 2022, the Russian government was vehemently criticised for amassing troops at the border with Ukraine, while state propaganda actively attempted to discredit messages about preparation for the invasion as Western and Ukrainian disinformation. In April 2022, after the Ukrainian military discovered evidence of mass murder of Ukrainian civilians and prisoners of war, Russian state media responded with a massive propaganda campaign to discredit evidence of war crimes as disinformation. In other words, instead of being a frame used to advance a certain understanding of events proactively, the disinformation frame is a reactive frame used to defend the regime from the criticism retroactively.

To further explore the relations across the frames in time, we conducted Granger causality tests which allows one to establish cause-effect relationships in time series data (Granger 1988). Because all series contain downward time trends, we take the first difference and perform the test with two periods lags. All series move independently of each other except for the dependence and disinformation frames (the latter Granger-causes the former at $p = 0.016$) and the normalisation and disinformation frames (the latter Granger-causes the former at $p < 0.001$, see full results in Table A6 and Figure A5 in the Appendix). In other words, the disinformation frame precedes the dependence and normalisation frames. Further tests reveal that the increasing volume of messages containing the disinformation frame has both contemporaneous and lagged effects triggering the dependence and normalisation frames.

It appears that the disinformation frame serves as a starting point preparing the ground for the dependency and normalisation frames. For one thing, the idea of 'information war' is a convenient logical assumption for the dependence frame: the West wages the war against Russia both on the battlefield and in the media using Ukraine as a proxy. Simultaneously, the normalisation frame alleviates the tension arising from the fact that Russia faces severe consequences due to invasion, suggesting that the government manages to stabilise the situation

Figure 2 Four Frames in the Social Media Subcorpus (July - September 2022, 3-day intervals)

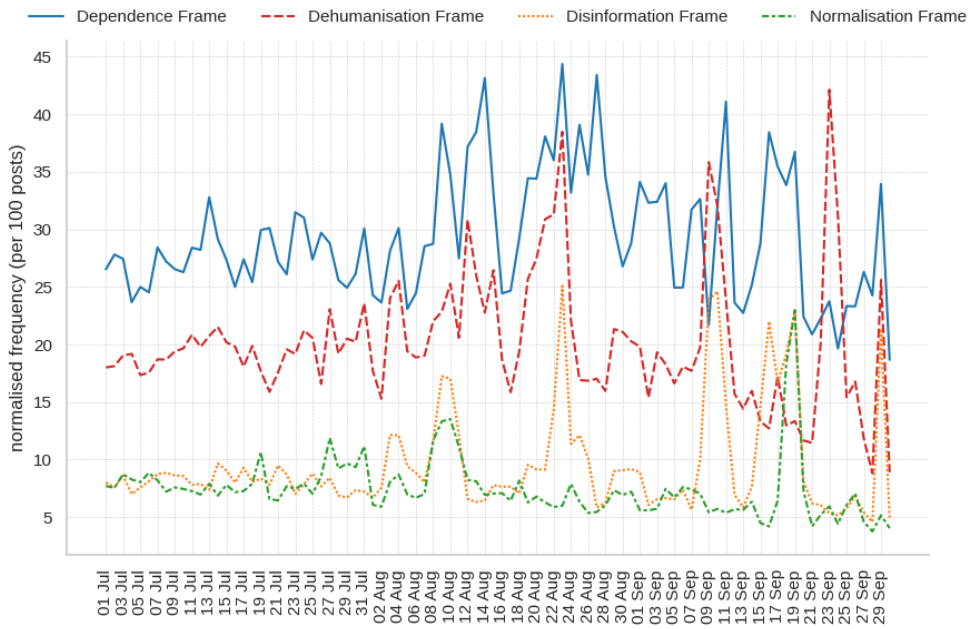


Figure 2 zooms in on war-related social media communication in the July - September 2022 period. All four frames represent a significant share of communication, with frequencies ranging from a maximum of 40 out of 100 messages for the dependence frame in August 2022 to a minimum of 5

out of 100 messages for the normalisation frame in September 2022. There are several specific features characterising the way these frames are utilised by the regime.

Similar to the analysis above, we calculated correlations to ensure that frames are distinct semantic entities in social media communication. In contrast to the official media corpus, we detect stronger correlations across frames on social media: the disinformation frame is related to the normalisation frame at 0.31 (t = 3.12), to the dependence frame at 0.4 (t = 4.15), and the dehumanisation frame at 0.55 (t = 6.2). To further explore the relations across the frames in time, we conducted Granger causality tests. According to the tests, all series move independently of each other (for full results see Table A7 and Figure A6 in the Appendix).

Another distinct feature of social media war-related communication is clear spikes, with at least two moments (August 8-12 and August 21) when all four frames are perfectly synchronised. Again, this synchronicity is mostly driven by a larger share of war-related content on OK. Lastly, compared to TV and online media, frames are structured differently in terms of their prominence. On social media, the mobilizational disinformation frame is more prominent than the normalisation frame. In other words, the rhetoric of propaganda across social media aims at mobilising audiences rather than pacifying them.

Division of Labour Between Media and Social Media

Our theory posits that there must be a division of labour between more 'official' media, such as television and media outlets, and social media platforms. While maintaining the picture of the war via the dependence and dehumanisation frames, television aims at demobilising audiences by presenting the invasion as a past crisis to which both the economy and social life have already adapted. In contrast, propaganda across social media platforms has a more mobilizational nature, focusing on active and ongoing information warfare against Russia. To further explore this division of labour, we compare the dominance of the disinformation and normalisation frames between the Media and Social Media corpora.

Figure 3 Normalisation and Disinformation Frames across the Media Outlets/TV and Social Media Corpora



Figure 3 shows that the normalisation frame is dominant in TV and online media compared to social media, except for two spikes on August 8 and September 17. These spikes are caused by many

messages published on regime-controlled OK, which we explore further in this chapter. This prioritisation suggests that more 'official' media discourse aims at presenting the war as less extraordinary than it is and downplaying its effects on everyday life. On the contrary, as shown in Figure 6, the disinformation frame appears dominant in social media discourse, with spikes suggesting coordinated attempts to promote this frame via identical messages. This prioritisation suggests that propaganda on social media aims at presenting the war as a more active conflict, which directly affects Russia via disinformation campaigns run by Ukraine and the West.

The 'division of labour' hypothesis is further corroborated by the analysis of spillover effects between the corpora: the Granger causality tests for differenced time series with 2 days lags indicate that the changes in frequencies of frames in the official media do not 'cause' (that is, precede) the changes in messages on social media (both aggregated across the platforms, and on OK, VK, and TG separately). None of the social media platforms drive the agenda in the media, save for the dependence frame (see Tables A8, A9, A10 and Figures A7, A8, A9 for OK, VK, and TG separately and Table A11 for the aggregated results in the Appendix).

Given the fact that social media platforms have more active audiences, these prioritizations suggest that propaganda on TV and online media, and social media form a division of labour, adjusting framing to specific audiences' profiles. As social media users are more active and likely to search for information, regime-controlled communication attempts to hinder this search by framing possible alternatives as disinformation and offers more engaging framing. Legacy media audiences are less active. Thus, it appears to be a logical strategy to pacify them further by presenting the state of affairs as returning to normalcy.

Cross-platform Analysis

The initial observations point to a special role played by OK in Russian state-controlled social media ecology. Figure 4 presents frequencies and fluctuations across three social media platforms.

