In search of differences and commonalities in Russian and American news quality

A comparative quantitative content analysis of Russian and American international online
news covering American withdrawal from Afghanistan

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"We are journalists, and so it is our job to be impartial and provide a fair and thorough assessment of what is happening on the ground from the perspective of what we're able to see."

Clarissa Ward, Chief International Correspondent for CNN
(as cited in Bennington, 2013)

1. Introduction

Last flights of the relief aircrafts, people sitting on the ground waiting for their turn to be relocated, hope, shimmering hot sun, soldiers with guns, fear, crying children, scattered around tatters – just some of the in-focus details which journalists managed to transmit while covering the ending of the longest American war across international online news. Afghanistan is one of the countries that became the centre of international online news on August 30, 2021 during the withdrawal of the American troops from Afghanistan. According to ABC News, the evacuation airlifted around 123,000 people out of the country (Davies, 2021).

The American – Afghan is the longest war in the history of America that lasted 20 years. The conflict escalated when the Taliban was accused in being in cooperation with Al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden after the September 11, 2001 attack in New York (Barker, 2008). Thus, the global military alliance against terrorism was formed. President Bush commanded the launch of military operation in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001 (Paust, 2001). This war knows many names: "American - Afghan War," "Operation Enduring Freedom from 2001 to 2014," "Operation Freedom's Sentinel from 2015 to 2021," "the war on terror," "the long war". These names define the war. Firstly, they reflect America's aim: to protect the American state and its people by promising to its nation to eliminate the terrorists on the soil of Afghanistan. Secondly, these names speak about the intention to bring freedom to the people of Afghanistan, which indicates American imperialistic politics. And thirdly, this war lasted for an extended period of time. Though the Taliban regime fell shortly after the launch of the military operation, it took much time for the American government to command the withdrawal from Afghanistan. It was a topic of discussion several times under

three presidencies: Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden (Zambakari, 2021). Joe Biden declared the decision to withdraw the army on the April 14, 2021, which was supported by most political parties.

Public opinion polls showed that most American political parties supported the withdrawal. Notably, Republican party was the only one which deviated, as only half of the votes were in favor of the withdrawal (Schulte, 2021; Data for Progress, 2021). Hill-HarrisX polls in April and July 2021 showed that 73% favoured the withdrawal, with 90% of Democrats and 42% of Republicans supporting in April, and 81% of Democrats and 61% of Republicans in July (Schulte, 2021). Another poll by Data for Progress in April 2021 showed an overall support of withdrawing American troops of 71%, with 81% of Democrats and 56% of Republicans supporting (Data for Progress, 2021).

Following the polls, Biden supported this decision by highlighting the reasons for the withdrawal in his official speech: 1) it is time to end an era of military operations with an aim to change other countries and, conclusively, to concentrate not on the threats of 2001, but 2021; 2) competition with other countries, for example Russia (Whitehouse, 2021). Biden noted that there were "multiple challenges in Russia" and added that Russia would be satisfied if America were in this war for one more decade (Whitehouse, 2021). Moreover, it can be argued that the withdrawal from Afghanistan was favourable, however the decision about the withdrawal is deemed debatable and was followed by the discussions and publications of international and national politicians, international experts, scholars, and journalists.

1.1 Russian and American discussion about the withdrawal from Afghanistan

International news is widely discussed and studied by scholars in the Media field. According to Wu (2000), one of the reasons why international news has become the research focus of scholars is its impact on the world. For this thesis, Russian and American international news was particularly interesting to compare as they have both had historical attachments to Afghanistan, namely the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979-1989) and the American – Afghan War (1999-2021). Moreover, according to Hinck & Ehri (2022), the American – Afghan war was covered most frequently by Russia (48.8 times monthly) and America (35.4 times monthly) from 2017 until 2020, whilst Afghan and Chinese media covered the war 30.2 and 26.9 times a month respectively. These findings not only evince the interest of great world powers in the war but demonstrates the significance of the event for the Russian and American media.

Scholarship on framing signals that American and Russian news coverage of wars display commonalities as well as differences. According to a study (Godefroidt et al., 2016), geopolitics influence news topics: Russian news spotlighted weapons dismantling while covering the war in Syria, whilst American news discussed the causes of the war in Syria.

As Russia is seen as one of the major American competitors, it is inevitable to explore Russia's reaction to the event. Although Vladimir Zhirinovsky from the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and Vyacheslav Volodin, senior functionary of the pro-Kremlin United Russia Party openly critiqued the U.S. withdrawal, stating that the withdrawal was the collapse of America's foreign policy (Russia Matters, 2021), Vladimir Putin appeared to admit that it was the right decision by commenting that Washington achieved nothing in Afghanistan (Aljazeera, 2021).

On the contrary, Peter Bergen, CNN's national security analyst, argued that it was a mistake to withdraw from Afghanistan as the Taliban took control during the event and, thus, the Doha Agreement, which served as a peace agreement to bring the war to an end, was not fulfilled and resulted in one thousand victims (CNN, 2021). In addition, General Milley, the ground commander in Afghanistan, described the US airlift of more than 120,000 Afghans, US citizens, and other nationals from Kabul as a "logistical success," but he named the overall policy in Afghanistan a "strategic failure" (CNN, 2021).

To conclude, politicians and war experts from both countries have expressed the gains and losses of the withdrawal, however they paid attention to different aspects of the military operation. When Russian authorities commented approvingly on the withdrawal itself, their statements concentrated on geopolitics and Washington's failure, whilst the American experts underlined the withdrawal's severe consequences.

1.2 Scholars on the withdrawal

Likewise, scholars from a plethora of disciplines have published studies about the withdrawal. Peters (2021), in the field of Philosophy, looked at the withdrawal through the prism of Gibbon's declinism, citing Ferguson's idea (2021) of the fall of America's empire which mirrors Britain a century ago; O'Rourke (2022), in Political Studies, similarly pointed to the decline of American power in the Asian hemisphere West of China; Halimi, Sudiman & Hassan (2021), in Terrorism Studies, highlighted the withdrawal as a milestone event that was playing its role in the ideological narratives of Islamist extremists in the region; Din, Ahmad & Ullah (2021), in International Relations, studied the connection between

government policies and media in the war context, where they argued that American policy uncertainty about the withdrawal triggered critical coverage of war.

However, besides the comparative quantitative content study by Din, Ahmad & Ullah's work (2021), the topic of media with regards to news covering the American withdrawal from Afghanistan has not been extensively covered by scholars. This gap in literature, combined with the heightened discussion of the withdrawal at present, has secured interest in researching international online news quality covering the American withdrawal from Afghanistan.

1.3 Rationale for this study. The role of media, news framing and quality: objectivity and diversity

This thesis starts with the quote by Clarissa Ward, CNN Chief Correspondent, who reported on multiple conflicts from the war's front lines. This citation discloses the importance of the way journalists cover events. International online news plays its role in the conduct of wars and their perceptions. Due to its tendency to report on events in a partisan, biased, and tendentious manner, international media runs the risk of becoming one of the main sources for the production of mass misunderstanding (Elham, Haand & Sadiq, 2021).

As in times of conflict people depend on the reality constructed by journalists, the quality of media coverage is of utmost importance (Godefroidt et al., 2016). Nohrstedt & Ottosen (2014) noted that the war in Afghanistan was one of the military conflicts which was accompanied by a massive amount of media misinformation, which reflects the problem of news quality whilst covering the war zones. As both news objectivity and diversity are the foundation for journalistic quality (Bachmann et al., 2021; Borger et al., 2019), the news for this study were analysed through these two parameters.

Quality of news is inextricably linked with framing. Meijer (2003) underscored that news can achieve high quality if there is an "interaction and collaboration" on how events are framed (p.25). Journalists exert influence over what readers know and how they think about events by foregrounding some details while omitting others. This process was studied by media theorists within framing theory (e.g. Entman, 1993). As content analysis that is not informed by framing theory might yield misrepresented data (Entman, 1993), framing theory was used to conduct the analysis.

Although Western news is more prominently framed than in Russia (Godefroidt et al. 2016), Lukyanova (2018) proved that framing is used to legitimize power in Russia. As a commonality, ethnocentrism, was present in both countries (Godefroidt et al., 2016). These

findings indicate that news framing shares commonalities and differences in covering wars, hence it was valid to employ framing theory to analyse modern international online news regarding the Afghanistan withdrawal.

1.4 Research problem statement, research question and sub-questions

   Whilst the objectivity (Hunter, 2015) and diversity (Baum & Zhukov, 2019) of American news have been analysed, comparative studies about American and Russian international online news covering the American withdrawal from Afghanistan are absent. In this thesis, media objectivity and diversity perspectives are of great theoretical importance and will be complemented by this thesis. Thus, by means of a quantitative comparative content analysis, attention is paid to news framing, focusing on news differences and commonalities.

   The choice of online news articles as units of analysis for this thesis is justified by the fact that, nowadays, the internet plays a crucial role in delivering news to readers. Althaus & Tewksbur (2002) argued that online news has changed the traditional way of reading newspapers. Choi, Watt, & Lynch (2006) highlighted that, starting in 2003, the internet began to play a role of a main channel for news covering the war in Iraq. A Pew survey revealed that three-quarters of Americans read the new about the war in Iraq online (Rainie, Fox, & Fallows, 2003, in Choi, Watt, & Lynch, 2006). This survey proved that the news from branded online media platforms were read the most due to several reasons: source diversity, quick updates, and access to multiple points of view. In addition, as eight in ten Americans read online news (Shearer, 2021) and 55 % of Russians do so daily (Elagina, 2021), online news became the focus of this study.

Therefore, the following research question was formulated for this thesis:

What are the differences and commonalities in the news framing between the American and Russian online news when reporting about the American troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan in August and September 2021?

and 2 sub-questions:

1 - To what extent are American and Russian international online media houses' reporting styles different in terms of objectivity?

2 - To what extent are American and Russian international online media houses' reporting style different in terms of diversity?

1.5 Scientific and social relevance

1.5.1 Scientific relevance

Quality online journalism in times of war is critical. Indeed, as war reporting is sensational (Lee & Maslog, 2005), it gets extensive attention effortlessly. Yet, research on online war reporting is inconsistent, despite the growing significance of online news (Dimitrova & Connolly-Abern, 2007). In addition, though some scholars have scrutinised the war reporting frames covering Afghanistan (e.g. Edy & Meirick, 2007), few have examined it in a comparative context. Moreover, there is a lack of comparative analysis of international media coverage, especially focusing on studies with different media systems, such as Russian and American news (Nikolaev, 2022). Therefore, the findings of this thesis intend to add to the body of cross-cultural literature on framing theory (Entman, 1989; Godefroidt et al. 2016) and comparative international online media coverage studies (Roman, Wanta, &Buniak, 2017; Horvit, 2003).

1.5.2 Social relevance

As the withdrawal has affected Middle Eastern countries and there was involvement of supranational organisations, it is a global event. Thus, it is a world-important event which is critical to study to understand how journalists cover wars internationally during conflict escalations.

The twenty-first century is an era of crooked mirrors, where media have an opportunity to present the wars not as they are but as the elites want them to be seen for the generic audience, with an aim of imbuing fear or of depicting a distorted reality. That is why studies which critically analyze and question the information reported in the news are of paramount importance. This thesis' comparison of the news aims to assist journalists to better understand differences and similarities in news framing of wars by Russian and American international media houses. In addition, this thesis might lead to the greater comprehension of news quality through the aspects of objectivity and diversity.

Thus, the results of this study can inform journalists about the current level of the quality of modern international online Russian and American news, and can serve as an opportunity for media specialists and journalists to think about the quality of news coverage, news framing, and its possible impact on audiences.

1.6 Outline

This thesis presents a quantitative comparative content analyzes of Russian and American online news articles to compare news framing. It specifically analysis the existence of differences and commonalities of news quality through two dimensions: objectivity and diversity. After the introduction, chapter 2 examines the theoretical framework of the study and focuses on the explanation of the main theoretical foundation: framing theory, as well as the main concepts of the thesis: news quality defined through the dimensions of objectivity and diversity; more specifically, the aspects of objectivity and diversity are justified and discussed. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological choices, justifies the quantitative method, and explains the data collection process and analysis. In addition, chapter 3 discusses in detail the description of the variables, operationalization, and the study's reliability and validity. The results of the analyses are presented by giving a general overview and reporting the analyses outcomes that focused on differences and commonalities in news framing in chapter 4. The last chapter answers the research question and the two sub-questions and discusses the results of this study.

