*Arben FETOSHI, Dren GËRGURI**

AGENDA SETTING ABOUT THE WAR IN UKRAINE: THE IMPACT OF TELEVISION IN KOSOVO

Abstract. *The article examines agenda-setting factors in Kosovo concerning the war in Ukraine. Due to the complex situation in the Western Balkans and the context of the tensions between Kosovo and Serbia, the presented research explains the role played by television in the hybrid media environment as the most important source of information in the crisis. The research looks at how television has impacted how the public views the war in Ukraine, and how it has covered the situation both before and after the invasion. A mixed methodology consisting of a questionnaire, television monitoring, content analysis, and desk research was thus adopted on the empirical level. On this level, 716 news stories were analysed between 1 February and 31 March 2022 and a survey with 1,312 respondents from Kosovo was conducted in April and May 2022 to identify different agents in the agenda setting and how that works with respect to the war in Ukraine. The research results show that the war in Ukraine has dominated the agenda of television stations in Kosovo, while the effects of their reporting vary according to the audience's demographic characteristics.*
Keywords: *agenda setting, framing, Kosovo, public opinion, Ukraine, war*

Introduction

The war in Ukraine – the biggest threat to peace and security in Europe and estimated to "go beyond its relations with NATO" (Mankoff, 2022) – continues to be the event currently attracting the greatest international attention. News of thousands dead and over 6 million displaced (UNHCR, 2022) since Russia began its invasion on 24 February 2022 has

* Arben Fetoshi, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism, University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina", Kosovo; Dren Gërguri, PhD, Teaching Assistant, Department of Journalism, University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina", Kosovo.

dominated the media agenda around the world. "The First Social Media War" or "World Cyberwar I", as announced by the Ukrainian Minister of Digital Transformation (Brown, 2022), are names that reflect the intensity and use of social media during this war. The ability to disseminate information in real-time and the importance of videos appearing on platforms like Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram have determined the strategic use for information, disinformation, and audience influence. The aggression that has shocked the world has also challenged professional reporting due to the difficulty of verifying sources in an environment 'bombarded' with information suiting the interests of the parties. For Ukraine, social media has provided new channels to share information that have helped with the resistance and secure external support, while for Russia it has provided an opportunity to produce the "fog of war" to hide the truth (Ciuriak, 2022). Therefore, major media organisations that have sent journalists to Ukraine to cover the bombings, violence and refugee crisis have taken special measures against fake news and propaganda content (New York Times, 2022). Even in the media of Kosovo this event has become top news, not only for its global importance, but also because of the geopolitical context of the area. Namely, regardless of the geographical distance from the war, the still-unresolved conflict with Serbia and its ties with Russia give reasons for constant concern regarding the stability of Kosovo.

While five of the six Western Balkan countries support Ukraine and have imposed sanctions on Russia, Serbia is the only one not to have harmonised its foreign policy with that of the European Union, despite it being in the process of membership negotiations (Taylor and Trkanjec, 2022). Yet, Kosovo continues not to be recognised by five EU Member States and is opposed by Russia and China in the UN Security Council.[1] For this reason, on 9 September 2010 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in which it accepted the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legality of Kosovo's independence and welcomed the EU's willingness to facilitate dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia (UN, 2022). While this dialogue started in 2011, it has not yet been concluded due to the opposing positions held by the parties. Belgrade continues to refuse to recognise Kosovo, while Prishtina does not accept any compromise that would violate its constitutional order. Meanwhile, in an attempt to justify the invasion of Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin has used Kosovo as a precedent, referring to NATO's intervention in 1999 (Tharoor, 2022). This trend has increased insecurity in Kosovo, even though researchers explain that there