Figure 4 Four Frames across Social Networks: TG, VK, and OK

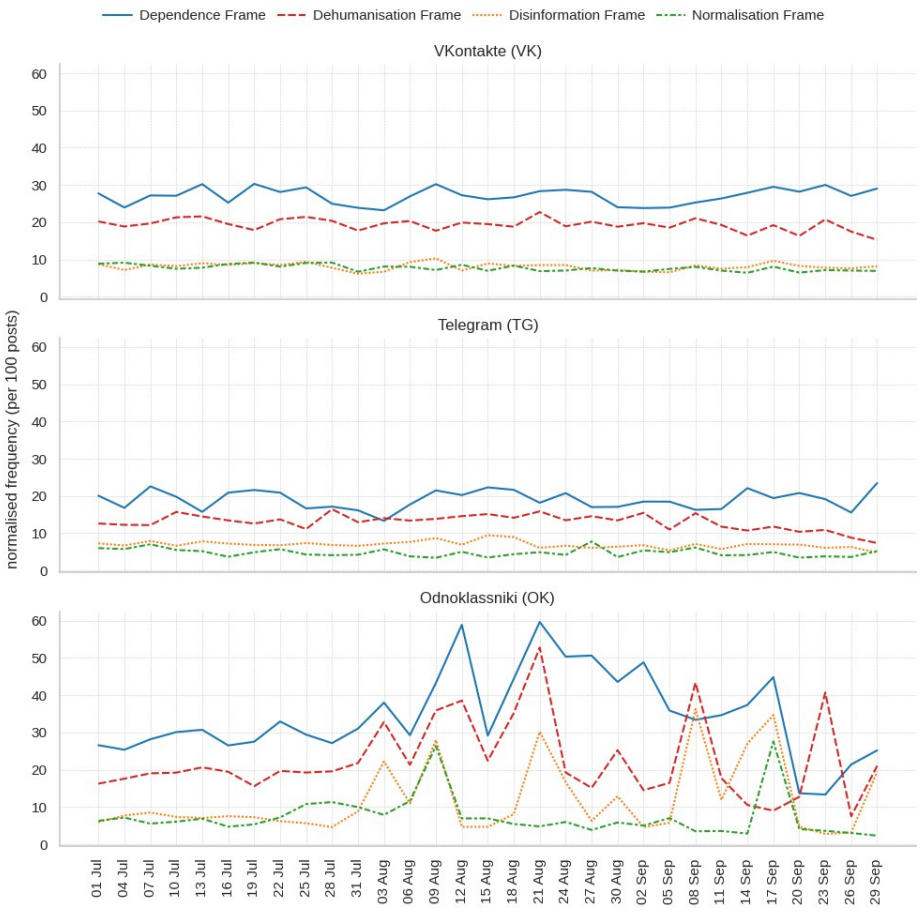


Figure 4 shows that the four frames retain the order described in previous subsections, with the dependence frame being the most popular. There are several features that make the distribution of frames across platforms different. First, the saturation of messages with the four frames differs across platforms. TG is the least saturated with four frames barely reaching a normalised frequency of 25 for the most popular dependence frame. VK has a medium saturation with four frames, reaching a normalised frequency of 37 for the most popular dependence frame. Finally, OK is the most saturated with four frames, with dependence and dehumanisation frames reaching a normalised frequency of 70.

Second, the four frames are unsynchronized on TG, weakly synchronised on VK, and well-synchronised on OK. On VK, there is a correlation between normalised frequencies of the disinformation frame on the one hand and the dehumanisation frame (0.39, t = 3.73) and the dependence frames (0.22, t = 2.01) on the other. The same pattern is detected on TG: the disinformation frame is weakly related to the dehumanisation frame (0.37, t = 3.81) and the dependence frame (0.25, t = 2.46). However, on OK, the synchronisation of frames is much stronger. The disinformation frame is related to the dehumanisation frame at 0.58 (t = 6.6), to the dependence frame at 0.36 (t = 3.6), and to the normalisation frame at 0.33 (t = 3.3). In addition, the dependence and dehumanisation frames correlate at 0.26 (t = 5.6).

The results suggest that the four frames are more independent on TG and VK and more correlated on OK. These differences in synchronisation of the four frames across platforms point to varying degrees of coordinated state control. The dynamic of war-related communication on TG and VK is more random, with frequencies of the four frames fluctuating independently of each other. This suggests that war-related discourse on TG and VK is driven by a variety of users and channels discussing various aspects of the war in an uncoordinated fashion. On OK, the four frames move in a coordinated fashion. This high degree of synchronisation points at a stronger degree of regime control over OK.

This coordination of major propaganda frames on OK is not surprising given its demographic and political profile. The platform is widely regarded as a more pro-regime online space than other social media platforms. Tables A12 and A13 in the Appendix present socio-demographic distributions underlying social media use and support for Russia's military actions in Ukraine in 2023. The audience of OK is significantly older compared to other social media platforms. While all age groups spend relatively similar amounts of time on TG, the main audience of VK is 25-45 age group, while the main audience of OK is 55+ age group. This socio-demographic structure aligns with the traditional distribution of political preferences in Russia, with support for the regime concentrated in the older cohorts. The number of individuals who fully support Russia's military actions in Ukraine increases from 24% in the 18-24 age group to 55% in the 55+ age group. This preference of older citizens for OK makes it a preferred target for pro-regime communication, with public groups featuring strong pro-Kremlin sentiment not only in Russia but also in other countries with Russian-speaking minorities (Teperik et al. 2018).

There can be two causal mechanisms explaining the prominence of propaganda frames on OK. Messages with these frames can be produced by users based on their political views. The regime can also spread messages with these frames in a coordinated fashion to reinforce the attitudes of supporters. Our analysis favours the latter, as users are unlikely to produce messages with similar framing in such a coordinated fashion. Hence, it is logical to conclude that varying degrees of correlation suggest an intentional strategy of regime propaganda, which selectively targets online spaces populated by regime supporters to reinforce their beliefs rather than persuade opponents or undecided individuals.

We also explored the synchronisation of war-related agendas between three social media platforms and the media (see full results in Figure A4 in the Appendix). The synchronisation of agendas is visible on TG: the normalisation, dependence, and disinformation frames on TG and in the media are correlated at 0.38 (t = 3.6), 0.35 (t = 3.6), and 0.35 (t = 3.6) respectively. For VK and OK, the correlation in frequency changes across frames is non-existent or very low. This is a surprising finding, given the analysis above suggesting that TG is characterised by more chaotic discussion and less synchronisation between four frames, and OK is characterised by strong synchronisation between frames and communication spreading all four frames in a centralised manner.

This difference in the degree of synchronisation between frames on one platform and between frames across platforms and the media points to the difference in the functions of these two platforms as channels for spreading war-related communication. TG is characterised by the presence of many oppositional channels, but also channels run by major Russian propagandists and an active radical pro-war nationalist cluster of channels, all reporting in a time-sensitive manner. In other words, the pro-regime cluster on TG is structured akin to a mini-media industry reporting on the war from the pro-regime perspective but retaining key qualities of the news industry, such as attention to the relevance of topics. In contrast, OK is characterised by a large number of asynchronous messages that are spread in an automated manner to target users with pro-regime attitudes without regard for the relevance of information.

Conclusion

The study posed the following research questions: 1) How does Russia's authoritarian regime frame the war in media and social media communication? 2) What is the cross-media and cross-platform division of labour between state-controlled media and major social media platforms in advancing major framings of the war? To address these questions, we analysed a subset of war-related political communication in Russian media and on social media throughout 2022. The analysis yielded the following results.

Firstly, we found that the dependence, dehumanisation, disinformation, and normalisation frames had distinct functions and formed complex patterns. On one hand, compared to three frames which were used proactively, the disinformation frame was often employed defensively when an authoritarian government needed to deflect accusations. On the other hand, frames exhibited sophisticated relationships. The dependence and normalisation frames stemmed from the disinformation, which served as a convenient logical assumption for the former. Secondly, we identified a sophisticated division of labour between media and social media platforms. We observed a division between television and online media, and social media discourses. While media outlets prioritised the normalisation frame, downplaying its effects on everyday life, social media platforms favoured the disinformation frame, portraying the war as an active conflict affecting Russia through disinformation campaigns. As social media users are more active, it is logical for state propaganda to target them with a more engaging disinformation frame to hinder the search for alternative information. As television and online media audiences are less active, it is logical to divert their attention from the war by presenting the state of affairs as returning to normalcy.

Finally, we observed an uneven dynamic across social media platforms. While the four frames were weakly correlated on TG and VK, suggesting relatively non-coordinated communication, on OK, frames were spread in a coordinated fashion. Simultaneously, on TG, while the frames were weakly synchronised within the platform, they were correlated with respective frames in the media discussion, whereas frames on OK and VK were weakly correlated with the respective frames in the media discussion. This difference indicates a complex structure of pro-regime media ecology. While the pro-regime cluster on TG combines elements of propaganda and attention to relevance typical of the news industry, OK becomes a target for a large amount of pro-regime messages spread in an automated manner. This difference likely reflects the different functions of propaganda vis-à-vis different audiences. While OK is already a largely pro-regime platform, the purpose of state communication is to reinforce the beliefs of supporters, which can be achieved without convincing, time-sensitive messages. As TG is a polarised platform with pro-regime, anti-regime, and apolitical clusters, propaganda needs to be more time-sensitive to appeal to audiences outside of the pro-regime core.

These results have important implications for several areas of research. Firstly, our results contribute to research on propaganda in Russia and authoritarian propaganda more generally, which often focuses on individual frames without considering interaction or media discourse. While previous studies identified individual frames, they often opt for classifying emotions (Miller 2019) or topics (Otlan et al. 2023). While these approaches provide valuable insights into propaganda techniques, they cannot reveal the structure of frames, which often have different functions and operate in conjunction.

These results also contribute to research on contemporary authoritarian regimes. Starting from Linz's (2000) distinction between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, political scientists have been discussing the role of mobilisation and demobilisation as two distinct underlying logics of authoritarian rule (Gerschewski 2023). By examining propaganda strategies in an authoritarian

context, we demonstrate that both can be present in one context. A regime can rely on a more mobilizational framing to target a more active audience and on a more demobilisation framing to target a different, more passive audience.

Finally, we build on a realistic snapshot of political communication, which allows us to conduct cross-media and cross-platform analysis. We respond to call for more holistic approaches to communication (e.g., Matassi & Baczkowski 2021) and document how the authoritarian regime in Russia attempts to instrumentalise television, online outlets, and social media simultaneously and adapt its strategies to specific platforms, tailoring communication to more or less pro-regime audiences. In turn, this division of labour sheds light on how modern autocrats continuously adapt to new, multiplatform, saturated media environments by choosing different approaches for different audiences.