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, the existing literature in the field is reviewed. This chapter starts with an introduction to the state of Russian and American modern international online news. This is discussed elaborately in order to better understand the context in which this research takes place. Secondly, the role of international online media in times of war is discussed. More specifically, this part discusses the interdependence of war and the media and the quality of reporting. Thirdly, the existing research on framing theory, the importance of news quality in connection with framing theory, and specific aspects of objectivity and diversity are presented.

2.1 The state of modern international online news in America and Russia

The news is the reflections of the time and is a part of a large ecosystem which interconnects with the state's political, economic, cultural, and social aspects. Thus, it is important to discuss the state of Russian and American modern international online media as the states' media environment influences the quality of the events coverage, and thus, it influences the reporting quality on the American withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Scholars have argued about the characteristics of modern Russian and American media environment and highlighted their main differences. The discussion on existing scholarship is presented in the following sub-chapter.

2.1.1 State of Russian modern international online media in 2021

Russian media houses are non-Western news providers. Though, in general, non-Western news is believed to be less visible in the international media environment, Russian international news is not invisible, conversely, recognized as prominent (Wu, 2000). The Russian media environment constantly undergoes transformations. Russian international online media have experienced significant changes from 2021 to now in 2022. The recent disappearance of alternatives to the state media channels and the blocking of Russia Today by European governments now is a loud echo of 2021. The current Russian media system cannot be separated from the past and is rooted in Soviet media professional norms and ethos (Roudakova, 2017).

Mainstream Russian international online news evolved from the fall of the Soviet Union. As Kiriya (2019) has argued, at that time, the aim of news houses was to officially accept independent commercialism and, unofficially, to keep paternalistic norms that allowed the state-controlled media to dominate the news environment. Thus, media professionals

stopped "truth-seeking" in their work (Nisbet & Kamenchuk, 2021), which resulted in poor news quality.

Similarly to Soviet-era media, Russian journalism in 2021 is distinguished by diminishing media freedoms: the emergence of new media laws about labeling alternatives to the state media as "foreign agents" and the start of mass journalists' immigration for their safety. It was a year of journalistic self-censorship in fear of reprisals, which resulted in the absence of strong independent journalistic voices. Thus, the choice of international Russian online media houses for this thesis was limited, as there was no variety of news agencies reporting in English.

2.1.2 State of American modern International online media in 2021

Comparably to Russian media's place in the international news environment, American news not just visible in it, but held the leading position. Considered to be global news providers especially for international news (Horvit, 2003), it could be predicted that American international online news might be of a higher quality compared with the Russian.

However, scholars on the state of American news have presented contradictory findings. From one side, and contrary to the Russian media, American news quality is acknowledged to be more stable, as the American political system did no experience such significant changes as the Russian. It is believed that America has a greater degree of pluralism and freedom of expression (Roman, Wanta, & Buniak, 2017). In addition, American news outlets are considered to be global news providers especially for international news (Horvit, 2003), which could lead to the assumption that American international online news should be of a higher quality compared with the Russian.

Yet, scholars have criticized the American media environment for creating a media pseudo-reality, which leads to news reporting with distortion from facts and with the inclusion of emotional figures of speech, full of intensifying words and word combinations (Nikolaev, 2022; Lippmann, 1995).

To conclude, both countries have been criticized by scholars in terms of news quality. Both Russian and American media are considered to be dominant in global news landscape (Wu, 2000). Given Russian and American media's vital roles as global purveyors of news, the quality of the countries' reporting styles covering an international incident such as the end of the war takes on added importance. This thesis aims to add to the existing body of literature on international online news quality in America and Russia with a focus on the under-researched area of comparative analyses on war reporting (e.g. Nikolaev, 2022).

2.2 The role of international online media in times of war and news quality

The role of media is linked strongly to issues of wars, as they are considered to be of utmost importance and interest due to the great news value and security ramifications. As the media are viewed as important actors in agenda-setting, they have the power to spark a nation's support for military operations, or, conversely, anti-war sentiments. For example, during the Soviet – Afghan war, the dead soldiers were sent in sealed zinc coffins back to the USSR, as the state was concerned about the possible media coverage which could disrupt the nation's support for the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (Malik, 2003). The way this event unfolded highlights what happens in wars is strongly connected to the media. Or, another example, media coverage of the war in Vietnam played a key role in turning the American public against the military invasion, which resulted in the withdrawal from Vietnam (Malik, 2003). Therefore, the paramount role of journalists in international news' reporting is to critically assess the information and write the news according to journalistic norms and ethics, to keep high standards of news quality, so that the public can make the right decisions.

According to Rai (2000), wars both supply news and create demand for news. Thus, in times of war, media houses covering the war news experience gains and a great increase in their audience. Media cover the war more extensively if the country of the media is involved in it. The audience pays attention the most if they have attachments to the war. This process results, in the end, in better news-selling capabilities.

Media response to wars has a selective focus which influences the reporting. Thus, battles and bombings are covered more frequently, while the social stance of the population, poverty and famine are covered less (Young, 1991). For example, whilst the deaths in Bangladesh caused by spring floods could be left unnoticed by the media, the Gulf War was extensively covered (Young, 1991). Besides, the selective focus of the international online news could be also linked to the fact that news coverage of war is affected by the proximity of journalists to the conflict. Thus, some aspects of the American withdrawal from Afghanistan could stay under-reported, whilst others could be widely spotlighted.

Moreover, both American and Russian international online news influence reporting in other countries. According to Segev & Blonheim (2013), America and Russia are among the most-discussed countries in the news globally: American online news is ranked 1st (18.6%) and Russian online news is ranked 6th (3.3%), thus they can endorse their narratives to other international media houses in the world. Consequently, the quality of American and Russian news influences the quality of other global news providers.

Conclusively, wars affect the quality of international online news. Wars and media are interdependent: whilst wars make news more popular, news creates awareness about the war and, thus, influences what people think about it.

2.3 Framing Theory

As previously discussed, the nature of online war coverage affects the way people think in a critical life-threatening situation. Framing analysis is considered useful to study war coverage (Dimitrova & Connolly-Abern, 2007); furthermore, frames inform about journalism and make cross-national differences visible (de Vreese, 2005). Consequently, in this thesis, framing theory was employed to understand the commonalities and differences in online news quality covering the American withdrawal from Afghanistan.

2.3.1 Development of framing theory

There is a large body of literature dedicated to framing studies. Goffman (1974) coined the "schemata of interpretation" (p.21) in Media Studies and defined frames as a tool that determine the meaning of events. In line with Goffman (1974), Gitlin (1980) interpreted frames as a way to organise information in the best consumption format for the audience. Entman (1993) described framing as the process of selecting "an aspect of perceived reality" (p.52) and giving it salience in the text to highlight a specific definition of a problem. It is widely acknowledged that frames highlight one aspect while taking attention away from the other details, which is critical for an audience's understanding of the event (Entman,1993). It is also suggested, on a practical level, that journalists mute their own interpretational frames in the texts to remain objective (D'Angelo, 2018). Though framing theory was criticised for the lack of comprehensible conceptualisation (Carragee & Roefs, 2004; Van Gorp, 2007) and operationalisation (Scheufele, 1999), Entman (1993) challenged this weakness by breaking down how framing theory explicitly shows how frames are embedded and become manifest in a text, and how they influence thinking. This thesis borrows Entman's notion of framing, as he underlines framing's particular pertinence for journalistic objectivity (1993) and diversity (2006) but also for scholars scrutinising content analyses to examine the readers' understanding of the event (1993).

2.4 News quality: Journalistic objectivity and diversity

2.4.1 The importance of news quality in connection with framing theory

The scholarship on framing reveals that the framing of news influences news quality in several ways. First, news covering war is sensational, thus this type of news tends to be more biased in framing, making the news more emotional, which leads to a decrease in the quality of news (Opperhuizen, Schouten, & Klijn, 2019). Secondly, it was argued by Bartholomé, Lecheler, & de Vreese (2015), that news covering of war has a tendency to exaggerate. Media houses create excitement and journalists tend to make their own interpretations of the event, which similarly diminishes the quality of news. Thirdly, frames, used to spotlight the event can lead to coverage where some important aspects of the event stay unnoticed by the audience (Baden, 2019). Hence, journalists should pay attention to the news framing, as it might affect not only the quality of the news of the media houses which report on the event, but also of those who take this coverage as a source of information for their own use. Last but not least, this link between the news framing and quality influences the audience's perception and opinions of the event. The worse the news quality, the less chance that the readers would be able to access diverse information and have the possibility to consider several positions on the event (Baden, 2019; Chong, 1996).

It is acknowledged that the Afghanistan war coverage from 1979–1989 had differences and commonalities in journalistic Soviet and Western quality. Specifically, according to Sheikh (1990), though Western news was considered more diverse than the Soviets', it was concluded that there was poor Western reporting, a lack of authenticity, credibility, accuracy, and newness due to several reasons. Firstly, the news quality was affected by the length of time from the event itself till the news was published, as most reporters were out of the war zone. Secondly, journalists relied on the use of non - journalistic sources. The Soviet coverage was similarly identified as being low in credibility but due to the media state control, resulting in the absence of details and fear of representing the event objectively. For instance, journalists tried to escape the word "war" due to censorship, substituting it with "problem around Afghanistan" (p.41). Polar representation of the event was traced in the news topics: Western news concentrated on "Soviet brutalities", "Afghanistan's freedom", "Mujahideen's courage", "love for Islamist values", whilst the Soviet media "glorified their soldiers" (p.41), presenting them as the ones who were "restoring schools and planting trees" (p.42). To conclude, quality is important to news reports, especially when it comes to a highly political issue such as wars in Afghanistan.

It is admitted that the concepts of objectivity and diversity are inseparable from news quality. In fact, scholars have defined news quality as the ability to be objective and to cover event including diverse statements (Bachmann et al., 2021; Borger et al., 2019*)*. Thus, similarly to Sheikh's study (1990), both objectivity and diversity are viewed as the main objects of this thesis to explore war reporting quality in Afghanistan.

2.4.2 Specific aspects/ dimensions of objectivity and diversity
Inclusion of official external sources

As discussed previously, objective news coverage is a sign of quality journalism. In addition, principles of objectivity are meant for journalism protection. In fact, though it is acknowledged that most coverage does not have perfect objectivity (Choi, Watt, & Lynch, 2006), Steele (1995) underscored that by reporting the facts from external sources, journalists minimize the responsibility for the words they write. For example, experts like political analysts or military personnel can interpret and give analyses of the event in ways that differ from those of journalists. This thesis follows the conceptualisation of objectivity stated by Borger et al. (2019). It is marked with indicators of 1) reliability on quotations from external and official sources and 2) exclusion of personal viewpoints and values, which is traceable through the journalists' use of subjective language. The second conceptualisation was borrowed by Borger et al. (2019) from Vis (2011) due to its thorough further operationalisation which results in a precise measurement. Indeed, external experts are considered neutral and able to explain the events free of bias (Steele, 1995).