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[1]   *Spain, Romania, Slovakia, Greece and Cyprus are five EU member states that have not yet recognised Kosovo's independence that is declared on 17 February 2008, while its membership in the UN continues to be opposed by Russia and China, which are permanent members of the Security Council.*

is actually little similarity between Kosovo and Ukraine. "... It is imperative to emphasize the difference between a limited, third-party intervention amid a state-sponsored campaign of ethnic cleansing – as was the case in Kosovo – and a calculated, full-on territorial invasion of a sovereign state for geo-political purposes – as in Ukraine", says Sidita Kushi, a professor of political sciences (2022). However, given the complex situation in the Western Balkans and the current tensions between Kosovo and Serbia, we evaluated the research concerning the media's agenda-setting role during the war in Ukraine, with a special interest not only in the media studies effect, but in the importance of this topic today as well. The aim of this article consists of examining the agenda-setting factors in a hybrid media system, concentrating on the role of television as the main source of information in times of crisis (Mehrabi, Hassan and Sham, 2009).

Theoretical perspective

Public opinion in democratic societies is primarily the result of what the media publishes. According to the Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle (2007), the term "fourth estate" was first used by Edmund Burke in a parliamentary debate in 1787, and refers to the influence and power of the media alongside three other powers: the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. Although today we have a more fragmented and polycentric media environment as an outcome of digital technology, the media's ability to dictate public attention has not changed (Grossman, 2022). The hybrid media system, which Chadwick (2017: 4) defines as "the interaction of old and new media logics", has altered media practices, audiences and the number of actors in political communication. According to that author, the model that shapes society today should avoid the idea of a passive audience and take into account the ability of "audience" activists to play a direct instrumental role in producing media content. Noting the systematic growth of the integration of the Internet and television, Chadwick (2017: 208) assesses that a "hybrid media system exhibits a balance between the older logics of transmission and reception and the newer logics of circulation, recirculation, and negotiation". Based on this hybridised reality, this research deals with the interaction of different factors in shaping how the Kosovar public perceives the war in Ukraine by using a unified theoretical framework that includes agenda setting and framing.

Agenda Setting and Framing

The media's ability to direct public attention to certain issues is explained in Agenda-Setting Theory, originally presented by Maxwell McCombs and

Donald Shaw in 1972. They combined two research methods to test agenda setting: a comparison of the media's agenda through analysis of news coverage with survey responses from the public, and "the findings showed that the media may not succeed in influencing what the public thinks, but they are very successful in influencing what the public thinks about" (Wanta and Alkazemi, 2017). Borrowing Walter Lippman's (1922) phrase "the picture in our heads", McCombs (2011) argues that the agenda of issues presented by the media affects the picture we will associate with those issues. These mental images are exactly where agenda setting and framing converge. In their study "The Convergence of Agenda Setting and Framing", McCombs and Ghanem claim that the second level of agenda setting – attributes and framing – are synonymous concepts that complement each other. Attribute agenda setting explicitly integrates the theory with framing research. The major focal points of framing research, frames, the process of framing and framing effects are, respectively, attribute agendas, the dynamics of the agenda-setting process, including its contingent conditions, and agenda-setting influence or effects (McCombs and Ghanem, 2001: 69). Yet, while agenda setting is limited to issues and events that are important (salience), framing constructs the media reality. According to the researchers, framing is the construction of an agenda with a limited number of thematically related attributes to create a coherent picture of events or special issues. Therefore, to explain agenda setting in Kosovo, the study focuses on *affective* attributes (positive, neutral, negative), but not *cognitive* ones (Wanta and Mikusova, 2010). Framing does not focus on the issues or topics that are chosen for coverage by the media, but on the specific ways in which they are presented (Scheufele and Tewskbury, 2007). Since the topic of the research is an international conflict with potential effects in Kosovo, the agenda of attributes in media reporting is evident through the negative portrayal of Russia, the labelling of the military intervention in Ukraine as an aggression, the denunciation of the tendency to link it with NATO's intervention in 1999, and its main source – the Western media. Considering that "the first level of agenda setting is the transmission of object salience, and the second level is the transmission of attribute salience" (McCombs and Ghanem, 2001: 68), in the research they are measured through the position of reports in news editions and attribute categorisation. However, the media is not the sole factor influencing the public agenda. This means that the public agenda is not created linearly, but is affected by social and psychological factors. In Kosovo, this means that the public's perception of the war in Ukraine is a result of the historical context of the long-running conflict with Serbia, the fact that this conflict is still unsettled[2], and