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Appendix

A1 Corpus Merging and Preprocessing

The corpus includes a broad, albeit uneven, selection of information sources: messages were extracted from 415 websites of media outlets, 25 websites of TV channels, and 85 social media platforms. The number of messages in the Telegram (TG) subcorpus, the third most popular social network in Russia, is almost 20 times smaller than the number of messages retrieved from Vkontakte (VK) and 10 times smaller than the number of messages retrieved from Odnoklassniki (OK). This imbalance is attributed to the architecture of TG. As of February 2024, TG platform had around 835,000 channels and 73,000 groups[1]. As of 2023, VK had 2,060,000 'public pages' only, with much more numerous 'communities'[2]. To validate the consistency of our data collection method and address the observed imbalance in the Telegram (TG) subcorpus, we conducted a comparison with the corpus of posts on social and political Telegram channels released by Rumiantseva and Otlan (2023). This comparison revealed that three-quarters of messages in our TG subcorpus matched the messages found in Rumiantseva and Otlan's dataset, thus confirming the reliability of our data collection approach. To enhance the comprehensiveness of our dataset, we merged WarMM-2022 with Rumiantseva's dataset, resulting in the addition of approximately 10,000 messages for the same period.

To prepare the dataset for analysis, several preprocessing steps were undertaken. Non-textual elements, including links, email addresses, meta-text elements, hashtags, and emoji, were removed from the data. Furthermore, the spelling was standardised, and sentence tokenization was performed using the Punkt Sentence Tokenizer[3], aided by a customised abbreviation dictionary. Following these steps, the resulting list of sentences in each publication was deduplicated to ensure data integrity and eliminate redundancies. The basic quantitative parameters of the resulting textual data are presented in Table 1.

Table A1. Quantitative statistics of the corpus across periods and sources

Source	period	Documents	Sentences	Word Count
Media and Television	February-June 2022	99.9 K	2.5 M	31.3 M
	July-September 2022	82.5 K	1.7 M	26.7 M
Total		182.4 K	4.2 M	58 M
Social Media				
Vkontakte	July-September 2022	920.3 K	12.2 M	182.5 M
Odnoklassniki		568.0 K	6.2 M	86.2 M
Telegram		46.4 K	0.4 M	5.9 M
Other		208.2 K	2.7 M	52.2 M
Total		1742.9 K	21.4 M	326.8 M

[1] Available at: https://tgstat.com/

[2] Available at: https://vk.company/ru/investors/info/11481/#

[3] Available at: https://www.nltk.org/api/nltk.tokenize.punkt.html

The periods covered by the two corpora exhibit a discrepancy, with the Media and TV corpus spanning 8 months (from February to September), while the Social Media corpus encompasses only 3 months (from July to September). This variance arises due to limited technical capacity. Social media platforms generate significantly more messages than traditional media outlets. Despite this disparity in coverage, it is notable that the Social Media subcorpus contains 20 times more messages than the Media and TV subcorpus. Telegram (TG), the third most represented social network in our data, exhibits nearly 20 times fewer documents than VK. However, it's important to note that this imbalance does not impact our results, as we compare normalised frequencies for the respective time periods and sources of messages.

A2 Semantic Textual Similarity and Model Selection

In this analysis, our primary focus lies on two frames: 1) disinformation and 2) normalisation. To gauge their prominence, we compare them against 3) dependence and 4) dehumanisation frames, which are already established as dominant during the analysed period (e.g., Alyukov, Kunilovskaya & Semenov 2022a).

Traditional dictionary-based approaches could be employed to identify these frames by tracing terms and collocations using dictionaries comprised of relevant terms (e.g., Hameleers & Minihold 2022). However, these approaches may yield numerous false positives (messages containing some terms from the dictionary but not the intended frame) or false negatives (messages containing the frame but not identified due to lacking the specific terms). Instead, we utilise a Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT) language model combined with an approach rooted in semantic textual similarity (STS). This approach hinges on comparing textual prototypes with real data to compute semantic similarity.

To construct these prototypes, two social scientists, well-versed in Russian media discourse, crafted succinct paragraphs (averaging 30 words) representing each frame and selected instances of their manifestation in actual news articles. These prototypes serve as clear examples illustrating how these frames materialise in Russian media discourse. The constructs and examples of real-life manifestations are detailed in Appendix Table 1. The frame detection methodology revolves around computing semantic textual similarity (STS) between the constructed prototype and every sentence in the dataset. STS is gauged as cosine similarity between numerical vectors that represent sentences in each pair. Sentences are vectorised employing a pre-trained sentence-transformer model (Reimers & Gurevych 2019), which maps a sentence onto a 512-dimensional dense vector space, effectively encapsulating its meaning. Sentences exhibiting higher similarity scores are deemed semantically similar and are positioned closer to each other within the vector space. As a model, we selected *distiluse-base-multilingual-cased-v2*[4], a tried and tested multilingual model which demonstrated good performance on a range of tasks involving identifying semantically similar sentences, including in Russian. According to the evaluation on the existing STS benchmarks[5], this model is inferior to the more recent sentence embedding models. However, in our validation study (see below), it outperformed the alternative options. Specifically, we experimented with all-mpnet-base-v2, the top leaderboard model, all-MiniLM-L6-v2, another sentence transformer, and ai-forever/sbert_large_nlu_ru, a

[4] Available at: https://huggingface.co/sentence-transformers/distiluse-base-multilingual-cased-v2

[5] Available at: https://www.sbert.net/docs/pretrained_models.html

dedicated Russian model. However, their performance on our validation set was inferior to the selected model.

Cosine similarity values calculated by the model lie in the range [-1, 1], where 1 represents absolute similarity, and -1 indicates that the sentence vectors are pointing in opposite directions. For each frame, we empirically established a cutoff threshold that yielded the best result on the annotated dataset in the validation study. A document is considered semantically similar to a given frame if its STS score is above the established cutoff threshold. The evaluation study was also utilised to determine the most effective method to obtain document vectors for this task. As we demonstrate below, the most effective approach was to use the vector of the most similar sentence in the document to represent this document.

Subsequent manual analysis indicated that very short sentences often introduce noise in the results. This observation motivated the decision to disregard sentences shorter than 6 words for semantic similarity calculation. The number of sentences skipped in this analysis is higher for social media data, but even in the Social Media subcorpus, short sentences constitute around 2% of all sentences, suggesting that their removal cannot significantly affect results. However, the proportions of documents containing frames are calculated based on the entire size of the dataset for the respective time interval.

A3 Validation

To test our approach and select its optimal parameters, we applied the developed approach to a small set of annotated documents. For each frame, social science experts with in-depth understanding of Russian media suggested 10 real publications expressing the frames. The negative examples included 10 random texts sampled from the set of the Press and TV publications, which included the standard warning required by the current law that the author of the publication is a ‘foreign agent’ (see the number of messages with ‘foreign agent’ label in Appendix Figure 1). This can be considered a reliable indicator suggesting that the content does not come from a state-controlled media outlet, and it is likely to be devoid of propagandistic narratives. The same set of 10 texts was used to test the validity of the approach for each frame. The quantitative description of the annotated validation set is provided in the last three numerical columns in Table 2. Each category (positive/negative) for each frame is represented by at least 10 documents, containing at least 288 sentences and over 4800 words.

After the texts were put through the cleaning and preprocessing pipeline, we experimented with several settings to obtain the best separation of the positive and negative examples. In particular, we tested three approaches to calculate the document STS scores. For each document, we computed (i) the mean STS score across the document sentences (mean_sts), (ii) the STS score for the mean-pooled document vector (doc_vector), and (iii) the sentence with the maximum similarity score (max_sent). The first three numerical columns in Table 2 display the mean aggregates and standard deviations across the documents in each category for each frame. The scores indicate that averaged sentence-level STS values (mean_sts) are consistently lower than STS scores obtained from mean-pooled document vectors (doc_vector). However, the difference is not significant if all three metrics return higher scores for positive than for negative instances.