It is interesting to notice that American news in the pre-war time with Iraq used 79% of official sources, while non-official sources like citizens or religious leaders were less prominent (Hayes & Guardino, 2010). Thus, it could be anticipated that international online news covering military operations in Afghanistan would have a consistent number of official external sources for analysis. In addition, according to Venger (2019), who spoke about the 2005 London bombings, Russian news used the fewest external official sources, resulting in 1.3 sources per story, whilst American news covered 4.08 sources per story. This result is in line with the findings of Hinck & Ehri (2022) who quantitively compared over 2000 news articles from 17 different Chinese, Russian, American, and Afghani media houses from February 2017 to January 2020. According to this study, American news cited from 2,115 sources whilst Russian media houses cited 243. With this in mind, the following hypothesis is proposed:H1: Russian news cite less external official sources than American in reporting on the American troops withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Inclusion of subjective language in the news

According to Hanitzsch et al.'s (2011) findings, journalists in countries on the left side of the map (see Figure 1) tend to follow universal rules of ethical-professional conduct, thus, it could be suggested that American news should rely less on opinionated language and collocations. However, journalists from countries on the right side (see Figure 1) are more skeptical towards universal ethical principles. Hence, it could be anticipated that Russian news would use subjective language more often in their reporting. In addition, as mentioned before, Russian journalism has gone through multiple changes. It is connected to the shift from Soviet to post-Soviet journalism. Perestroika (1985-1991) played its own important role in the becoming of modern Russian news. For example, journalists' language underwent wide changes. The news language mirrored the changes on the societal level (von Seth, 2011). As such, journalists started using the 'I' pronoun when including opinions and judgements, and modal verbs started to appear more often in the articles. The practice of writing articles based on the state citations was decreasing. In addition, Pasti (2005) has noted that nowadays journalists try to convey their personal view while reporting, which impacts the quality of the news, making them less factual based. There is even such a notion as "the journalistic authorship," which refers to Russian journalism and it is considered to be a core of professional Russian journalistic culture (Pasti, 2005, p.101).
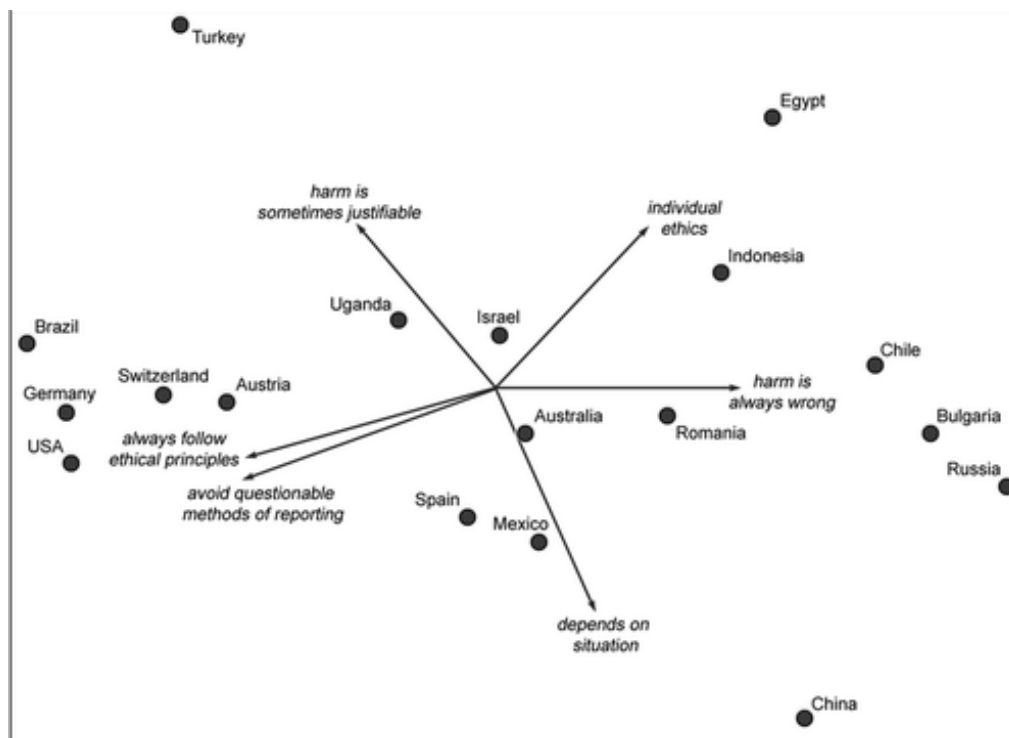

Figure 1 displays Hanitzch et al.'s (2010) analysis and reflects the correlation between the countries and their norms towards ethical principles, which led to the Hypothesis 2 on the subjective reporting.

To sum up, the previous research directs towards the hypothesis:

H2: Russian news use more subjective words and word combinations than American in reporting on the American troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan.

While objectivity was conceptualised through the reliance on external sources and exclusion of journalists' opinions and values, it is known from the literature that audience opt for online news to get information about the war due to the diversity of news sources (Choi, Watt & Lynch; 2006). To conceptualise diversity, the researcher follows the diversity definitions of Choi (2009) borrowed from Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. (1985): 1)"Diversity of sources used in the news" – the origin of the source. 2) "Diversity of geographic origins" - the location of the news sources. 3) "Diversity of topics"- informs what the news is about 4) "Diversity of themes" – informs about themes. According to Choi (2009), though both topics and themes are considered to be frequently used in academic research to measure the quality of news, they had hardly been a tool of measurement for international news. Thus, this study aims to expand knowledge on international news coverage by adopting the concept of diversity.

Diversity of sources origins used in the news

Notably, previous research points out that both American and Russian online news source diversity is declining. Choi (2009) indicated that two out of three American news agencies decreased the number of sources after the Iraq War. Similarly, though the journalism after the fall of the Soviet state was defined as more liberalized and had a greater number of diverse opinions, the diversity of sources started to decline with the presidency of Vladimir Putin (von Seth, 2011). Von Seth's observations are in line with the findings reported by Wu et al. (1996). These scholars have documented that the diversity of experts and news sources in the Russian media is limited, as are the number of external sources, due to the state of media in Russia (Wu et al.,1996). This means that Russian international online news are not focused on the dissemination of alternative interpretations of global events, such as the withdrawal from Afghanistan, as these news sources could threaten official Russian policies and political actions. Thus, this directs towards the hypothesis:

H3: Russian news sources are less diverse in terms of their origins than American news in reporting on the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan.

Diversity of news sources' geographic origins

  Scholarship on the diversity of geographic sources origins reveals that Russia and America allow different countries to amplify their voices. As such, according to Hinck & Ehri's study on the American – Afghan war, American media overwhelmingly cites sources from the United States, but also it substantially includes views from Afghanistan, Russia, and Pakistan (2022). Whilst Russian media cited the American sources with the highest frequency, it also included Afghani, Russian, and Iranian sources (Hinck & Ehri, 2022).

  According to Horvit (2006), the non-Western news agencies included the citations from foreign countries less often than the Western media houses did. As claimed by this study, Associated Press (AP), the American news agency company, reported from 30 countries, which is as twice as the Russian TASS, which reported from 14 countries. But uniquely, Russian media includes perspectives from such countries as Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan (Horvit, 2006). If not for TASS, it would hardly be possible for the external official sources from these countries to be present in the international online media environment. In addition, relying on the theory which suggested that Russia includes less diverse sources of origin (von Seth, 2011; Wu et al.,1996), it is expected that Russian online news would be similarly more undiversified due to the fact that most media reporting in English for the international audience is state-controlled.

  To sum up, the previous research directs towards the hypothesis H4: Geographic origins of Russian news sources are less diverse than American news sources in reporting on the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan.

Diversity of news topics

  According to Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. (1985) news topics is what the reported event is mainly about. In this thesis, the definition of news topics is in line with Sreberny-Mohammadi et al.'s (1985) and is seen as the main subject or focus of the news article. Scholarship on news topics of international online news has revealed that military and political topics are the most frequent in Western media outlets (Sreberny-Mohammadi et al., 1985) and are common in Russian media houses (Kolesnichenko, 2021). Hence, as the military operation is the subject of this thesis, it is anticipated that both Russian and American media houses would cover the withdrawal with the focus on these two main topics. It is acknowledged that the more topics covered by the media houses, the better the news quality (Nikolaev, 2022). Nikolaev's recent qualitative comparative study examined the news that covered political events and proved that the diversity of topics was extremely limited in

the American online news, whilst the number of topics covered by the Russian media houses was much wider: 2 vs 9 topics. In addition, according to Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. (1985), non – Western media houses have the tendency to cover the news covering economic matters or other topics. Thus, it is expected that H5: Russian news topics are more diverse than American news topics in reporting on the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan.

Diversity of news themes

News themes in international online news is an important subject of the research. Kolesnichenko (2021) underscored this importance by giving an example of how themes reflect the transformations in the content of the articles and in journalism as a whole in the specific timeframe. Thus, themes can describe the state of international news. In this thesis, news themes are defined as the underlying ideas around which the whole story revolves (Sreberny-Mohammadi et al.,1985). The main difference between topics and themes is in their scope. Whilst topics are very specific, themes are broader and more general (Sreberny-Mohammadi et al.,1985). In addition, themes are considered to be better indications than topics of the actual content of international news (Sreberny-Mohammadi et al., 1985). According to Kolesnichenko's (2021) qualitative study, the diversity of themes in the American online news is higher than in Russian news: 13 vs 11 themes accordingly. Hence, it is expected that H6: Russian news themes are less diverse than American news themes in reporting on the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan.

2.4.3 Summary of theoretical framework

To conclude, the concepts of objectivity and diversity were defined in total within six dimensions. In this thesis, six dimensions have been discussed in a variety of scientific literature in Media Studies. Figure 2 below - the conceptual model, a result that depicts the visualization of all 6 hypothesis. The comparative angle of the recent Russian and American international online media on the withdrawal from Afghanistan will further complement the existing findings.
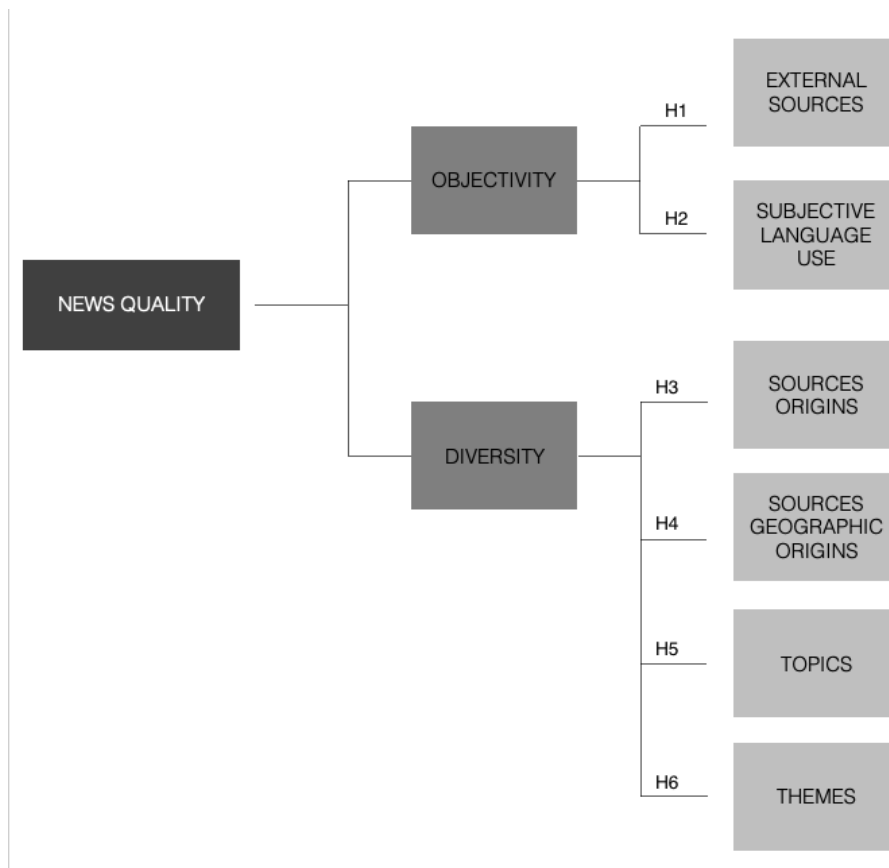
Figure 2 Conceptual model.

The research design of this study is elaborately described in the following chapter.

3. Methodology

In this Master Thesis, online news articles of Russian and American prominent news agencies are being analysed to examine differences and commonalities in news qualities. By conducting and analysing a quantitative comparative content analysis, the following research question is being answered: *What are the differences and commonalities in the news framing between the American and Russian online news when reporting about the American troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan in August and September 2021?*

The following chapter elucidates the reasons for the choice of the research methodology, the assurance of its reliability, quality and validity. Thus, this chapter consists of the quantitative content method justification, the data collection, the operationalization of theoretical concepts and their quantifiable measures, and the data analysis. Finally, this chapter presents the discussion on the research limitations and the quality assurance.