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2 *The Kosovo–Serbia dialogue with the mediation of the EU has not yet been concluded with a legally binding agreement on the normalisation of relations.*

Russia's continued opposition to Kosovo's independence. Given that the transformation of the media environment has enabled the public to have a substantial impact on agenda building and news framing, through social media activity citizens help determine what is newsworthy (Moy, Tewksbury and Rivke, 2016). Thus, considering that in times of crisis people return to television more due to its credibility (Mehrabi, Hassan and Sham, 2009) and because "the hybrid media system constantly requires judgments and interventions regarding which medium is more appropriate to communicate a political event or process" (Chadwick, 2017: 22), this research analyses the content and reporting of Kosovo's television stations in the context of *inter media agenda setting*.

Intermedia agenda setting

While the Internet and especially the Web 2.0 technology has brought a revolutionary change in communication with the "hegemony" of social platforms (Statista, 2023) and "citizen journalism", television continues to maintain its dominance by being able to *adapt* (Cela, 2015; Chadwick, 2017: 45). According to researchers, the Internet has dictated a new model of television because the new possibilities enabled by retroactive consumption and an on-demand audience (VOD) facilitate a completely different approach compared to classic television. Television has not lost its audience, but its audience is increasingly migrating to the online environment (Ciacu and Tanase, 2012). Kosovo is on the same trajectory and television continues to be the most trusted media type (Zeneli, 2021: 141), while Facebook is the most frequently used social media (Datareportal, 2023). Still, despite the great impact of the Internet on users due to its volume and interactive nature, it is impossible to measure this impact outside of interactions with traditional media. Studies show that Internet users depend strongly on online traditional media sites, especially while seeking information on current events (Margolis and Resnick, 2000: 113). The Internet can therefore be used to examine *intermedia* agenda setting – the impact of online media on traditional media, and vice versa. Even though social media are more accessible, faster and more popular among young people, elite newspapers like The New York Times in the United States are the most important *intermedia agenda setters* (Vonbun et al., 2016). In relation to major events, the increase in competition between media organisations promotes intermedia agenda setting because, in order not to contradict the expectations of the audience, they follow and mutually influence each other. According to them, neither online media nor television are *faster*, they are also more likely to be monitored by other journalists and more likely to be agenda-setters. Meanwhile, if we take account of the factors that determine the media agenda such as

news sources (representatives of institutions, politicians, public figures etc.), *the professional norms held by journalists*, *the ideological positions* of the media and their *influences* on each other (McCombs and Gahnem, 2001), then *intermedia agenda setting* in Kosovo gives support for the view that "in the hybrid media system shows that the agenda of different types of media are often homogeneous, highly interdependent and self-referential. As a result, a common national agenda still appears to exist, especially for high salience issues" (Langer and Gruber, 2021). Thus, despite the differentiation of the audience in terms of its use of varying types of media, salience, attributes and framing are the components that constitute the mechanism of their influence on the public agenda.

Methodology[3]