Table A2. Average STS values for categories and quantitative parameters of the annotated data

frame	label	mean_sts: Mean+/-STD	doc_vector: Mean+/-STD	max_sent: Mean+/-STD	docs	sents	wc
dependence	positive	0.24+/-0.04	0.51+/-0.06	0.50+/-0.08	11	482	9941

	negative	0.11+/-0.06	0.31+/-0.13	0.38+/-0.09	11	544	9523
dehumanisation	positive	0.18+/-0.06	0.42+/-0.12	0.49+/-0.15	11	497	6982
	negative	0.14+/-0.09	0.34+/-0.13	0.42+/-0.03	11	544	9523
disinformation	positive	0.20+/-0.07	0.50+/-0.08	0.59+/-0.07	10	539	8030
	negative	0.12+/-0.06	0.32+/-0.13	0.42+/-0.05	11	544	9523
normalisation	positive	0.09+/-0.04	0.20+/-0.07	0.29+/-0.05	10	288	4896
	negative	0.05+/-0.03	0.16+/-0.05	0.23+/-0.05	11	544	9523

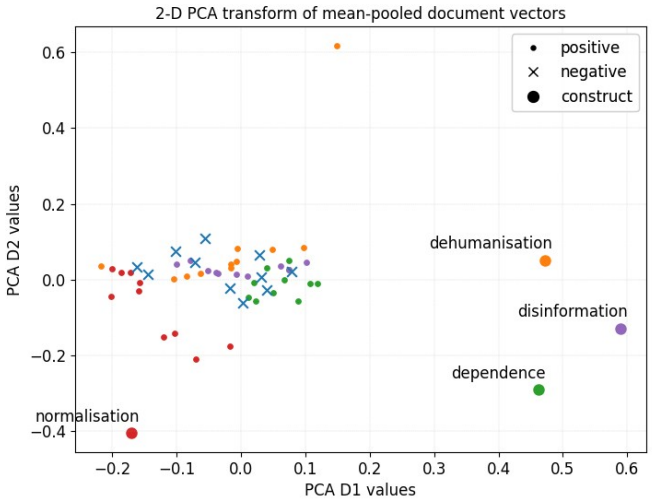
To decide whether a document contains a given frame, we have to introduce an STS threshold. The threshold values were established experimentally by iterating (step 0.01) across STS values between the minimum and maximum observed for the positive category in each frame. The thresholds for *max_sent* approach range between 0.27 (normalisation frame) and 0.47 (disinformation frame). Table 3 reports the F1-scores[6] for each approach for the optimal threshold value. The best segregation of the categories is achieved using *max_sent* score, with an absolute maximum of 0.9 for the disinformation frame.

Table A3. Quality of positive-negative classification for various document STS measures (F1-scores)

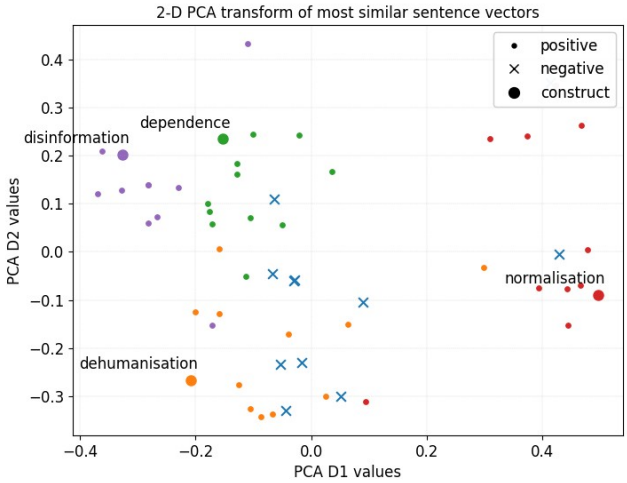
frame	mean_sts	doc_vector	max_sent
dependence	0.91	0.96	0.87
dehumanisation	0.72	0.75	0.86
disinformation	0.78	0.89	0.9
normalisation	0.75	0.78	0.84

This result is also supported visually. We plot the vectors of the constructed passages representing each frame and the vectors for positive and negative samples obtained using averaged document vectors and max_sent approach in Figure 1. All vectors were transposed into the two-dimensional space using Principal Component Analysis (PCA).

Figure A1. Representation of documents in the vector space: competing approaches

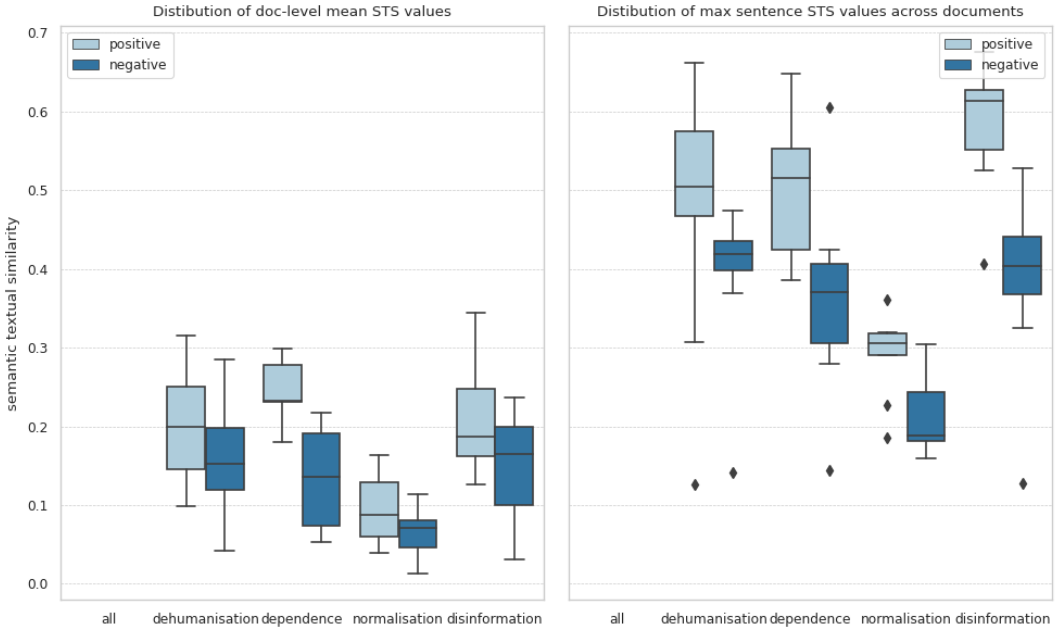


[6] A quality metric typically used for classification tasks which combines precision and recall.



As evident from the graphs, the max_sent approach yields a clearer demarcation of the annotated classes in the vector space, with documents attributed to a particular frame clustered around their respective construct, whereas negative samples (indicated by blue crosses) are dispersed throughout the vector space. Moreover, Figure 2 illustrates that document-level STS values exhibit more distinct distributions between positive and negative categories when the max_sent approach is employed(i.e., if a document is represented by the vector of a sentence with the maximum similarity to the construct).

Figure A2. Distribution of document-level STS values obtained on different document representations (left: mean-pooled document vector vs right: maximum STS sentence vector)



Theoretically, this approach is logical: a frame may manifest in one part of the publication and not in another. It is not uncommon for documents to carry several frames simultaneously. Averaging vectors or STS values across the document sentences can dilute the meaning of a document.

In summary, the evaluation study provides evidence that the proposed method of frame detection in the corpus publications yields reliable results. The vectors capture the semantic aspects of the sentences relevant to this study, enabling us to differentiate between frames and annotated categories for each frame with a reasonably high level of accuracy. The classification quality metric returned an F1-score of over 0.84, indicating good performance (Table 3). The validation study also provided the STS thresholds used in the main study to detect semantically similar documents for each frame.

To ensure that the approach captures frames with sufficient precision, we randomly extracted 500 messages classified by the algorithm as belonging to one of four frames or not containing frames (100 messages per class). These messages were manually coded by two authors independently. Using human coding as a baseline, the average accuracy of machine coding is 0.4. While this result may be considered poor by the standards of simpler classification tasks, it is satisfactory for an algorithm identifying five classes with subtle semantic differences in raw data automatically. The algorithm's performance was on par with performance of coders (Krippendorf's α = 0.44). As the primary goal of our analysis is not to identify the absolute volume of messages containing different frames, but rather to trace fluctuations across time and between media and platforms, this level of accuracy is enough to effectively identify such fluctuations.

A4 Frame Prototypes

Table A4. Constructed Frame Prototypes and Their Realisations

Frame name	Frame construct	Examples
dependence	Украинское правительство не является автономным и полностью подчинено «коллективному Западу». Зеленский – это марионетка, которая выполняет команды США. Вашингтон давно готовил Киев к войне с Россией для того, чтобы ослабить Россию.	Нарышкин заявил, что США ориентируют Украину на максимальную активизацию мобилизации Вашингтон рекомендует призывать мужчин с 17 до 70 лет и дополнительно призывать женщин, отметил директор Службы внешней разведки России МОСКВА, 20 ноября. /ТАСС/. Соединенные Штаты ориентируют Украину на максимальную активизацию мобилизации, рекомендуют призывать мужчин с 17 до 70 лет и дополнительно призывать женщин. Об этом заявил директор Службы внешней разведки (СВР) России Сергей Нарышкин. Заявление распространило пресс-бюро СВР. Запад требует от режима [президента Украины Владимира] Зеленского, не считаясь с потерями, продемонстрировать мировому сообществу невозможность победы России в украинском конфликте. В частности, по имеющимся у СВР России достоверным данным, США ориентируют руководство Украины на максимальную активизацию мобилизационных мероприятий для восполнения огромных потерь, которые понесли ВСУ в ходе провального контрнаступления, - сказал Нарышкин. "Американские и британские кураторы Киева рекомендуют военно-политическому руководству Украины снизить до 17 лет и повысить до 70 лет призывной возраст, а также проводить дополнительную мобилизацию женщин", - заявил он. Как отметил глава СВР России, следуя таким установкам, министр обороны Украины Рустем Умеров предложил Верховной раде изучить возможность понижения минимального возраста для призыва в армию. Если это произойдет, то киевский режим подтвердит свою нацистскую сущность, направив в пекло войны семнадцатилетних юношей для продления агонии ВСУ. Это очень напомнит действия верхушки фашистской Германии по созданию осенью 1944 года народного ополчения нацистов "Фольксштурм", в рамках которого из детей формировались отряды "Гитлерюгенд", - продолжил он. Нарышкин подчеркнул, что колоссальные потери среди украинских военнослужащих заставляют Киев направлять в бой "стариков". ВСУ уже формируют новые подразделения из бойцов старше 40 лет и приступили к мобилизации мужчин старше 50 лет, - добавил он.