3.1 Quantitative method justification

This study relies on the previous scholarship and the existing theory. Thus, it has a deductive research approach. As the deductive nature of the analysis allows to test hypothesis deriving from the theory and plan the research method (Babbie, 2014), to identify differences and commonalities in the online news quality between the American and Russian media houses when reporting about the American troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan, namely in news objectivity and diversity, a quantitative comparative analysis of international online news was conducted. Krippendorff (2004) characterised quantitative content analysis as the core method of social sciences, as it enables the researcher, in contradistinction to qualitative method, to be in detached observation and conduct objective measurement. Thus, it is a strong statistical tool which results in high reliability to test the hypothesis. Another distinct reason why this method is pertinent for answering this research question, is because it yields data generalisability, and it allows to systematically analyse a large number of online news articles (Neuman, 2011). In addition, this method explores the hidden meanings in the text which could stay unnoticed even by the content creators (Neuman, 2011). Indeed, similarly, Krippendorff (2004) highlighted that quantitative content method reveals the hidden layers for institutional and cultural context of the data. In addition, the unobtrusive data collection allows to analyse the texts without participants involvement, leading to the reduction of data biases (Babbie, 2014).

To conclude, the preciseness of measurement, its reliability, an ability to generalize data, to elucidate the phenomenon which could have been missed due to the large quantity of

data, an unobtrusive nature, and the quality to analyze the sources condition justify validity of quantitative comparative content analysis method for this research.

Furthermore, a quantitative comparative study with the alike research focus is markedly absent. Previous studies about online news covering wars indicated the lack of comparative studies in scientific literature (Dimitrova & Connolly - Abern, 2007; Nikolaev, 2022), thus this study aims to fill this gap in comparative analyses by exploring the framing of international online news in times of war. Therefore, quantitative comparative content analysis of online news was deemed appropriate for this thesis.

3.2 Sampling

As the main aim of the study is to reveal differences and similarities across international online news, it is important to justify the choice of the international media for this research. According to Pew Research (2018), 57% of people read international news globally. It is acknowledged that international media was long term dominated by western journalism. However, the international media landscape started to reshape as new non-western voices arose. One of the first notable non-Western news agency was Al-Jazeera, which started to report in English in 2006 whilst covering the war in Afghanistan and Iraq (Firdous, 2009). Hanitzsch (2018) argued, that the same situation is replicated in media studies, which leads to uneven academic publications on western and non-western media. Thus, inclusion of international news from non-Western countries is an important research subject, as it will widen the understanding of journalism. Last, but not least, the American withdrawal from Afghanistan is a recent military operation, which happened in August 2021, hence it is still possible and convenient to analyse publications of the media houses via news online archives.

To select the most representative media houses, the most viewed English published news websites from Russia and America were chosen for this study. As the aim of the research is to analyse comparatively the quality of foreign online news in representing the reality of the withdrawal, online news articles published in Fox News Channel (FNC), NYT, Russia Today (RT), and Telegraph Agency of the Soviet States union (TASS) provided the data for this study. Four news portals frequently addressed the American withdrawal of troops, thus, they had a sufficient amount of news articles per each media house for this study. In addition, these four specific news outlets were chosen as they constitute two internationally opposing sources, representing influential and leading news outlets from Russia and America. All of them cover international and political events and allow

international audience to access news in English. Besides, these four online news websites were studied separately by scholars, while this study focuses on their comparison.

FNC was founded in 1996 and it has 266.2 millions monthly visits as of December 2021(FNC, 2021). It is owned by Fox Entertainment Group and it is run by Rupert Murdoch as its chairman. Although FNC was created as a television network, the station provides online news that are widely circulated amongst the readers (Gibbons, 2022). According to Media Bias Fact Check organization *FNC* is categorized as a right – biased news organization with the audience leaning conservative (Pew Research Center, 2016). Though FNC is recognized as one of the most popular news sources in the United States with a motto acquired in 2017 "Most watched, most trusted" (FNC, 2017), yet, it is considered as a propagandistic source of information (Bauer et al. 2022). Scholars have highlighted that FNC appears to be in general "favorable, elite-driven, consensus-oriented, patriotic, and casualty-free" in covering Vietnam and Iraq Wars (Aday, p.146, 2010).

NYT is one of the world's leading newspapers. It was founded in 1851 with an aim to deliver professional reporting where every story should be in accordance to ethical and professional standards (Davis, 1921). NYT launched its website in 1995 (Greer & Mensing , 2006). NYT website has 260.7 millions of readers (NYT, 2022). Opposingly to FNS, *NYT* is left – centered. And it is the only left – centered news agency in this analysis. Its slogan "All the news that is fit to print".

RT channel was launched in 2005, when the Russian information security doctrine set the goal to promote a new image of Russia abroad (Smirnova, 2020). Margarita Simonyan, RT's Editor in Chief, defined the main task of media house as to give "Russia a new voice of its own, which would tell about the country to people who do not speak Russian" and to share the Russian position on world events. Though it is registered as an independent non-profit organization, it receives funding from the Russian Federal Agency on Press and Mass Communications. RT positions itself as an international media space and an alternative to Anglo-Saxon channels (Smirnova, 2020). While internally the media house tends to favour the government agenda, internationally RT appeals to both right and left wing sectors of the population and it owns 49 millions readers (Smirnova, 2020).

The last media house, chosen for the sample is TASS. TASS is Russia's leading state news agency, founded in 1904. Since its inception, TASS was considered as the news channel which projected governments' interests (Alleyne and Wagner, 1993). According to Rantanen and Boyd-Barrett (2004), although TASS was once considered among the top five international news agencies, it was not a part of the competition within the top Western

agencies starting from 1991, once the Soviet Union collapsed. In 2020, TASS' audience rose up to 156 million visitors with an average of 27 million visitors per month (TASS, 2020). It is right - centered biased.

3.3 Data collection

After the four international online news sources had been chosen, this research pursued a random sampling method within these four media houses. This sampling method allows to make assumptions and generalizations about the population of interest and it is chosen by researchers due to its simplicity, ability to represent the target population and lack of bias due to equal chance of the units of analysis selection (Etikan & Bala, 2017). As this study aims to provide a perspective into the withdrawal coverage by international online news, the specific time frame is chosen for the data collection: 01/08/2021 – 30/09/2021- the month of the withdrawal and the month after the withdrawal which yielded in numerous publications. Additionally, this time frame will allow to gather the data to answer the research question and sub-questions.

As the aim of sampling is to create a manageable corpus of data which could represent the whole set, the appropriate sampling research strategy should be in place. According to Stevens (1996), a sample of 150 or 15 units of analysis per independent variable is the minimum amount for quantitative research. Thus, around 50 online news articles were selected per each of four online media outlets. Henceforth, approximately 200 articles is sufficient within the time available for this research. Random sampling was applied to retrieve articles from the original websites. The key word combination for this thesis was "American withdrawal from Afghanistan" which was typed through the advance search engine on the website. These word combinations were selected for this thesis as it defined precisely the type of the news which should have been collected. Each news article was assigned a number and chosen randomly afterwards. The search results from all four media platforms presented the news by the websites algorithms and were not ranked by time.

As individual news article was a unit of analysis in this study, each online new article was coded one by one and systematically by one human coder and 10% of the data set was coded by the second human coder manually to assure the intercoder reliability. This will be further discussed in 3.6 Quality assurance. The data was collected manually and align with the codebook. Each article was copied and coded for 8 different categories: country, external official sources, author's self-citations, reference to the opinion and emotions, diversity of

source origin, diversity of geographic source origins, diversity of topics, and diversity of themes which will be further elaborated in 3.4 Operationalisation and in 3.5 Data Analysis.

3.4 Operationalisation

This thesis systematically examined variables that might exert influence on the quality of international online news published in Russia and America. According to Neuman (2011), variables in quantitative method should be thoroughly operationalised into clear quantitative measures. The variables are operationalised though the development of specific categories with the assigned numerical values even if the data qualitive in nature (Neuendorf, 2017). The operationalisation of these measures is developed in a coding book (see Appendix A: Codebook). The coding scheme could be defined as a system which ensures that the codes are added consistently across the data set (Neuendorf, 2017). It allows to implement quantitative analysis and leads to the interpretation of the data and, thereby, research inferences. Thus, it should consist of all measures which would provide the answer to the research questions. As the codebook should consist of clear, unambiguous definitions and easy instructions (White & Marsh, 2006), this thesis has thoroughly defined variables and the categories were assigned with the numbers. Concepts, relevant variables, namely, their ability to test the hypotheses, were taken from the previous research that results in valid findings to provide validity for this research (Babbie, 2014).

As discussed earlier, the quality of the online news could be measured through objectivity and diversity parameters. Thus, for this study, two groups of variables were coded as dependent variables of the model. The first group of dependent variables includes objectivity and the second diversity. These groups investigate the quality of the news texts. The independent variable consists of two countries: Russia and America, thus makes it categorical.

To assess news objectivity, reliance on external official sources and inclusion of personal opinion were measured. This research followed the operationalisation of Carpenter (2008) where external official source was defined as a "source text" or a direct quotation. The rest of the article was defined as an "author text". The sources in the text were identified through the direct verbs such as: "said", "reported", "stated", "noted" and indirect verbs such as: "hope", "feel", "believe". More words and phrases could be fined in the coding book (see Appendix A: Codebook). Thus, external official sources include people who spoke on behalf of an organization, government (e.g., president, prosecuting attorneys, representatives, police), business (e.g., defense attorneys, business owners), non-profit (e.g., Red Cross) or

international organizations, media professionals (e.g., journalists, bloggers, the author of the news could have cited himself) and anonymous official (e.g., Pentagon official, lobbyist, White House aide) source categories. Unofficial sources like citizens, victims, unrelated business owners were not considered as experts for this thesis, so they were not coded as external official sources. This variable for objectivity is measured by the total sum of external sources.

Next, personal opinion was measured by the deviation from objectivity through identification of the number of subjective language in the news. This variable is defined based on previous research by Vis (2011) who conducted a quantitative content analyses on subjectivity in the news. Thus, the explicit reference to opinion and emotions was registered once the modal verbs, modal adverbials, modal adverbs, modal functions of imperatives, modal functions of subjective, time and place adverbials, intensifiers, cognitive verbs, exclamations, first and second person pronouns, questions were identified in the text. The complete list of subjective words and words combinations are in the coding book (see Appendix A: Codebook). This variable for objectivity is measured by the percentage of the subjective language in the article.

Diversity

Choi's (2009) definition of diversity was followed to assess *news diversity*. This concept was measured through 4 dependent variables: 1) diversity of source origin, 2) diversity of geographical origin, 3) diversity of news topics, 4) diversity of news themes. The first variable was initially categorized into 7 dimensions by Choi (2009). However, due to the angle of this analysis during the sampling process and intercoder reliability test, new categories arose: "Russian government", "Taliban government", "Afghan government". Thus, the news sources were operationalised in 10 categories: 1) "home country government" (e.g. government of all countries except America, Taliban, Afghanistan, Russia; heads of military; Pentagon), 2)"home country private" (e.g. private university), 3)"international organization", 4)"wire agency" (this category includes other media houses or business organizations which gathers news for distribution like "Associated Press"), 5)"own correspondent" (the journalist cites himself or doesn't include the external citations at all), 6) "US government", 7) "Russian government", 8) "Taliban government", 9) "Afghan government" and 10) others (this category includes NGOs, writers of the books, soldiers). The first variable for diversity of source origin is measured by the total sum of sources origins.

Next, to research further news diversity, Choi's (2009) definition of diversity of geographic origins was pursued. Hence, geographic origins were divided into 7 categories: 1) "North America", 2) "Latin America", 3) "Africa", 4) "Middle East" (includes Afghanistan), 5) "Asia/Pacific", 6) "Western Europe", 7) "Eastern Europe/Eurasia" (includes Russia). The second variable for diversity of sources geographic origin is measured by the total sum of geographic categories.

After that, the third dimension of diversity was operationalised. Diversity of topics was defined according to Weaver et al. (1985) into 9 categories. Thus, in total, one article can have 4 topics. 1) "politics", 2) "military/defence", 3) "economics matters", 4) "international/aid", 5) "social services/ public health", 6) "crime/police/judicial/legal matters", 7) "disaster/accident", 8) "personalities/culture/ecology/religion", 9) "others". According to Weaver et al. (1980) there could be up to 4 topics in total. To define the topics the news titles were studied. The third variable for diversity of topics is measured by the total sum of topics present in the article.