This study analyses the effects of the media on the Kosovar public regarding the war in Ukraine and the way of television reporting on the crisis before and after the invasion. The geopolitical context, continuous mentioning of Kosovo by Moscow in an attempt to justify the aggression, and the still unresolved conflict with Serbia, an ally of Russia, make research on the impact of the war on Kosovo very valuable. The fact that public perception is the result of being exposed to different types of media led us to determine that we needed primary data from citizen surveys, whereas for the research on television reporting we collected data arising from the monitoring of central news editions. We chose television, given that "in times of crisis people turn to television more" (Eddy and Fletcher, 2022) and in Kosovo television continues to be the most reliable source of information (Zeneli, 2021: 141). As a result, for the empirical level a combined methodology including a questionnaire, monitoring, data analysis, and desk research was used. The questionnaire was designed to allow respondents to give more than one answer to questions related to the Russia–Ukraine war, the type of media they relied on to be informed, and their assessment of the quality of media reporting on the war. Based on data from the Kosovo Statistics Agency (KSA, 2021), in order to ensure a representative sample 1,312 citizens were surveyed, divided according to Kosovo's seven regions: Prishtina with 354 respondents, Prizren with 254, Peja with 171, Mitrovica with 149, Gjilan with 135, Ferizaj with 132 and Gjakova with 117. The number of respondents in the regions was determined in proportion to the number of households in those regions; for instance, Prishtina with 198,897

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[3] *Second-year students at the Department of Journalism of the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" were involved in this research by administering the questionnaire in seven regions of Kosovo and thus deserve special thanks.*

households has 354 respondents, Prizren with 177,742 households has 254 respondents and so on.

Table 1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

	Total no. of respondents: 1,312	100%
SEX		
Female	586	44.7
Male	695	53.0
Valid	1,281	97.7
Missing	31	2.3
AGE		
18–25	392	29.9
26–35	204	15.5
36–45	215	16.4
46–55	228	17.4
56–65	171	13.0
Over 60	93	7.1
Valid	1,303	99.3
Missing	9	0.7
RESIDENCE		
Urban	512	39.0
Rural	797	60.7
Valid	1,309	99.8
Missing	3	0.2
EDUCATION		
Elementary school	157	12.0
High school	527	40.2
University	555	42.3
None	53	4.0
Valid	1,292	98.5
Missing	20	1.5

Source: The survey conducted for this study.

The survey was carried out in April and May 2022, while for the data processing and analysis we used SPSS Statistics 21. We based the monitoring method on the main criteria of the Agenda-Setting Theory: position and length of the story. As McCombs and Shaw state, "prominence in the television news format is defined by placement as one of the first three news items or any discussion which lasted more than 45 seconds" (Griffin, 2013: 380). In addition to the three main news in news editions, by categorising the content as positive, negative or neutral, the framing effect of TV channels was measured. To determine the media agenda, central news editions were analysed on the public television broadcaster RTK (News) and four commercial televisions: KTV (Evening News), RTV21 (21 Live News), Klan Kosova (News 20:00) and T7 (Central News). The research sample

encompassed 270 main news editions between 1 February and 31 March 2022. In order to identify how the agenda of Kosovo's televisions had changed, it was decided to monitor the main news editions before and after the start of the war in Ukraine. The questionnaire was administered a few weeks later after we had monitored the TV news editions with a view to understanding how the TV reporting had impacted the audience's perceptions. Building on the research questions about the media agenda–public agenda relationship in Kosovo regarding the war in Ukraine, we posited the following hypotheses:

H1: The greater the importance of an event, the stronger the influence of television news in setting the public agenda concerning it.

H2: The demographic characteristics of the audience in Kosovo are not a determining factor for the effects of television reporting on the war in Ukraine.

Analysis of the findings

The majority of Kosovo citizens rely on television to be informed about the war in Ukraine. In the question on their source of information, respondents could choose more than one option. Out of 1,312 respondents in the country's 7 regions, 65.3% indicated that they were informed by television, 46% by social media, 33% by portals and only 5.4% by radio. These figures confirm that in a hybrid media environment the audience tends to use different media types at the same time.

Figure 1 reveals the growing use of social media in Kosovo, while according to Zeneli (2021: 141) television is the most reliable source, calling for an explanation of the effects based on the *intermedia agenda setting* concept.