		- Законопроект, согласно которому призывной возраст для рядового состава повысится с 60 до 65 лет, а для командного - с 65 до 70 лет, зарегистрирован в украинском парламенте. Про этом директор СВР указал, что острая нехватка людских ресурсов на фронте вынуждает Киев идти и на увеличение количества женщин в рядах украинской армии, "которых, согласно западным оценкам, насчитывается более 40 тыс. человек". Киевский режим уже повысил возрастную планку для набора женщин на военную службу до 60 лет. Но Киеву этого мало. Украинское военное командование просит расширить перечень женских профессий, подпадающих под мобилизацию, - отметил он. - С октября этого года ей стали подлежать работницы медицинской сферы. В результате в больницах, поликлиниках и аптеках резко обострилась проблема дефицита кадров. Но действующий киевский режим, похоже, это не интересует, и он готов продолжать войну "до последнего украинца" во имя западных интересов"
disinformation	Украина и Запад начали полномасштабную информационную войну против России. Огромная машина дезинформации Украины, западных СМИ и российских СМИ-иноагентов производит лавину фейков об СВО, чтобы дискредитировать информацию из достоверных официальных источников, вызвать ненависть к России, играть на эмоциях, сеять панику и хаос. .	Украинские "фабрики лжи" и пропаганда Запада: как отличить правду от фейка о спецоперации. Почему важно сравнивать материалы из разных источников и перепроверять любое сообщение в сети, читайте в материале РИАМО. Интернет, призванный объединять людей, сегодня их стремительно разъединяет. Ежедневно по мессенджерам и социальным сетям расходятся все новые и новые фейки, касающиеся военной спецоперации на Украине. Как отличить правду от лжи и рассуждать объективно, обозреватель РИАМО выяснил у экспертов. Внимание к деталям. "Фабрики лжи" в Украине готовились к информационной войне с нашей страной давно, уверен военный эксперт, обозреватель, полковник в отставке Виктор Литовкин. Многие фейковые видео, постановочные кадры и вирусные сообщения, дискредитирующие российскую армию, были заготовлены еще до начала спецоперации. А создают такой скандальный контент по лекалам специальных институтов, которые уже участвовали в информационной войне в Югославии, Ираке, Афганистане. Чтобы отличить правду от вымысла, эксперт рекомендует подключать критическое мышление, опираться на здравый смысл и мыслить аналитически. Важно не воспринимать любое сообщение как истинное. Всегда есть приметы, по которым

		можно понять, что перед вами фейк. Вернемся к Буче. Люди, которых там расстреляли, все с белыми повязками на руках. Белая повязка - это отличительная черта российской армии, позволяющая отличать своих от чужих. Украинская армия носит синие повязки на рукавах, ополченцы Донбасса - красные. Мирные жители, которые носили белые повязки, симпатизировали российской армии, сотрудничали с ней, получали продукты питания. Понятно, что случившееся - это месть нацбатов-бандитов, - поясняет Литовкин. Выложенные вдоль дороги тела - это угроза, считает эксперт. Посыл ее абсолютно прозрачен: будете сотрудничать с русскими - вас ждет такая же судьба. Гибридная война. Шиты белыми нитками и знаменитые сцены из роддома в Мариуполе с одной-единственной беременной девушкой на все здание, добавляет Литовкин. На кадрах внутри помещения - ни каталок, ни знаменитых кресел для рожениц, ни шкафов с мединструментами. Не выдерживают критики и фейковые призывы не вступать в российскую армию, потому что ребят якобы отправят на фронт. С самого начала спецоперации на государственном уровне было заявлено, что призывников никто посылать на фронт не будет. Работать будут только контрактники - обученные воины, - подчеркивает Литовкин. Видео с якобы взятыми в плен российскими солдатами, активно обсуждавшиеся в социальных сетях в начале спецоперации, тоже оказались недостоверными: в глаза бросались форма с неправильными шевронами, нелепые резиновые сапоги и другие ляпы. Вся эта фейковая информация рассчитана на людей испуганных, не мыслящих критически, психически неустойчивых. Ожидается, что они испугаются сами и будут пугать других. То, что происходит сейчас, - это гибридная война против нашей страны: политическая, экономическая, информационная, психологическая, экологическая. Держите голову холодной, будьте спокойны и не поддавайтесь на провокации, - рекомендует Литовкин. "Любое сообщение следует проверять". Член Совета при президенте РФ по развитию гражданского общества и правам человека (СПЧ) РФ Леонид Поляков отмечает: неподготовленному человеку очень тяжело справляться с массированной пропагандой, которая использует все приемы психологического давления на

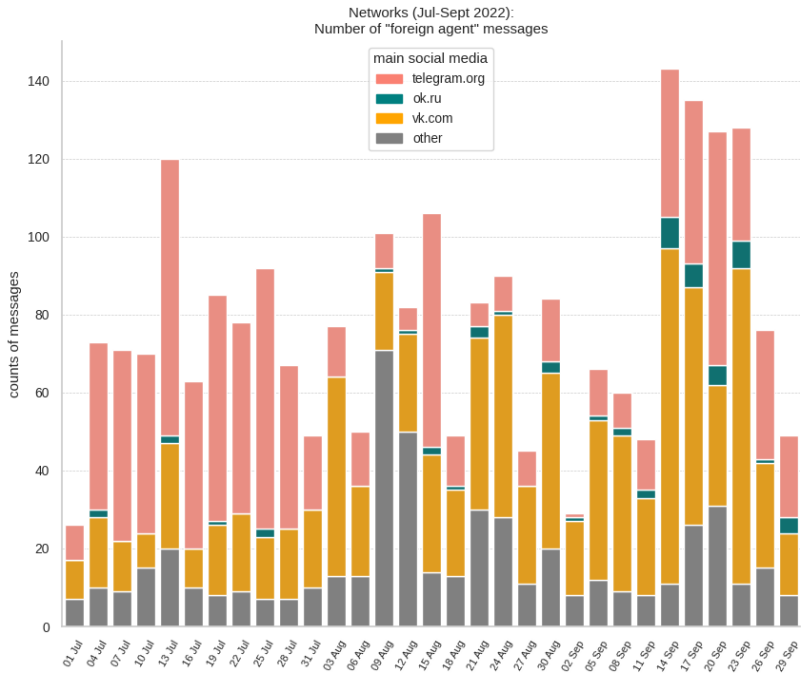
		индивида. Это целая индустрия, целое направление войны. В ней работают люди, которые профессионально промывают мозги и настраивают на определенный лад, - говорит он. Важно понимать, что в условиях санкций и экономической войны, которая развязана против России, информационную поддержку будут использовать на все 100%, подчеркивает эксперт. Нужно быть готовым к тому, что любое сообщение, которое идет из источников, поддерживаемых Западом, будет содержать не информацию, а пропаганду. Если вы так или иначе включаетесь в информационное пространство и не готовы различать, где пропаганда, а где ложь, используйте простое правило: любое сообщение следует проверять, искать альтернативные версии произошедшего. Учитесь не просто получать информацию из одного источника, но подкреплять один материал другими. Тогда вы начнете сравнивать информацию и поймете, что существуют разные интерпретации одного и того же факта. А, может быть, поймете, что перед вами грубая подделка, - говорит Поляков. "Цель противника - посеять панику". Прочитав сообщение в информационном источнике о каком-либо зверстве, эксперт советует: не спешите принимать его за чистую монету. Слишком велик риск сформировать неправильную картину под воздействием эмоций. Любое сообщение о человеческих жертвах, насилии возмущает наши души. Но учтите, что в условиях информационной войны это и есть цель нашего противника - посеять панику, неуверенность, ощущение того, что все пропало. Самое главное - не поддаваться этим чувствам. Поэтому сохраняйте хладнокровие и подвергайте анализу то, что читаете, - говорит Поляков. Эксперт напоминает: то, что делают наши воины в ходе специальной военной операции, - дело святое. Мы боремся против возродившегося нацизма, и мы боремся против Запада, который, к сожалению, этот нацизм выпестовал и направил против нас. В этой борьбе поражения быть не может. Мы обязательно выстоим и победим. И какие бы информационные потоки лжи на нас не обрушивались, мы будем понимать, что правда за нами, - подчеркивает Поляков.
dehumanisation	На Украине установилась нацистская хунта. Кровожадные бандеровцы хладнокровно пытают российских	Звери! Мы им отправляем оружие?! - итальянцы об украинских нацистах В