Moreover, this thesis followed Choi's (2009) definition of diversity of themes. Initially, this categorization had 7 points, however, during the intercoder reliability test, it was clear that nearly every news article was blaming Biden for the way how withdrawal was handled and its consequences, thus one more category "Biden's fault" was added, which led to final list of 8 categories: 1) "nuclear arms", 2) "politics independence/rebel", 3) "religious/ ethnic conflict", 4) "terrorism", 5) "peace move/negotiation", 6) "war in Afghanistan" (including the withdrawal itself), 7) "Biden's fault" and 8)"others". The fourth variable for diversity of news themes is measured by the total sum of themes present in the article.

The exact definition and measurement of the variables could be found in the codebook in (see Appendix A: Codebook). By using these dependent variables and dimensions, it is possible to see the media patterns usual for media housing while covering the war, to build the argumentation about the commonalities and differences between American and Russian online news and draw the conclusions about each media house and its particularities.

3.5 Data analysis

First, the data was humanly coded. After that, to guarantee that the variables have been created meticulously and are understood in the similar way amongst the scholars, intercoder reliability test was implemented for every variable manually. During the pilot phase, 10% of the sample alike data were coded together with the second researcher to

identify the extent of reliability. The intercoder reliability test resulted in high compatibility of values for each dataset variable.

The intercoder reliability test was conducted by the second coder, a fluent English speaker with a degree in economics. As advised by Krippendorff (2004), the coder was prepared for the test coding after a short training on data collection. This coder was chosen for the test to identify the instructions' accuracy the coding book which assured further thorough coding. Both coders analyzed 20 sample news articles and scrutinized the opportunities to improve the coding scheme. Though all the variables had achieved a high reliability, the level of subjectivity in the text raised the most questions, as it was difficult to differentiate the fact from opinion. Hence, both definitions of "fact" and "opinion" were added to the coding book and subjectivity was coded twice to achieve a better result.

Next, the data was gathered in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) which works with nominal data (McCormick & Salcedo, 2017). To answer the research question and to explore the differences and commonalities in American and Russian online news coverage of the withdrawal, the analysis was arranged in such a way that it answered each research sub-questions.

The data was analyzed using, parametric two-sample t-test to compare the means of two countries, as independent variable is categorical and dependent variable is continuous. This test allows to make the same assumptions about two different populations by estimating the true difference between two group means using the ratio of the difference in group means over the pooled standard error of both groups (Berkman & Reise, 2012). The results of the data analysis are presented in the following chapter.

3.6 Quality assurance

According to Krippendorff (2004), reliability in quantitative content analysis is established by accuracy, stability, and reproducibility. To start with, the analyzed data constitutes manifest content, which is considered to be more reliable than latent content (Krippendorff, 2004). Thus, the research accuracy was established. To ensure stability in this research, a preliminary codebook was created and tested before the final implementation of the analysis. The test of the codebook allowed to check the clarity of the coding instructions and assured the quality of the coding instructions and its process. The data analysis and data collection for this thesis is reported in an unambiguous way. Thus, this study could be replicated effortlessly and lead to the same results. The final codebook was used in the same way for every news article in the sample.

Research validity can be described as the degree to which empirical measure shows the meaning of the concept (Babbi, 2014). The concepts in this study are discussed in depth and grounded on the previous relevant media academic research. Moreover, variables and sampling are grounded on previous research which led to valid results. Though Krippendorff (2004) noted that online search engine could be precarious for research validity as news can sometimes deviate and not precisely cover the searched topic, the collection of 200 online news articles appeared to be relevant.

To ensure that sample consists of pertinent articles and cover the withdrawal from Afghanistan, each article was studied during the sampling. None of the articles were deleted from the formed sampling as all of them were found relevant for the research. This procedure proved that the search word combination "American Withdrawal from Afghanistan" was precise for this research.

4. Results

The following chapter outlines the results of the thesis and answers the main research question: *What are the differences and commonalities in the news framing between the American and Russian online news when reporting about the American troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan in August and September 2021?* To answer this question 200 news articles published in 01/08/2021 – 30/09/2021 from four different Russian and American online news websites were statistically analysed. The results are reported in accordance with sub-questions.

The results showed that in general both American and Russian online news articles have their own strong and weak characteristics in terms of quality reporting about the war in Afghanistan. Notably, journalists from both of the countries never cite their own works while reporting which results in high objectivity. While American online news are more objective in terms of reliance on external official sources, Russian news refer significantly less to the use the subjective language which is part of the opinion or emotions display. In terms of diversity, both of the countries have their own similarities in number of themes and number of geographic origins and distinctions: in the number of source origin, number of covered topics.

In the ensuing sections the results are reported.

4.1 Overview

For this study 200 articles from Russian and American news websites were analysed. The online news articles from Russian TASS (N = 50) and RT(N = 50) together with American Fox News (N = 50) and NYT (N = 50) constitute the data corpus of the research.

4.2 Comparison in terms of objectivity

The following section focuses on the quality of the news in terms of the results on news objectivity through analysis of external sources and subjectivity and aims to answer the following first sub-question: To what extent are American and Russian international online media houses' reporting styles different in terms of objectivity?

4.2.1 External sources

In order to identify difference between the number of external sources in American and Russian online news articles a two – sample t-test was performed. Inhere, independent variable is country and dependent variable is number of external sources cited. A two sample t-test revealed that there is a significant higher number for external resources from America ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 3.09$) than from Russia ($M = 1.74$, $SD = 1.36$), $t(136.01) = -7.23$, $p < .001$.

Therefore, as anticipated, H1 was accepted: Russian international online news are less objective than American international online news in reporting on the American troops withdrawal from Afghanistan was accepted.

4.2.2 Subjective language use

In order to identify difference in the number of subjective language in American and Russian online news articles a two – sample t-test was performed. Inhere, independent variable is country and dependent variable is the percentage of subjective language used. A two-sample t-test inferred that media houses have a significant higher score for subjective language from America ($M = 27.50$, $SD = 19.07$) than from Russia ($M = 19.22$, $SD = 16.05$), $t(198) = -3.33$, $p = .001$. Hence, H2 was rejected, resulting in the finding that Russian news use less subjective words and word combinations than American in reporting on the American troops withdrawal from Afghanistan**.**

Using the method described above, the obtained results indicated that American online news much more objective than Russian news in terms of reliance on external official sources. However, American online news used a much bigger amount of subjective language in the text such as explicit reference to the opinion or emotions. Consequently, Russian news are more objective in terms of the language the journalists used in their articles.

4.3 Diversity

In order to measure the news quality through the prism of the diversity, diversity of news sources, diversity of geographic origins, diversity of news topic in titles and diversity of news themes in American and Russian international online news were analysed. This subsection aims to answer the second sub-questions: How diverse is news coverage with regard to news sources, topics, geographic origins, and themes in American and Russian international online media?

4.3.1 Diversity of news sources origins

In order to identify difference in number of news sources origins in American and Russian online news articles, a two – sample t-test was performed. Inhere, independent variable is country and dependent variable is number of news sources origins. Similarly to external sources citations, a two – sample t-test indicated that media houses have a significant higher score for the diversity of news sources origin from America ($M = 1.75$, $SD = 1.11$) than from Russia ($M = 1.36$, $SD = .84$), $t(183.94) = -2.77$, $p = .006$. Consequently, H3 was

accepted. Russian news sources were found less diverse in terms of their origins in reporting on the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan if compared to American news.
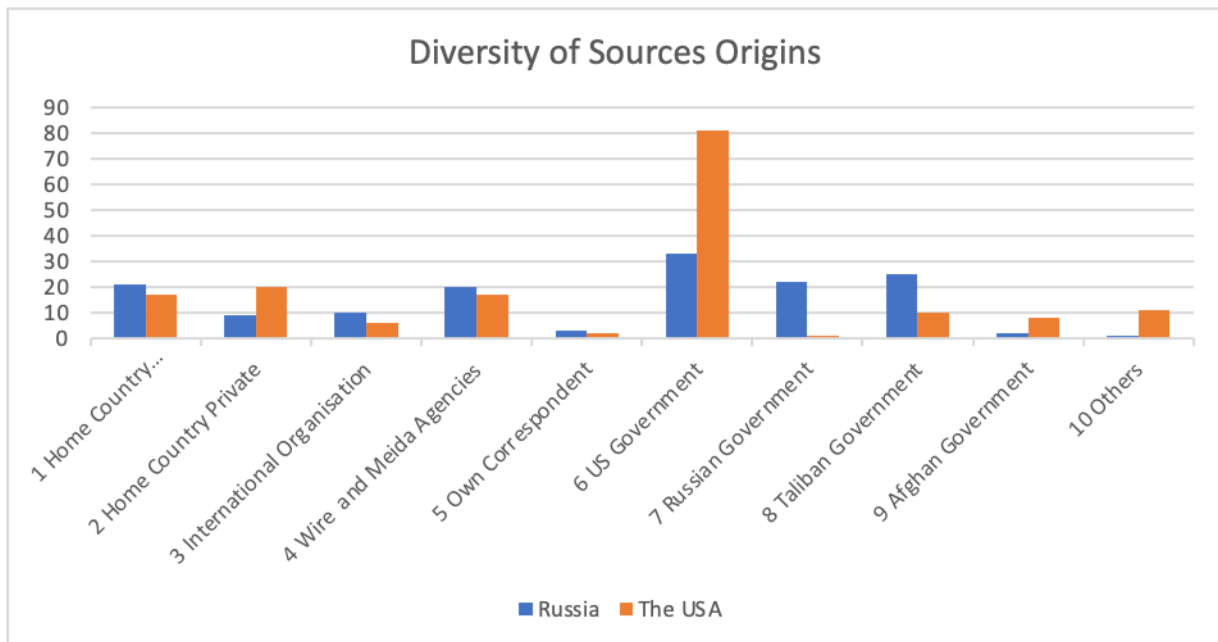

Figure 3 Diversity of sources origins.

Figure 3 visualizes the diversity of sources origins per country. It could be inferred that both Russian and America media houses citied mostly American government. It is evident from the results that officials from Taliban and Afghan government was less frequently cited by the American media. However, Russian media resorted to the citation of Taliban officials, which was cited nearly as often as the American government officials, and even more than Russian government officials. Whilst American media opt for the experts from private companies, Russian media prefers to cite the government officials.

4.3.2 Diversity of geographic origins

In order to identify difference in number of geographic origins in American and Russian online news articles, a two – sample *t*-test was performed. Inhere, independent variable is country and dependent variable is number of sources geographic origins. Remarkably, a two-sample *t*-test showed that there is no significant difference in terms of diversity of geographic origin for media houses sources in America ($M = 1.37$, $SD = .69$) and Russia ($M = 1.20$, $SD = .55$), $t(188.55) = -1.92$, $p = .056$. As a result of which H4 was rejected. Thus, Russian news were not found less diverse in regard of sources geographic origins than the American news whilst reporting on the withdrawal of American troops from

Afghanistan. Therefore, it could be inferred that both Russia and America cited the news sources equally from diverse countries.
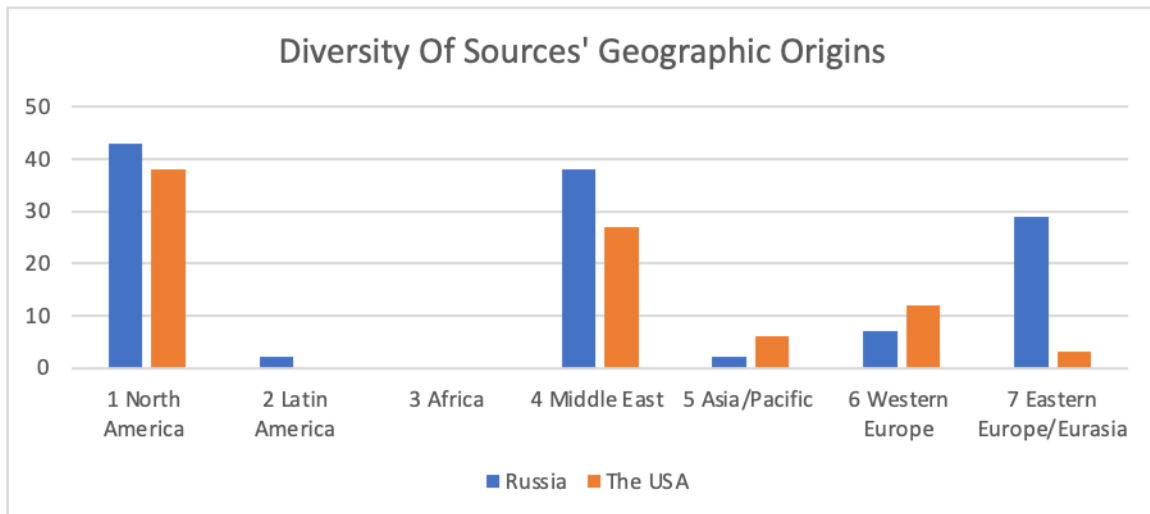
Figure 4 Diversity of sources geographic origins.