Although data show a continuous rise in social media use by the audience in Kosovo (the Datareportal (2023) reports 2017–2023), insufficient data are available to be able to compare the use of these media from generation to generation. Figure 2 displays differences in how media were being used by different generations in 2022.
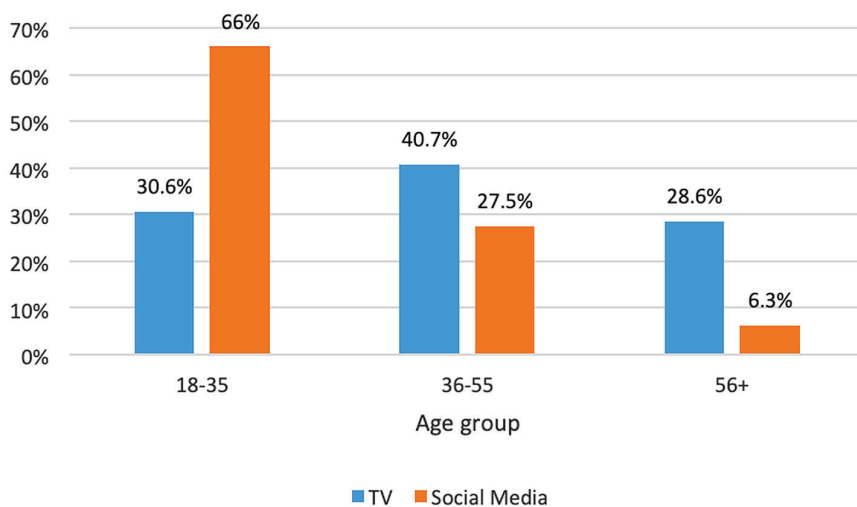
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Figure 1: SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE WAR IN UKRAINE
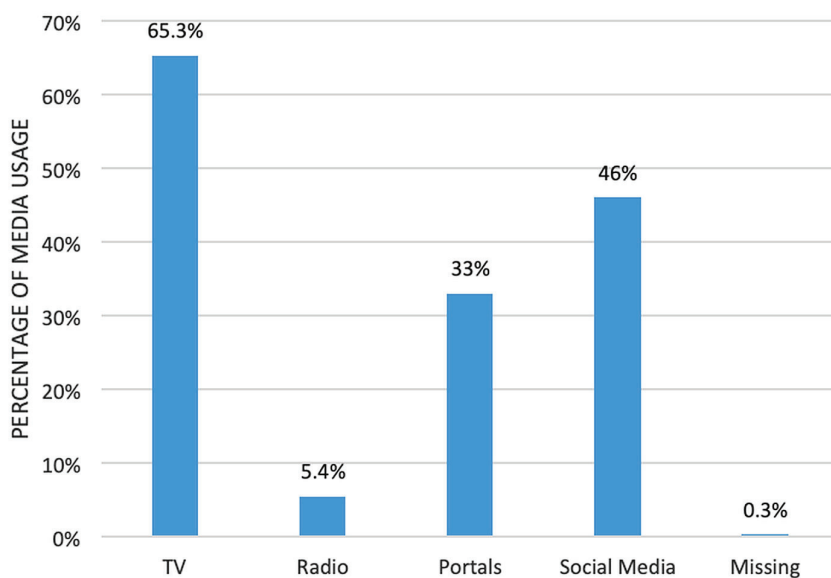
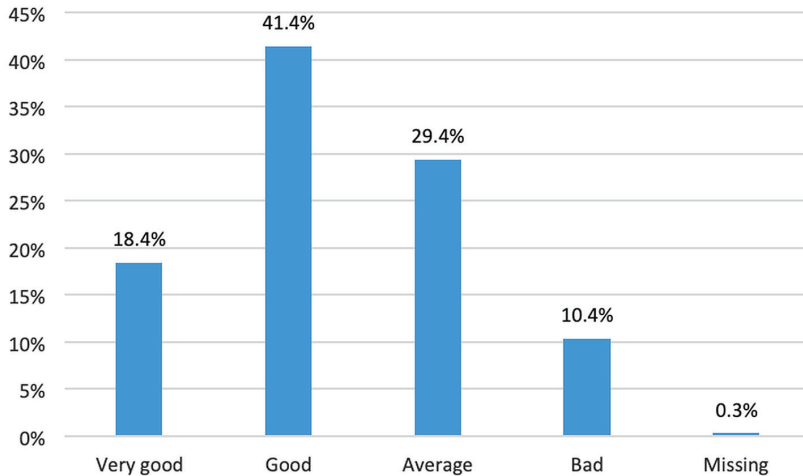Source: Own survey conducted for this study.