	пленных и совершают зверские убийства мирного населения во имя фашистского режима. Националистические симпатии к этой язве нацизма особенно распространены на территории Западной Украины.	Италии распространяется видеоролик с пытками российских пленных украинскими военными. Несмотря на явное противоречие с генеральной линией на Западе, согласно которому злодеяния совершает исключительно Россия, видео не смогли обойти молчанием крупные СМИ, сообщает корреспондент ИА REGNUM. При этом в описаниях к видео отмечается, что эти преступления совершают некие абстрактные солдаты против других просто солдат. Упоминается также, что Киев уже опроверг подлинность видео, но начал при этом расследование. Простые итальянцы, между тем, сравнивают украинских военных с боевиками ИГИЛ (организация, деятельность которой запрещена в РФ), прославившимися издевательствами над пленными, а также напоминают, что их вооружает в том числе правительство Италии. "Меня восхищает совершенно уверенный тон в статьях, когда зло приписывают русским, в отличие от сомнительного тона, когда злодеяние совершается украинской стороной", - пишет Энрико де М. "Это им мы отправляем оружие?" - спрашивает Давид К. "Эти звери и убийцы достойны тех, кто им предоставил оружие", - добавил Антонио М. "У пленных, которые сдаются, есть права, признанные Женевской конвенцией. Расстрел пленных является военным преступлением", - напомнил Антонио Донато М. "Неслыханная жестокость, если новости правдивы, то достойны настоящих нацистов. Их надо судить за военные преступления", - призвала Агостина П. "Это солдаты кандидата на Нобелевскую премию мира", - вставил Федерико А. "Разве это не военные преступления??? Или Зеленского это не касается, потому что он кандидат на Нобелевскую премию мира? - возмутился Марко К. "Если быть честными, то нужно в заголовке указать, что это украинцы расстреливают беспомощных российских пленных", - считает Сузанна А. "Надо уточнить, что именно украинские солдаты совершают эти варварства по отношению к русским солдатам", - поддержал Риккардо Л. "Удивлена, что сообщают новости о зверствах против российских солдат, потому что до сих пор мы видели односторонние новости", - недоумевает Тина Г. "Давно было известно, что украинская власть опирается на нацистские движения, восемь лет терроризировала русскоязычных украинцев, англо-американцы всегда об этом знали, финансируя у них переворот в 2014 году", - отметил Сальваторе Л. "Это невозможно, ведь украинская армия демократическая.

		Стрелки - это русские, замаскированные под украинских солдат", - издевается Джузеппе В. "Пора русским серьёзно начать кампанию по денацификации", - считает Габриеле М. "Это не солдаты. Они преступники. Я надеюсь, что видео поможет наказать тех, кто совершил эти злодеяния. Но мы не ненавидим украинцев как народ, многие из них не виноваты. Мы не делаем так, как это делает Европа, которая разжигает ненависть к русским вообще", - заметил Паоло М. "Эти преступления должны дать понять всему миру на что способны эти преступные нацисты из Украины. Вот что они делали с другими народами", - пишет Мария Р. "Думаю, это такие же преступления, которые совершают украинские неонацистские батальоны против населения Донбасса. Почему Европа закрывает глаза? Приказ США не вмешиваться? Если Путин мясник, то они кто? - задался вопросом Антонио И. Начинает проявляться варварство украинских солдат и наёмников по отношению к русским солдатам. Не это ли соучастие тех государств, которые дали оружие Украине? Война никогда не кончится, если вы посылаете оружие, мир приходит без оружия, но с дипломатией уважаемых и авторитетных людей", - Антонио С. "Мы должны рискнуть третьей мировой войной, защищать эти цветы гуманизма и демократии? Чтобы Украина осталась в руках нацистов и наёмников? - спрашивают итальянцев представители Компартии Италии в регионе Венето. Добавим, что в Италии с начала военной операции фактически идёт ползучая реабилитация нацизма. Как сообщало ИА REGNUM, ранее La Repubblica опубликовала интервью с одним из главарей нацистской организации "Азов" (организация, деятельность которой запрещена в РФ).
normalisation	Постепенно жизнь возвращается в свое русло. Нормализуется экономическая ситуация, стабилизируются рынки, люди, эвакуированный из Донецкой и Луганской народных республик, привыкают к мирной жизни.	Эксперты говорят о нормализации жизни в новых регионах России 28 февраля 2023 10:38 Важную роль в развитии играют регионы-шефы. Фото их архива Правительства Курской области В последнее время специалисты отмечают тенденцию возвращения жителей ЛДНР, Запорожской и Херсонской областей, которые ранее перебирались в Россию как беженцы, домой. Это говорит о том, что жизнь постепенно приходит в норму, отмечают политологи. В качестве примера эксперты приводят Мариуполь, который фактически превратился в руины в ходе боевых действий. Сейчас, после того, как город начали восстанавливать, отстраивать новое

		жильё, там проживают около 230 тысяч человек, а с военными и строителями - около 300 тысяч. Президент Владимир Путин в Послании Федеральному Собранию 21 февраля отметил, что к 2030 году новые регионы должны по инфраструктуре, социальной сфере выйти на один уровень с другими субъектами. Так, уже с 1 марта там начнут выплачивать пенсии и пособия. Политологи отмечают, что большую роль в процессе восстановления ЛДНР, Запорожской и Херсонской областей играют регионы-шефы. К слову, Курская область в мае 2022 года взяла шефство над Первомайским районом Донецкой Народной Республики. Так, в декабре курские строители провели капитальный ремонт в Мангушской школе 2. Они привели в порядок учебные классы, спортзал, пищеблок, привели в порядок внешнюю и внутреннюю отделку здания, кровлю.

Figure A3. Number of Messages with ‘Foreign Agent’ Label



A5 Frames by Source

The distribution of publications/posts containing specific frames across sources of information and time with removed duplicates – almost identical messages in social media. On some platforms, identical messages reached 50% of the total number for some time-intervals.

Table A5. Distribution of frame across media platforms in July-September 2022 (in the sentence-length-controlled setup)

A6

Frame	Platform	Number of documents	Hits	%
Dependence	Media + TV	82494	18916	22.9
	Vkontakte	920252	249119	27.1
	Odnoklassniki	568018	196448	34.6
	Telegram	58188	11053	19.0
	Other	160767	45651	28.4
Dehumanisation	Media + TV	82494	15233	18.5
	Vkontakte	920252	178855	19.4
	Odnoklassniki	568018	130157	22.9
	Telegram	58188	7615	13.1
	Other	160767	27842	17.3
Disinformation	Media + TV	82494	6249	7.6
	Vkontakte	920252	74991	8.1
	Odnoklassniki	568018	71123	12.5
	Telegram	58188	4079	6.9
	Other	160767	15175	9.4
Normalisation	Media + TV	82494	10501	12.7
	Vkontakte	920252	71648	7.8
	Odnoklassniki	568018	41116	7.2
	Telegram	58188	2779	4.8
	Other	160767	12040	7.5

Correlations and Granger Causality Tests

Table A6. Pairwise Granger Causality Tests with Lag Order of 2 for the Media Subcorpus

Pair	Res.Df	Df	F	Pr(>F)
Dehumanisation - Dependence	236	-2	0.326897	0.721487
Dehumanisation - Disinformation	236	-2	0.559652	0.572171
Dehumanisation - Normalisation	236	-2	0.533833	0.587066
Dependence - Disinformation	236	-2	4.204632	0.016069
Dependence - Dehumanisation	236	-2	0.046584	0.954493
Dependence - Normalisation	236	-2	0.185492	0.830817
Disinformation - Dependence	236	-2	0.758933	0.469314
Disinformation - Dehumanisation	236	-2	0.642105	0.527108
Disinformation - Normalisation	236	-2	1.276367	0.280985
Normalisation - Disinformation	236	-2	7.483197	0.000708
Normalisation - Dehumanisation	236	-2	1.285215	0.278536
Normalisation - Dependence	236	-2	0.313682	0.731058

Table A7. Pairwise Granger Causality Tests with Lag Order of 2 for the Social Media Subcorpus

Pair	Res.Df	Df	F	Pr(>F)
Dehumanisation - Dependence	86	-2	0.322926	0.724922
Dehumanisation - Disinformation	86	-2	1.453358	0.239602
Dehumanisation - Normalisation	86	-2	2.774711	0.068092
Dependence - Disinformation	86	-2	0.700526	0.4992
Dependence - Dehumanisation	86	-2	1.630008	0.202064
Dependence - Normalisation	86	-2	2.314339	0.105102
Disinformation - Dependence	86	-2	2.223577	0.114553
Disinformation - Dehumanisation	86	-2	0.65405	0.522563
Disinformation - Normalisation	86	-2	0.73202	0.483979
Normalisation - Disinformation	86	-2	0.925223	0.400445
Normalisation - Dehumanisation	86	-2	0.322397	0.725303
Normalisation - Dependence	86	-2	1.061855	0.350409

Table A8. Pairwise Granger Causality Tests with Lag Order of 2 between VK and the Media Subcorpus

Frame	Direction	Res.Df	Df	F	Pr(>F)
Dehumanisation	Media to VK	86	-2	0.75951	0.471081
	VK to Media	86	-2	0.791992	0.456294
Dependence	Media to VK	86	-2	0.755006	0.47317
	VK to Media	86	-2	6.051054	0.003507
Normalisation	Media to VK	86	-2	0.519674	0.596614
	VK to Media	86	-2	0.7214	0.489058
Disinformation	Media to VK	86	-2	1.527583	0.223028
	VK to Media	86	-2	0.951886	0.390136

Table A9. Pairwise Granger Causality Tests with Lag Order of 2 between OK and the Media Subcorpus.