Remarkably, both Russia and America cite sources from North America and Middle East as it is seen in Figure 4. However, whilst Russia has cited sources from Eastern Europe, American media has chosen the experts or sources of information from Western Europe. Notably, the withdrawal from Afghanistan was not covered including the citations neither from Africa nor from Latin America.

4.3.3 Diversity of topics in news titles

In order to identify difference in number of topics in news titles in American and Russian online news articles, a two – sample t-test was performed. Inhere, independent variable is country and dependent variable is number of topics in news titles. A two – sample t-test demonstrated that Russian media houses have a significant higher score for diversity of news topics ($M = 1.69$, $SD = .72$) than America ($M = 1.19$, $SD = .42$), $t(159.12) = 5.10$, $p < .001$. Therefore, H5 was accepted. Hence, Russian news were found more diverse in terms of news topics than the American news in reporting on the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan.

Figure 5 Diversity of news topics.

Figure 5 corresponds to the diversity of news by each of the country. Inspection of this figure indicates that both Russia and America touched upon of mainly two topics: "politics" and "military/defence". Whilst American media has not covered the economic matters of the withdrawal, Russian media has dwelled on all of the topics' dimensions. It is apparent that there was a substantive amount of topics which has fallen under the category of "others".

4.3.4 Diversity of themes in the news

In order to identify difference in number of themes in in American and Russian online news articles, a two – sample *t*-test was performed. Inhere, independent variable is country and dependent variable is number of number of themes. In the last part of the quantitative content analysis, a two *t*-test showed that there is no significant difference in terms of news themes in media houses sources in America ($M = 1.76$, $SD = .55$) and Russia ($M = 1.91$, $SD = .85$), $t(197) = 1.61$, $p = .109$. Consequently, H6 was rejected. Thus, Russian news were not found more diverse in regard of themes than American news while reporting on the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan. Thus, it could be inferred that both Russian and American online news covered the same amount of news themes.

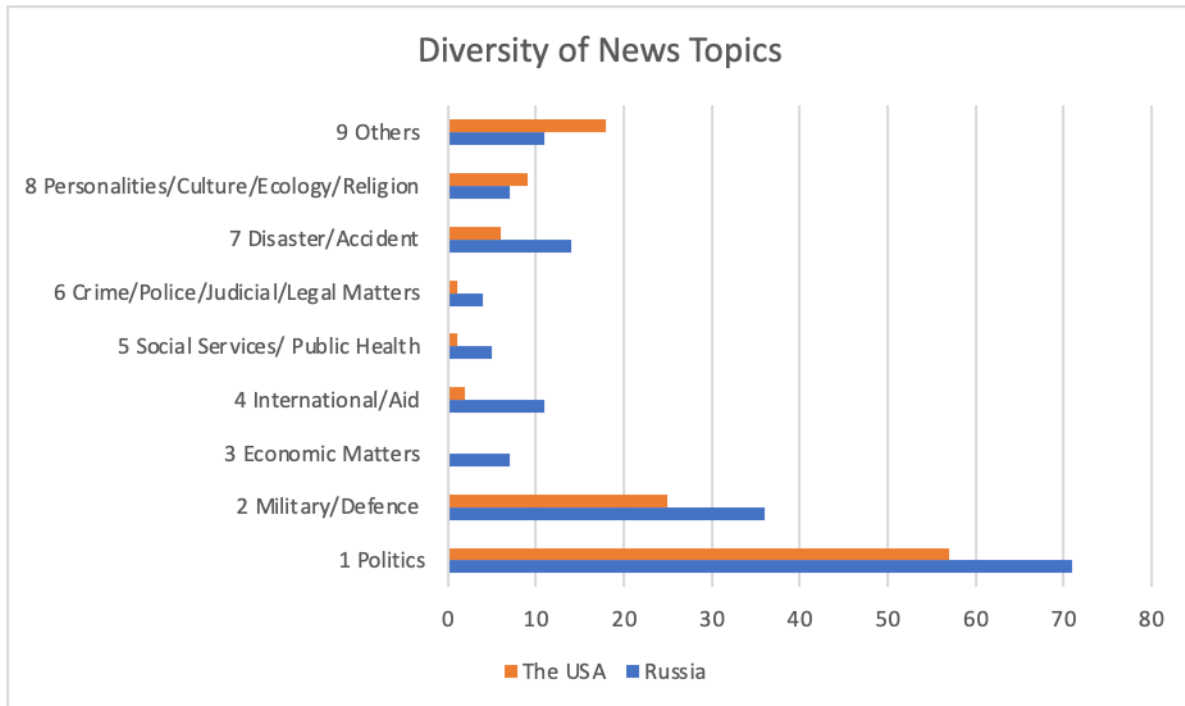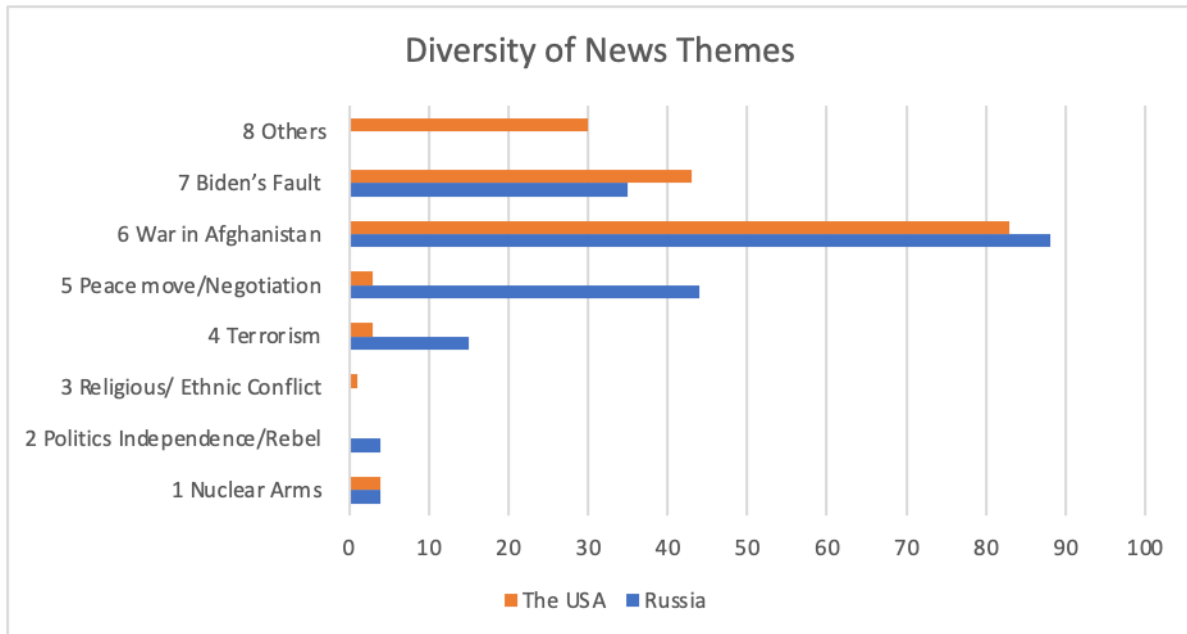*Figure 6* Diversity of news themes.

As evident from Figure 6, the main theme of both Russian and American media was "war in Afghanistan". In addition, "Biden's fault" theme prevailed in the articles as in Russia so and America. Noticeably, the theme of "religious/ethnic" conflict was negligible for Russian media, whilst the theme of "politics independence/rebel" was missing in the American.

To conclude, it appeared to be clear, that both Russian and American online news, alike the objectivity results, are diverse in their own way. The comparative analysis suggested that while American news are more diverse in source origin, Russian online news covered much more diverse topics. However, surprisingly both Russian and American journalists touched upon the alike number of themes and used sources from the similar number of geographic origins.

Moreover, Figure 7 depicts the conceptual modal of the hypothesis' results. The conceptual model indicates that half of the hypothesis (N=3) were rejected, whilst the other half (N=3) was accepted.
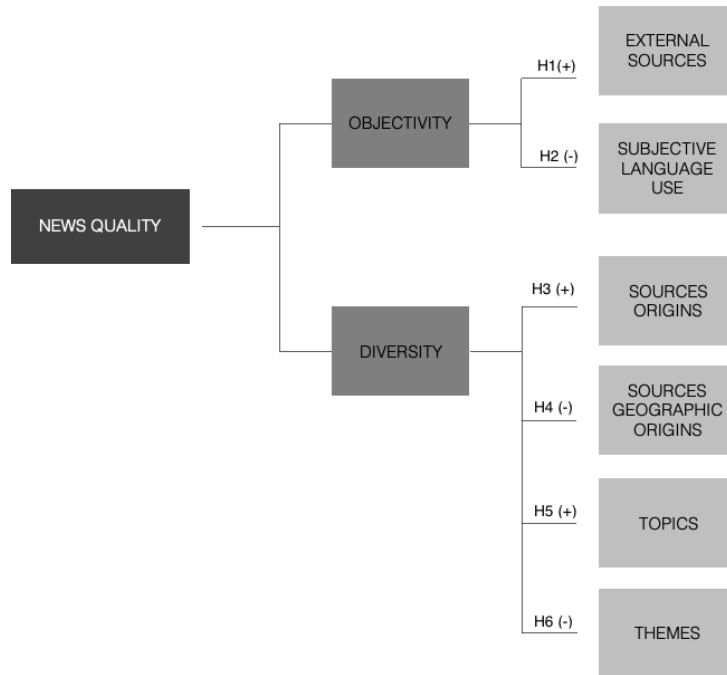
Figure 7 Conceptual modal depicting the results of hypothesis.

Therefore, the comparative alanysis suggests that Russian and American international online news reported on the American withdrawal from Afghanistan with a higher quality in different aspects. Whilst America was found significant in correlation with inclusion of external official sources and diversity of sources origins, Russian media houses were found statistically significant in terms of diversity of topics. There was no anticipated correlation between American international online news and diversity of sources' geographic origins and Russian international online news and the diversity of themes, as there was no significant difference found in the results of the analysis. Hence, the findings of this thesis partly in line with the results of the previous research and they will be more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusion.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Not all events make it to the dateline. Some incidents have the ability to occupy entirely the space provided by international online media houses. As such, the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan on the 31st of August 2021 was a significant event: America's 20-year involvement in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan had many authors. Almost every well-known international online news agency paid attention to the longest American war and tried to report the reality of the events to their audience.

The aim of this study was to assess differences and similarities in the news quality of two opposing countries with the most influential international media houses: FNC, NYT, RT and TASS, which covered the withdrawal during a two-months time period. It explored the international online news focusing on the citations, subjective language, sources, topics and themes. Previous research and findings of this thesis have showcased that the quality of international online news cannot be simplistically described as one country being better in covering war-related news than the other. News should be analyzed via multiple parameters. The result of this thesis favors the argument of Wu that, those events which are news flashed are not covered with an even quality by the media houses in different countries (2000). Objectivity and diversity, which define the news quality, of Russian and American international online news covering the American withdrawal of Afghanistan will be the focus of the discussion and conclusion chapter.

5.1 Summary of the result

According to the output from each country, it is clear that the quality of Russian news is distinct from that of American news. Overall, the quantitative content analysis has revealed various significant differences and similarities on objectivity and diversity between American and Russian international online news. Thus, the main findings of this study suggest that:

1) Both Russian and American international online news quality reporting differ in terms of objectivity in the use of official external sources, and subjective language, and diversity of source origins and news topics.

2) Both Russian and American international online news quality reporting are similar in terms of objectivity in omitting journalists' self-citation and diversity of source geographic origins and news themes.