Figure 2: MEDIA USAGE WITHIN DIFFERENT GENERATIONS IN 2022

Source: Own survey conducted for this study.

Meanwhile, as far as media reporting is concerned, the majority of citizens expressed their satisfaction, evaluating it as "good" (41.5%) and "very good" (18.4%). The remainder (30%) gave an 'average' rating and just 10.4% of them rated it as "bad".

Figure 3: CITIZENS' ASSESSMENTS OF KOSOVO MEDIA REPORTING ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE

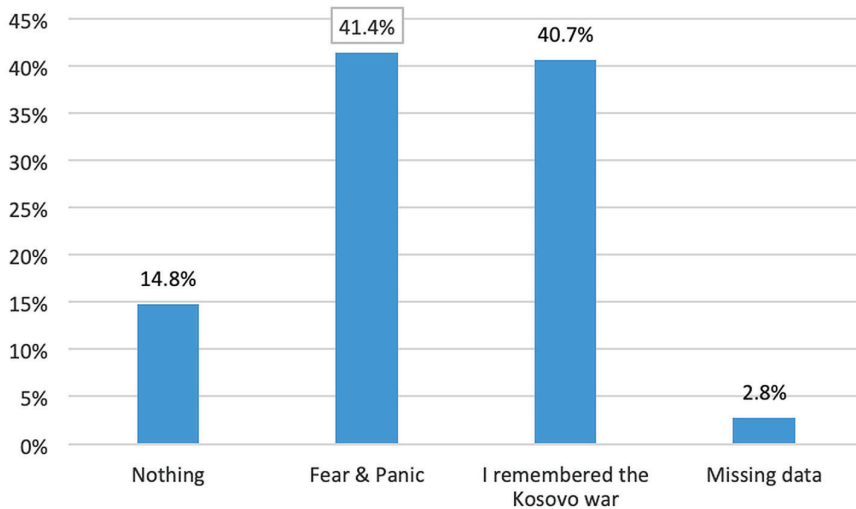Source: Own survey conducted for this study.

The formation of public opinion in Kosovo confirms McCombs' assertion that the effect of the media depends on people's need for orientation. The survey results also show that citizens' perception of the media reporting is congruent with the results of monitoring the reported content, not only as concerns the volume of exposure and importance of the topics, but also with the attributes the media ascribes to the issues on which it reports. Among the 716 news reports on these television stations, 61% were directly related to the war in Ukraine, while the rest dealt with the effects of the war in Kosovo, mainly economic ones, such as the higher prices of certain products. However, as McCombs notes, the media is never the only factor that determines the public agenda. The media sets the agenda only when citizens perceive its reports (news stories) to be relevant (McCombs, 2011). In this sense, public opinion in Kosovo is the outcome of the socio-political context, which also includes the official positions in politics, the influence of the unresolved conflict with Russia's ally, Serbia, and the influence of the attitude to the Western powers, which the citizens see as the saviours of Kosovo.[4]

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[4] This perception is the result of NATO's military intervention (March–June 1999) that ended the war in Kosovo.

The effects of media reporting on citizens of Kosovo

Media reporting on the war in Ukraine has brought back memories to the citizens of the Kosovo war and caused the fear of a new one. When asked about what feelings were caused by the news about the war in Ukraine, 40.8% of respondents expressed that they remembered the horrors of the war in Kosovo, 41.4% felt fear and panic, while only 14.9% answered "nothing". The fear of the possibility of a new conflict developing in Kosovo is also stressed by the analysis and opinions of foreign organisations and researchers, linking it to Russia's interest in shifting international attention away from its aggression in Ukraine (McBride, 2022; Dragas, 2022).