Frame	Direction	Res.Df	Df	F	Pr(>F)
Dehumanisation	Media to OK	86	-2	0.233475	0.792289
	OK to Media	86	-2	0.041409	0.959457
	Media to OK	86	-2	0.762221	0.469829

Dependence	OK to Media	86	-2	0.118377	0.888509
Normalisation	Media to OK	86	-2	1.691828	0.190398
	OK to Media	86	-2	0.297555	0.743412
Disinformation	Media to OK	86	-2	0.007994	0.992039
	OK to Media	86	-2	0.161927	0.850768

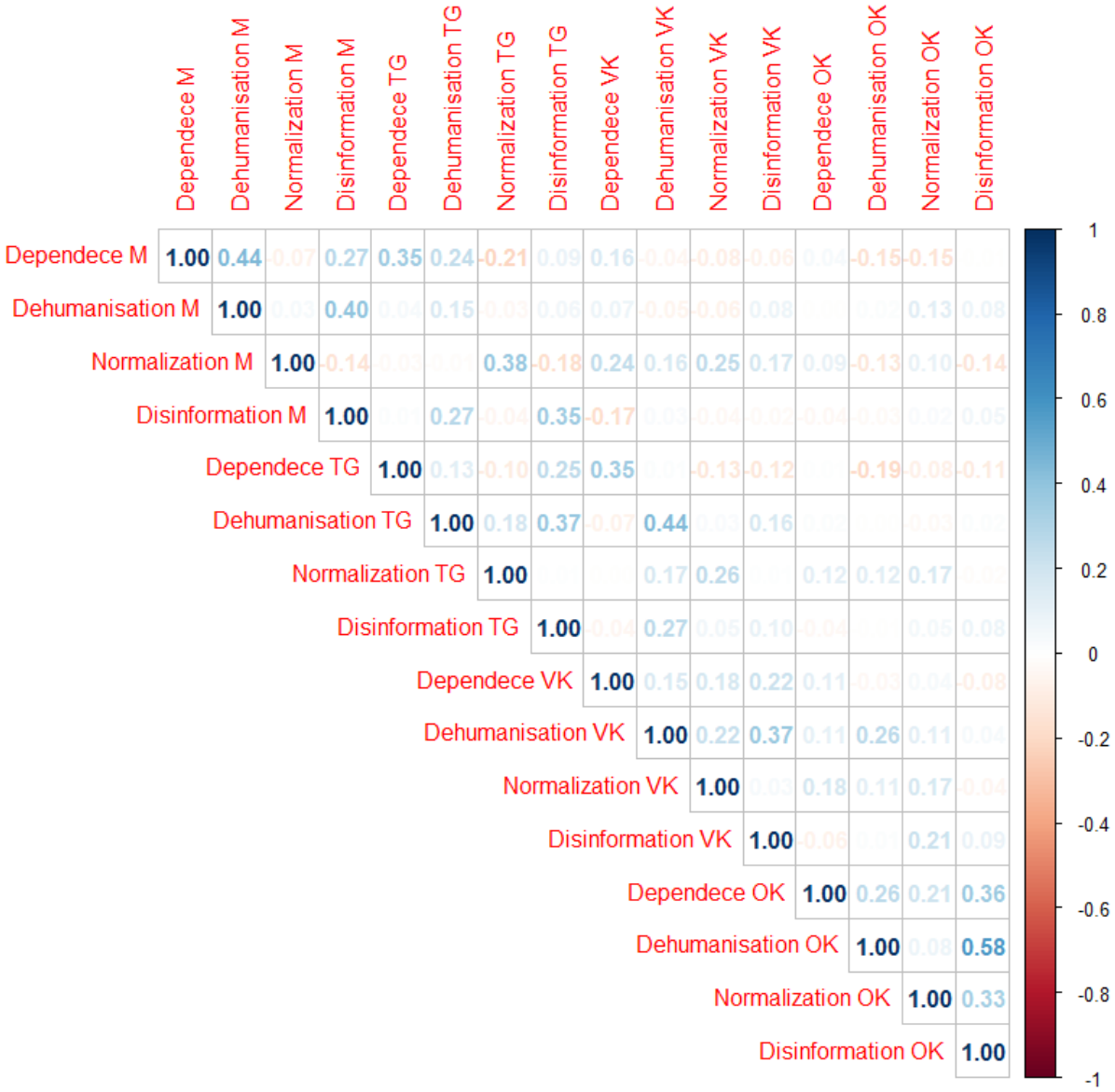
Table A10. Pairwise Granger Causality Tests with Lag Order of 2 between TG and the Media Subcorpus.

Frame	Direction	Res.Df	Df	F	Pr(>F)
Dehumanisation	Media to TG	86	-2	0.230003	0.79503
	TG to Media	86	-2	0.11719	0.889561
Dependence	Media to TG	86	-2	1.023208	0.363876
	TG to Media	86	-2	0.091691	0.912478
Normalisation	Media to TG	86	-2	2.180647	0.119323
	TG to Media	86	-2	0.629253	0.535483
Disinformation	Media to TG	86	-2	0.052215	0.949155
	TG to Media	86	-2	0.568398	0.568595

Table A11. Pairwise Granger Causality Tests with Lag Order of 2 between the Media and Social Media Subcorpora

Frame	Direction	Res.Df	Df	F	Pr(>F)
Dehumanisation	Media to Social Media	86	-2	0.300101	0.741535
	Social Media to Media	86	-2	0.288296	0.750279
Dependence	Media to Social Media	86	-2	0.944493	0.392967
	Social Media to Media	86	-2	0.742988	0.47879
Normalisation	Media to Social Media	86	-2	1.582449	0.211535
	Social Media to Media	86	-2	0.47408	0.624113
Disinformation	Media to Social Media	86	-2	0.017299	0.982853
	Social Media to Media	86	-2	0.452739	0.637427

Figure A4 Correlations Across Differenced Time Series for Frames Between the Media and Social Media Subcorpora



Legend: M = Official media, TG = Telegram, VK = Vkotakte, Ok = Odnoklassniki.