5.2 Differences and commonalities in news objectivity between the American and Russian online news

Lippmann (1995) and Urbanski (2012) believed that every journalist should strive for objective reporting, so that another reporter could also achieve the same objective news article, just like in science scholars could use the same methodology to get the same results. However, Hanitzch et al.'s (2010) highlighted that different aspects of objectivism could be understood in various ways in the analyzed national contexts, so the objectivity norm could be idiosyncratic. The idiosyncrasy of objectivism was found in the results of this thesis.

5.2.1 Differences and commonalities in use of external official sources in American and Russian online news

It was expected in the sample of this thesis that American news would be of a higher quality in terms of objectivity, specifically, in terms of reliance on official external sources and of exclusion of personal viewpoints, which could be traced by the use of subjective language while reporting. However, the findings of this study are only partially in line with the theoretical arguments.

Reliance on official external sources

The findings extend those of Venger (2019), confirming that in times of conflict American news cites more official external sources, while Russian news relies on them much less. This might be connected to the previously described Russian media system, which influences the sources journalists include (Wu et al., 1996). As Russian media are mostly state owned, they are censored and thus, conflict media coverage is likely to be transmitted through the lens of a small pool of government-approved sources: specially vetted or state experts. This leads to the decrease of the number of official external sources, that could be cited by the Russian media.

Exclusion of opinions and personal values

It was expected that Russian news would include more personal opinions and values than American news, using subjective words and word combinations in reporting on the American troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan. However, the analysis proved that American news used significantly more subjective phrases; thus, the analysis does not correlate with Hanitzch et al.'s (2010) findings. This contradiction might appear because it was an American military operation, which is why the American online news relied more on emotional language and included their own views more often than the Russian journalists.

In addition, this finding that the American online articles used a significantly higher amount of subjective language in the text could be connected to the fact, that, even when the journalists try to include professional points of view or include an experts' neutral voice, it still could be an opinion, not a fact (Steele, 1995). Thus, this result of a high amount of subjective language could be explained by the amount of American sources used.

Furthermore, only one American journalist cited his own article in the news, which led to the general conclusion that journalists from America and Russia rarely cite themselves. Hence, the findings illustrate that online news from as America, as from Russia, is of high quality in terms of the omission of journalists' self-citations.

To conclude, this study indicates two main findings in terms of objectivity as a journalistic quality: 1) both Russian and American news objectivity in times of war tends to suffer more from the inclusion of opinionated and emotional subjective language and rarely from journalistic self-reference; 2) whilst Russian online news are more objective in terms of the exclusion of personal opinion, American online news achieved a better journalistic quality in terms of reliance on official external sources.

5.3 Differences in news diversity between the American and Russian online news in terms of diversity

This study partly supported the theoretical arguments on international online news diversity presented in Chapter 2 Theoretical framework.

Diversity of source origins

To start with, as it was expected, Russian news sources origins were found less diverse than American news origins in reporting on the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan. These findings extend those of Wu et al.'s (1996). These scholars have shown that due to the state of Russian media, the diversity of experts and news sources is limited, just like the number of external sources (Wu et al., 1996). This means that the Russian international online news is not particularly rich on the distribution of alternative interpretations of major world events, such as the withdrawal from Afghanistan, due to the potential threat posed by these news sources to Russian political stances.

Diversity of news topics

Next, as anticipated, Russian news topics were found to be more diverse than American news topics in reporting on the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan. This

finding extends those of Nikolaev's (2022), confirming that Russian media houses tend to report about events from different angles, considering different sides of the story.

Diversity of sources' geographic origins and Diversity of news themes

Lastly, two insignificant results were reported. Firstly, it was expected that the geographic origins of Russian news sources would be less diverse than American news sources in reporting on the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan. However, it occurred, that America and Russia cited equally from the same number of sources' geographic origins. Secondly, it was suggested that Russian news themes would be more diverse than American news themes in reporting on the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the analysis showed that the results were insignificant. Thus, Russian and American online news covered the same number of themes.

This study adds to the existing gap in the literature and will add to the scientific corpus on the comparative media coverage of war (Dimitrova & Connolly-Ahern, 2007; Nikolaev, 2022).

5.4 Overall discussion regarding the news quality in America and Russia

The American withdrawal repeated the history of USSR's withdrawal from Afghanistan after 33 years. It is intriguing to look retrospectively at the work of Sheikh (1990), who compared American and Russian journalism nearly 3 decades ago, and to see the results of this thesis - it feels almost like a déjà vu.

Scholars have proven that there are both similarities and extensive divergences between Russian and American coverage of news, and they have elucidated the reasons for this (Sheikh, 1990; Johnson & Weaver, 1994; Wu et al., 1996). As such, Johnson & Weaver (1994) highlighted that this might be due to different roles of the media in the two societies and the divergence in understandings of professional journalistic routines, definitions of professionalism, and practices. Wu et al. (1996) highlighted that journalism cannot be separated from political, economic, social, cultural, and historical dimensions of the state. For example, as attested by Malinkina & McLeod (2000), the intervention of the USSR in the affairs of Afghanistan was influenced by the USSR's ideology, which affected the quality of Russian media. On the contrary, American news quality was more stable, as the American political system did no experience such significant changes as Russian did: shifting from the Soviet empire to Russia. Thus, the Russian media was more liable to be influenced by the changes in the political regime than the American media. In addition, some of the results

might be influenced by the fact the Russian news outlets are mostly state-owned, while American are mostly privately-owned.

As discussed by Nord & Strömbäck (2006), the war in Afghanistan can be considered to be covered by American media with higher quality if comparing, for example, with the war in Iraq or the 9/11 attacks against the USA. However, there was no study found that assessed the quality of Russian media's war coverage in Afghanistan. This study aimed to assess the quality of online news in both countries in times of American withdrawal from Afghanistan.

5.5 Implications

This thesis highlights the importance of international online news quality and news framing in times of war. Both American and Russian journalists have the areas for improvement as in terms of both objectivity and diversity.

The results of this thesis have illustrated that American journalists tend to use opinionated phrases and emotional language, which decreases the quality of international online news to certain extent in times of war. This observation suggests that American journalists and reporters should be more heedful of their writing style and the language to improve the news objectivity while covering wars. In addition, the findings revealed that American practitioners are predisposed to uniformed coverage of events in terms of news topics, which also diminishes the news quality. This finding indicates that American journalists should enhance the news diversity by ensuring news topic diversity. Thus, the international audience could have access to news that portrays the issues in a broader way.

Similarly to American journalists, Russian media practitioners should improve their reporting style. First, Russian journalists rarely incorporate information from external official sources while covering military events, which lessens news objectivity. This finding suggests that reliance on external official citations should be taken into account to portray issues in a neutral and unbiased manner, preventing the audience from being misled. Second, it is necessary to enlarge the diversity of news sources origins. Thus, Russian media professionals could create journalism that encourages an international audience to have a pluralistic view and a more informed conclusion on the event.

5.6 Limitations and reflection

Although this study finds significant differences in the objectivity and diversity of American versus Russian international online news reporting, there are several research limitations to be reported. As such, the analysis cannot answer why there are such significant differences in reporting styles - why the Russian news turned out to be more objective in

regards to the exclusion of opinionated and emotional phrases and more diverse in terms of topic diversity, whilst American news appeared to be more objective concerning the inclusion of official external sources and more diverse with respect to diverse source origins. For example, whether this is happening due to the reporting war reporting environment and editorial policies, or for professional or political reasons, deserves further examination, possibly via in-depth interviews.

Moreover, though the quantitative method is pertinent for the comparative media content analysis, this method has its limitations. According to Krippendorff (2004), quantitative data can limit the interpretation of certain inferences. Hence, this study managed to showcase the diversity of topics and themes of the online articles, however the examples of how the journalists decide which topic or theme to cover in times of war could add to the scientific corpus on war coverage.

In addition, the choice of Russian media houses publishing news in English was limited to the state-owned news channels. The independent Russian media rarely publishes in English. This practice is mostly common when there is an event of a great importance (e.g. withdrawal from Afghanistan, Russian – Ukranian war) and there is an urge to publish the news for an international audience. However, the small number of published online articles about the American withdrawal from Afghanistan from independent media houses has not fulfilled the requirements for this thesis.

As proved by this thesis, most of war reporting relies on military and political sources. By nature, these sources of information are known as those which might have incentives to manipulate media reporting (Nord & Strömbäck; 2006) and thus, the news might not tell the real story of the event and some areas of coverage could be neglected, which could influence the overall quality of the news.

5.7 Suggestions for further research

The limitations discussed above suggest improvements for the future research. To start with, the news could be analyzed in depth qualitatively, in addition to the quantitative method. Scholars have reported that the combination of these two methods results in ensuring that the limitations of one type of data are balanced with the strengths of another (Jick, 1979). In addition, the use of triangulation in addressing the research question would improve the findings' credibility and validity (Jick, 1979). For example, it would be interesting to interview journalists about their practices, their reporting decisions strategy, internal factors

within media organizations, media houses' structural underpinnings, their difficulties that influences the quality of the published news, and the news omissions.

In the wake of this research, future study could comparatively analyze international and local Afghan news coverage of the withdrawal, which would enlarge and diversify the research sample. Local news reflects the events from the national perspective, and thus, it plays significant role in the delivering information to local communities (Gulyas, O'Hara & Eilenberg, 2019; Webster, 1984). In addition, as the quality of local news influences those who are in the danger zone, it could play a crucial role in people's lives (Gulyas, O'Hara & Eilenberg, 2018; Webster, 1984). Likewise, Russian news could be analysed in the Russian language. This would allow to examine independent media houses which was not possible in this thesis. Adding local national media houses might result in interesting findings concerning objectivity and diversity. As such, the knowledge about the quality of international and local national news could be advanced.

In addition, the results would have more accurate mean values due to the enlargement of the sampling scope.

As Figure 5 displayed that both American and Russian media houses have covered the the news topics under the category "others". Thus, it would be beneficial to include more diverse topics, especially with the more human focus.

And the last but not least, it would be beneficial to investigate the withdrawal from the media houses with different political orientations as political attitudes about the war have the ability to influence media greatly (Choi, Watt & Lynch; 2006). Thus, by adding new variables, the differences and commonalities in reporting in war by right or left-wing biased news could be traced, which would make it possible to assess the dependence of news quality on a political point of view.

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Appendix A: Codebook

Group 1: Independent variables (Name of the country covered the news)

Where were the news published?

> Russia 1

> America 2

Group 2: Dependent variables

#1 Objectivity

1.1 Quotation from external official sources

How many direct quotations are used?

To measure the amount of included official external sources, they should be

1) identified as a direct quotation if you see direct quotations, that could be identified by the verbs: "said", "reported", "stated", "noted", and synonyms of these words such as "told", "exclaimed", "asserting", "tweeted", "reported", "stated", "accused", "viewed", "criticized", "added", "mark", "explained", "warned", "acknowledged", "called", "touted", "emphasized", "interjected", "referenced", "advised", "continued", "reiterated", "went on to praise", "repeated", "explained", "retorted", "replied", "fired back", "confirmed", "slamming", "wrote", "referred", "asked", "argued", "predicted", "concurred", "read", "excoriated", "pledged", "meant", "pointed to", "declared", "assured", "claimed", "vowed", "stressed", "testified", "argued", "characterized", "described", "pledged", "faulted", "urged", "assessed", "described", "recorded", "announced", "insisted", "questioned", "mentioned", "cited", "pledged", "expressed" then count and note down the count number in D.

1. if one source provides more than one piece of information, count as 1.
2. when a direct quote is from another individual, count 1.

2) Write down the number of the author citing him/herself including previous report of his/her own. Note down the total number of personal citations in E.

1.2 Personal opinion and emotions

To what extent is the news objective?

To measure the exclusion of opinion and emotions in the articles, the deviation from objectivity should be calculated. Thus, the amount of subjective language in the text should be identified through the explicit reference to the inclusion of opinion and emotions in the text. Hence,

1) highlight an explicit reference to the opinion and emotions which could be identified via the subjective language

Indicators of subjective language:

1.1 Presentation and interpretation

* Modal verbs - can, must, have to, ought to, could, would,

* Modal adverbials - possibly, definitely, actually, hopefully, maybe, carefelly, intentionally, probably, potentially, possibly, franky, firmly, finally, presumably, supposedly, exactly, relatively, forcefully, honestly, basically, nearly

* Modal adverbs - still, already, only/just, ever, never, yet

* Modal functions of imperative - Come here!

* Modal functions of subjunctive - May our government set a good example.

* Intensifiers - quite, very, almost, hardly, likely, potentially, ultimately, pretty much, no doubt, absolutely, clear, firmly, most, biggest, extraordinary, the worst, even, barely, apparently, the ugliest, sadly, unfortunately, completely, significantly, totally, constantly, really, deeply, highly, the most, widely, obviously, extremely, certainly, totally, especially, crazy, definitely, too, undoubtedly, largely, bitterly, scarcely, of course, essentially, inevitably, consistently, at least, entirely, truly, desperately, specifically

* Cognitive verbs - say, think, hope, expect, seems, believe, know, guess, remind,

* Exclamations - How beautiful!

* Subjective coherence relations (presentational relations) - The neighbours are not at home, because their lights are out.

1.2 Representation of self of whom?

* First person pronouns - I, my, we, our

* Deictic elements (time and place adverbials) - now, here, yesterday , in the future, once

1.3 Interactivity with the addressee

* Second person pronouns – you, your

* Questions similar to – How to explain this crisis?

2) Note down the word count of all the content of the complete sentences in F and G.

3) Write down the total word count of this news article (from Word) excluding title, names, credits and disclaims in H.

4) Calculate the % in I.

#2 Diversity

2.1 Diversity of News Sources

How diverse is the news?

1) Count the number of diverse sources in the text.

2) If the source of the information is citing someone from another media house but we can categorize the source, then we code it from 1 to 9. If the news mentions the other news or correspondent from the other news, then assign it under 10

News is coming from:

* home country government - other countries governments(excluding US government, as it is a separate category) - 1

* home country private - 2

* international organization - 3

* wire agency (a business organization which gathers news for distribution e.g. Associated Press) and media agencies - 4

* own correspondent (means the journalist didn't include official external resources and it is solely journalists' text) - 5

* US government (including top military representatives) - 6

* Russian government - 7

* Taliban government - 8

* Afghan government - 9

* others (book, ngo) - 10

3) Write down the total number of diverse sources in J.

1. Diversity of Geographic Origins

How diverse is the geography of sources in the news?

1) Count the number of sources' geographic origin in the text.

The geographic origin refers to the location of the news sources. The eight main categories were:

*North America - 1

* Latin America - 2

* Africa - 3

* Middle East - 4

* Asia/Pacific - 5

* Western Europe - 6

* Eastern Europe/Eurasia -7

2)   Write down the total number of diverse geographic origins of sources in L.

2.   Diversity of news Topics

How many topics are covered in the news?

1)   Count the number of news topics in the title.

The type of situation the news is mainly about:

* politics - 1

* military/defence - 2

* economic matters - 3

* international/aid - 4

* social services/ public health -5

* crime/police/judicial/legal matters - 6

* disaster/accident -7

* personalities/culture/ecology/religion - 8

* others – 9

2) Write down the total number of diverse topics in M.

3.   News themes were further divided

How diverse are the themes of news?

1)   Count the number of themes in the article.

News themes were divided into seven categories:

*nuclear arms - 1

* politics independence/rebel - 2

* religious/ ethnic conflict - 3

* terrorism - 4

* peace move/negotiation - 5

* war in Afghanistan -6

* Biden's fault – 7

* Others - 8

2) Write down the total number of diverse themes in N.

APPENDIX B: Sample

1 Russian news articles

1	https://tass.com/world/1342513
2	https://tass.com/world/1342369
3	https://tass.com/world/1341797
4	https://tass.com/world/1340943
5	https://tass.com/world/1340883
6	https://tass.com/world/1340881
7	https://tass.com/world/1340863
8	https://tass.com/politics/1340587
9	https://tass.com/press-releases/1340119
10	https://tass.com/world/1339241
11	https://tass.com/world/1338887
12	https://tass.com/politics/1338613
13	https://tass.com/world/1338403
14	https://tass.com/world/1338085
15	https://tass.com/politics/1337851
16	https://tass.com/world/1337951
17	https://tass.com/world/1337903
18	https://tass.com/politics/1337317
19	https://tass.com/world/1337313
20	https://tass.com/world/1336875
21	https://tass.com/world/1336839
22	https://tass.com/world/1336805
23	https://tass.com/world/1336779
24	https://tass.com/politics/1336649
25	https://tass.com/politics/1336645
26	https://tass.com/politics/1336575

27	https://tass.com/world/1336117
28	https://tass.com/world/1335963
29	https://tass.com/politics/1335851
30	https://tass.com/world/1335609
31	https://tass.com/world/1335543
32	https://tass.com/world/1335537
33	https://tass.com/world/1335505
34	https://tass.com/world/1335499
35	https://tass.com/russia/1335493
36	https://tass.com/world/1335453
37	https://tass.com/world/1335421
38	https://tass.com/politics/1335383
39	https://tass.com/world/1335051
40	https://tass.com/world/1335019
41	https://tass.com/world/1335027
42	https://tass.com/world/1334999
43	https://tass.com/world/1335009
44	https://tass.com/world/1334973
45	https://tass.com/world/1334965
46	https://tass.com/world/1334941
47	https://tass.com/politics/1334805
48	https://tass.com/world/1334587
49	https://tass.com/world/1334575
50	https://tass.com/world/1334487
51	https://www.rt.com/russia/536138-us-senator-biden-pentagon/
52	https://www.rt.com/russia/536101-putin-erdogan-syria-talks/
53	https://www.rt.com/op-ed/536129-taliban-pakistan-nuclear-bolton/

54	https://www.rt.com/russia/535799-russia-spy-chief-afghanistan/
55	https://www.rt.com/news/535469-pentagon-probe-afghan-civilians-murder/
56	https://www.rt.com/search?q=Buyer's+remorse'%3A+Biden's+approval+rating+plummets+as+voters+view+Trump+more+favorably+amid+Afghan+w&type=
57	https://www.rt.com/usa/535486-iran-president-un-speech/
58	https://www.rt.com/news/535469-pentagon-probe-afghan-civilians-murder/
59	https://www.rt.com/usa/535464-amazon-hire-afghan-refugees/
60	https://www.rt.com/search?q=Biden+hails+end+of+'relentless+war'+in+first+UN+speech%2C+but+vows+to+focus+on+&type=
61	https://www.rt.com/news/535310-afghanistan-drone-strike-victims/
62	https://www.rt.com/news/535275-taliban-girl-secondary-schools/
63	https://www.rt.com/news/535144-blinken-israel-abraham-accords/
64	https://www.rt.com/usa/534952-oliver-stone-afghanistan-911-revenge/
65	https://www.rt.com/news/534913-australia-uk-us-alliance-nuclear/
66	https://www.rt.com/usa/534854-trump-milley-china-treason/
67	https://www.rt.com/usa/534833-milley-book-trump-coup/
68	https://www.rt.com/news/534778-unheard-voices-journalist-refugee/
69	https://www.rt.com/usa/534757-blinken-kabul-afghan-lgbtq/
70	https://www.rt.com/usa/534596-george-w-bush-911-speech/
71	https://www.rt.com/news/535126-imran-khan-interview-sco/
72	https://www.rt.com/usa/534502-mike-pence-biden-vaccine-mandate/
73	https://www.rt.com/russia/534490-russia-deployment-tanks-afghan-border/
74	https://www.rt.com/uk/534452-mi5-terror-plots-afghanistan/
75	https://www.rt.com/russia/534426-wrangel-grandson-afghanistan-withdrawal/
76	https://www.rt.com/news/534367-americans-foreigners-depart-kabul-flight/
77	https://www.rt.com/news/534338-afghanistan-us-taliban-doha/
78	https://www.rt.com/news/534137-us-working-taliban-flights-afghanistan/
79	https://www.rt.com/russia/534090-g7-china-meeting-afghanistan/
80	https://www.rt.com/usa/534102-state-department-hinders-evacuations/

81	https://www.rt.com/usa/534020-us-evacuees-blocked-by-taliban/
82	https://www.rt.com/usa/534017-afghan-refugee-food-complaint/
83	https://www.rt.com/usa/534012-jim-acosta-tucker-carlson-refugees/
84	https://www.rt.com/usa/533980-florida-restaurant-joe-biden/
85	https://www.rt.com/news/533965-afghanistan-women-rights-protest/
86	https://www.rt.com/usa/533935-afghan-withdrawal-gopro-video/
87	https://www.rt.com/usa/533921-biden-poll-afghanistan/1
88	https://www.rt.com/news/533789-moazzam-begg-afghanistan-bagram-guantanamo/
89	https://www.rt.com/news/533751-assange-snowden-nobel-prize/
90	https://www.rt.com/usa/533696-pentagon-afghanistan-anger-pain/
91	https://www.rt.com/usa/533677-biden-harris-approval-ratings-bottom/
92	https://www.rt.com/usa/533683-american-journalists-kabul-stranded/
93	https://www.rt.com/usa/533681-florida-restaurant-bans-biden-supporters/
94	https://www.rt.com/news/533667-kabul-airport-tour-taliban-afghanistan/
95	https://www.rt.com/uk/533670-uk-military-afghanistan-usa/
96	https://www.rt.com/news/533647-kandahar-taliban-victory-parade/
97	https://www.rt.com/usa/533661-ann-coulter-biden-trump-afghanistan/
98	https://www.rt.com/russia/533644-pope-putin-criticism-west-afghanistan/
99	https://www.rt.com/news/533637-biden-ghani-phone-call/
100	https://www.rt.com/russia/533631-us-interference-abroad-end-era/

2 American news articles

No.	Link
1	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/20/us/politics/biden-afghanistan-fact-check.html?searchResultPosition=1
2	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/09/04/us/politics/biden-doctrine-afghanistan-foreign-policy.html?searchResultPosition=2
3	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/24/world/asia/afghanistan-g7-us-withdrawal.html?searchResultPosition=3
4	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/09/28/us/politics/milley-senate-hearing-afghanistan.html?searchResultPosition=4
5	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/16/us/politics/afghanistan-withdrawal-congress.html?searchResultPosition=5
6	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/09/30/us/politics/biden-trump-comparisons.html?searchResultPosition=1
7	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/09/30/us/politics/senate-afghan-aid.html?searchResultPosition=2
8	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/09/29/world/un-general-assembly-speeches.html?searchResultPosition=3
9	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/09/29/world/europe/erdogan-putin-turkey-russia.html?searchResultPosition=4
10	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/09/29/us/politics/house-hearing-milley-austin-afghanistan.html?searchResultPosition=5
11	https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/07/world/asia/taliban-afghanistan.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article
12	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/09/28/us/politics/milley-austin-afghanistan-war.html?searchResultPosition=8
13	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/09/27/us/politics/general-milley-testimony-trump.html?searchResultPosition=9
14	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/09/25/opinion/joe-biden-democrats-trump.html?searchResultPosition=10
15	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/09/13/opinion/china-taiwan-afghanistan.html?searchResultPosition=1
16	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/09/04/us/politics/biden-doctrine-afghanistan-foreign-policy.html?searchResultPosition=2

17	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/17/us/politics/lawmakers-from-both-parties-express-fury-over-the-withdrawal-from-afghanistan.html?searchResultPosition=3
18	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/17/world/asia/afghanistan-united-states.html?searchResultPosition=4
19	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/18/world/europe/britain-afghanistan-johnson-biden.html?searchResultPosition=5
20	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/08/world/asia/afghanistan-taliban-kunduz.html?searchResultPosition=6
21	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/13/world/europe/afghanistan-eu-us-credibility.html?searchResultPosition=7
22	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/31/opinion/Afghanistan-taliban-escape.html?searchResultPosition=8
23	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/12/us/politics/marines-evacuation-afghanistan.html
24	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/21/opinion/us-afghanistan-pakistan-taliban.html
25	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/31/us/politics/usa-residents-in-afghanistan.html
26	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/22/us/politics/isis-kabul-airport.html
27	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/live/2021/08/20/world/biden-afghanistan-taliban
28	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/22/us/afghanistan-usa-withdrawal.html
29	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/article/afghanistan-war-us.html
30	https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/10/world/asia/afghanistan-taliban-farah-cities.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article
31	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/20/technology/afghanistan-taliban-social-media.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article
32	https://www-nytimes-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/2021/08/18/world/asia/taliban-victory-strategy-afghanistan.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article
33	https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/13/world/asia/afghanistan-rapid-military-collapse.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article

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