Figure A5 Differenced Time Series for the Media Subcorpus

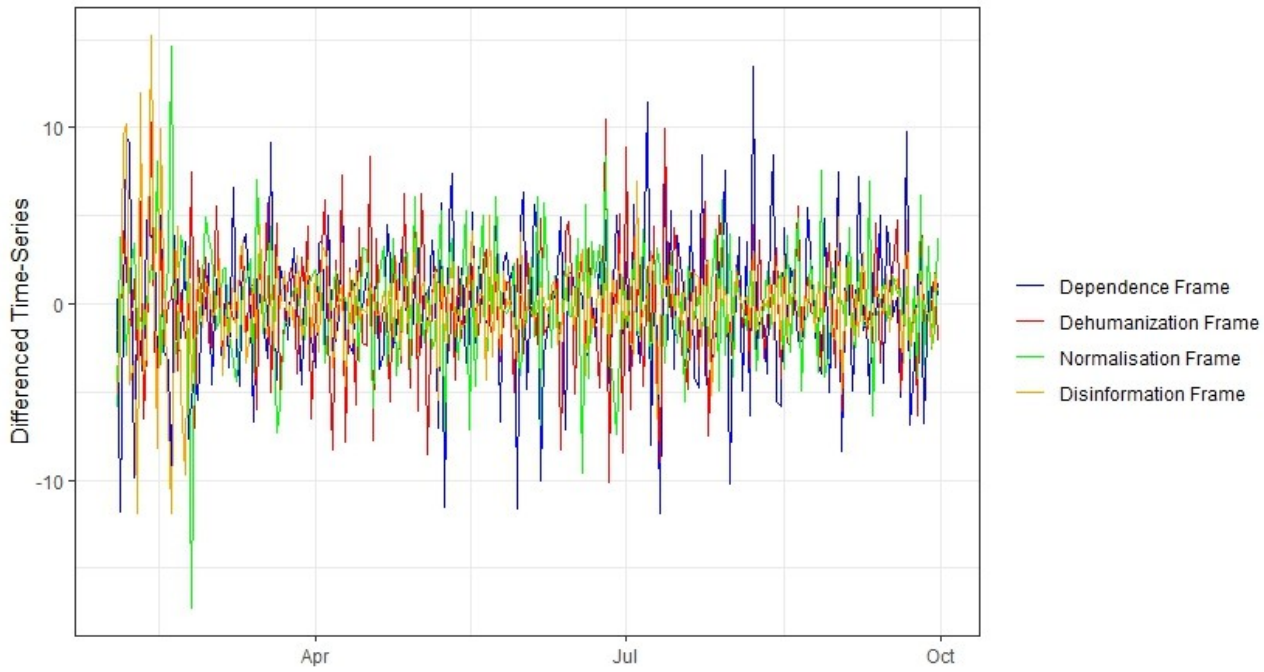


Figure A6 Differenced Time Series for the Social Media Subcorpus

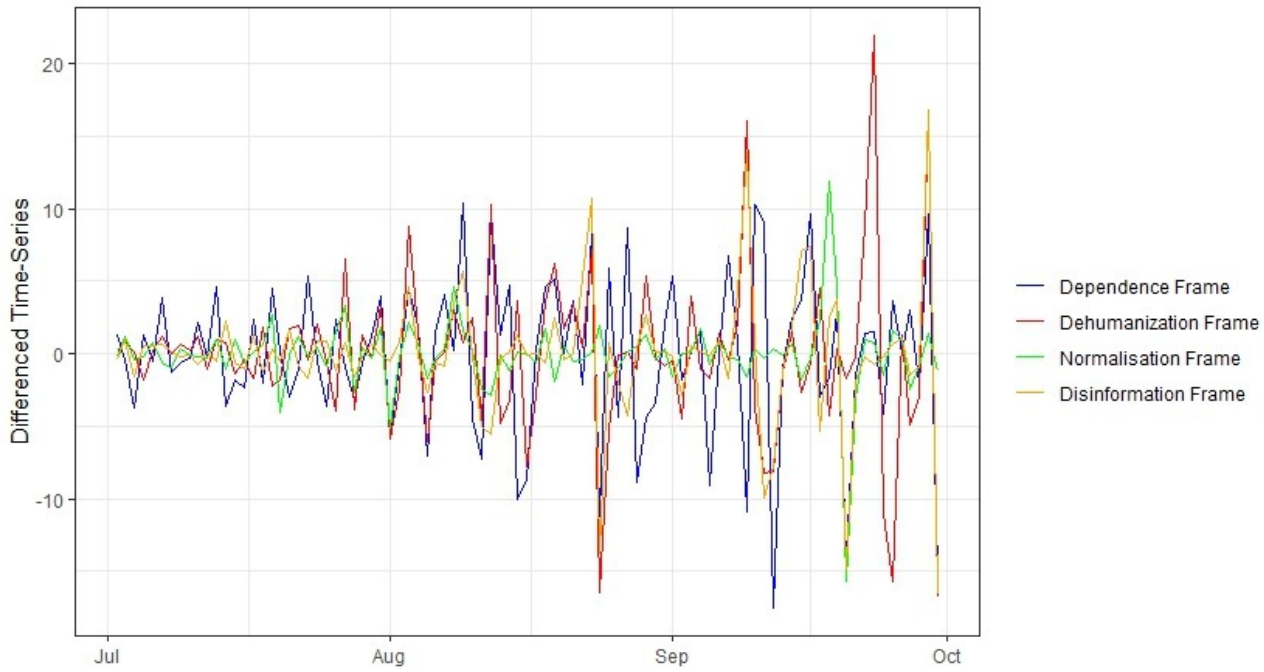


Figure A7 Differenced Time Series for VK

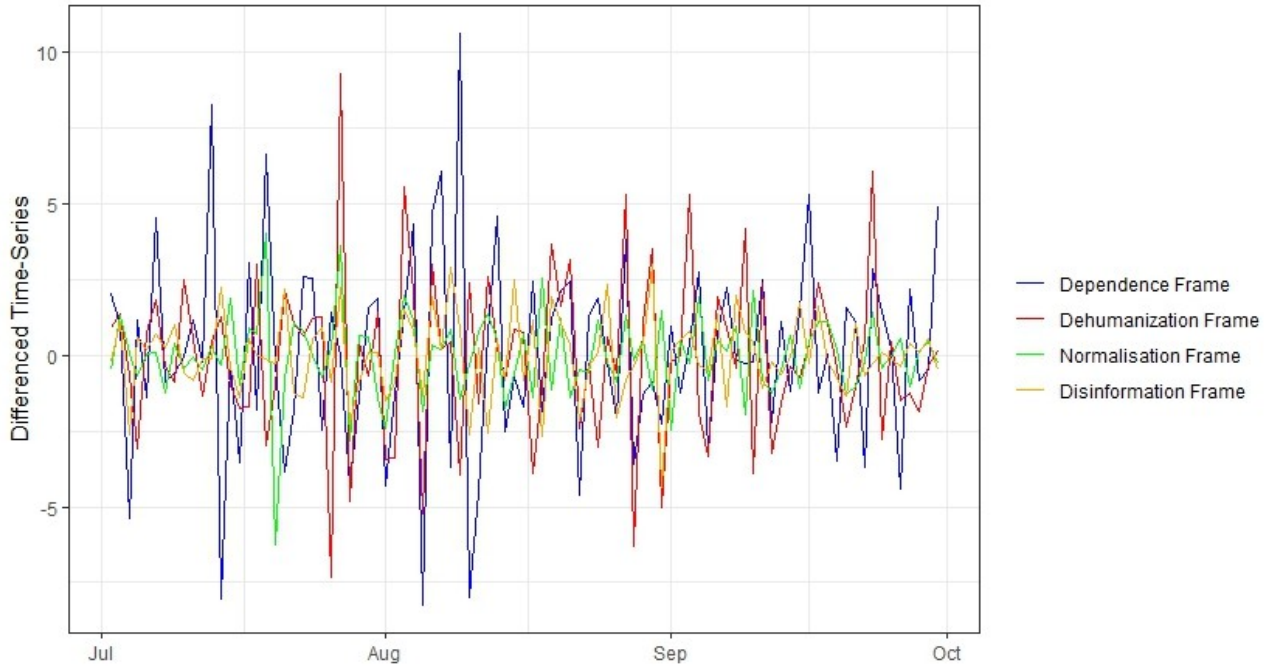


Figure A8 Differenced Time Series for OK

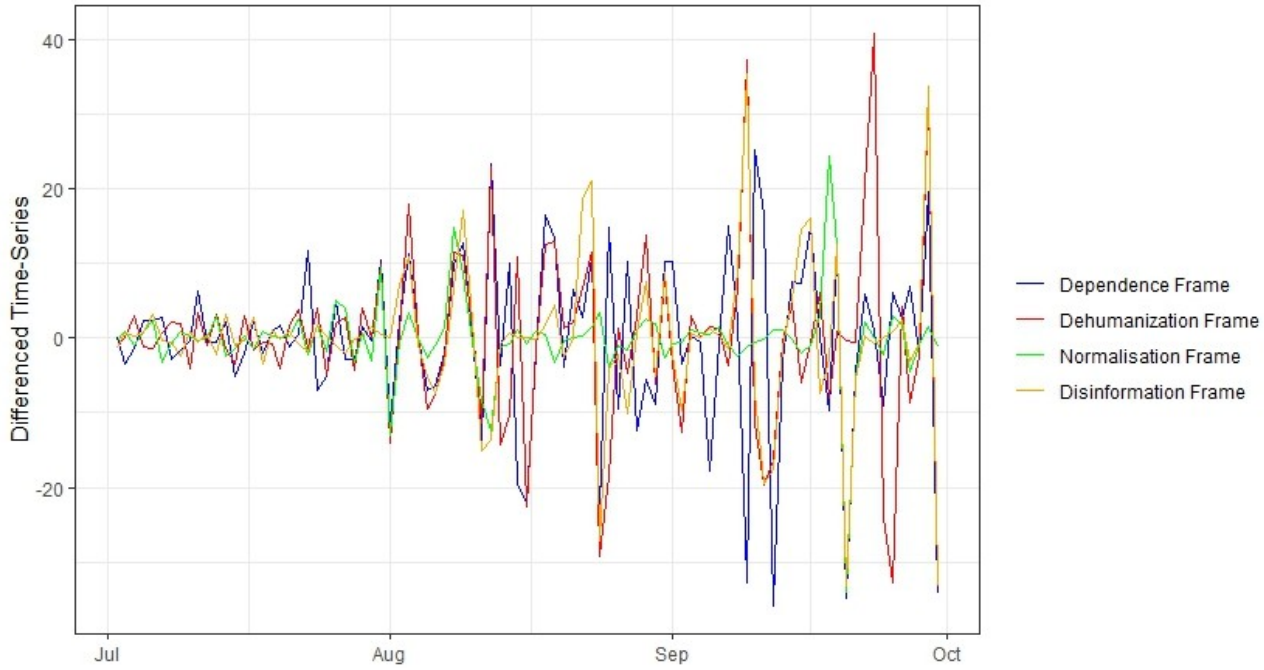


Figure A9 Differenced Time Series for TG