Figure 4: EFFECTS ON SOCIETY CAUSED BY KOSOVAR MEDIA REPORTING ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE
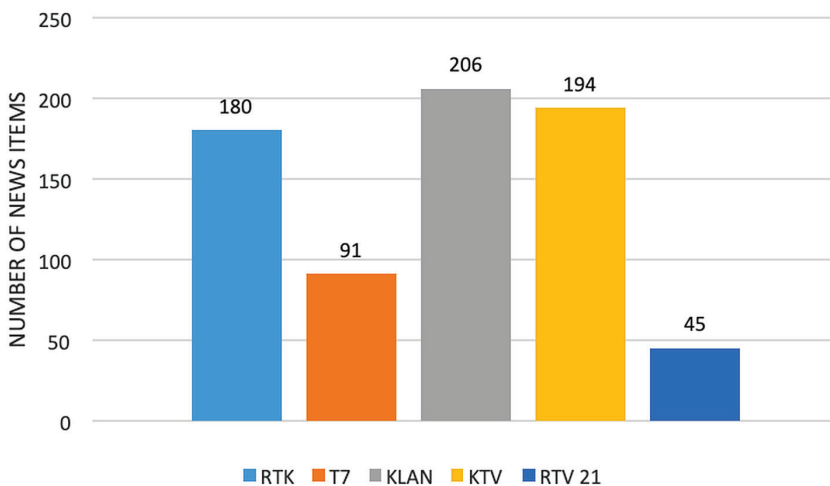
Source: Own survey conducted for this study.

Media reporting has caused fear and panic among some citizens, while the majority of respondents (58.9%) who declared that they were afraid of a new war are aged 18–25, namely, young people who did not experience the last war in Kosovo. In this age group, female respondents (65.9%) and those from urban areas (62.6%) expressed greater fear. Education does not seem to be decisive in whether citizens are influenced by media reporting because respondents with a higher level of education (university) answered that they are more afraid (64.1%) than respondents who had only completed secondary school (58.6%). Meanwhile, the age group in which media reporting created the lowest amount of fear and panic is respondents over 65 years old, the generation that was in their forties during the last war in Kosovo.

Further, the biggest share of those who stated that they remembered the Kosovo war were in the age groups over 65 (62.4%) and 46–55 (61%). Naturally, the share is greater among these age groups compared to young people (18–25 years old) who did not experience the war. Still, some (17.6%) young respondents said that the media images and reports about the war in Ukraine had reminded them of the war in Kosovo since they had heard from family members about many events that happened in Kosovo in the 1990s, learned at school about them, read about them in books or watched documentaries or seen theatre performances. Over 70% of these young people came from rural areas, which were the most affected during the last war in Kosovo.

Kosovo television stations have given different amounts of space to news items about the crisis and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. During the monitoring period (1 February – 31 March), the highest number of news stories was recorded from the start of the war until mid March. Of the 270 news editions of the five main television channels that were analysed, Klan Kosova had the most news broadcasts (206), followed by KTV with 194, then RTK with 180.

Figure 5: THE NUMBER OF NEWS ITEMS ABOUT THE WAR IN UKRAINE
*BETWEEN 1 FEBRUARY AND 31 MARCH 2022*

Source: Own survey conducted for this study.

Using Agenda-Setting Theory, news editions were analysed based on ranking (position), attributes, and news sources. Among the five television stations, KTV most often listed Ukraine in the top three news items (34 times), followed by RTK (28 times), Klan Kosova (26 times), RTV21 (17

times) and T7 (13 times). In 44% of the news editions, news about the war in Ukraine or its effects in other countries was listed in the top three news items.

Figure 6: "AGENDA SETTING": WAR IN UKRAINE, AMONG THE TOP THREE
*   NEWS ITEMS IN THE NEWS EDITIONS*
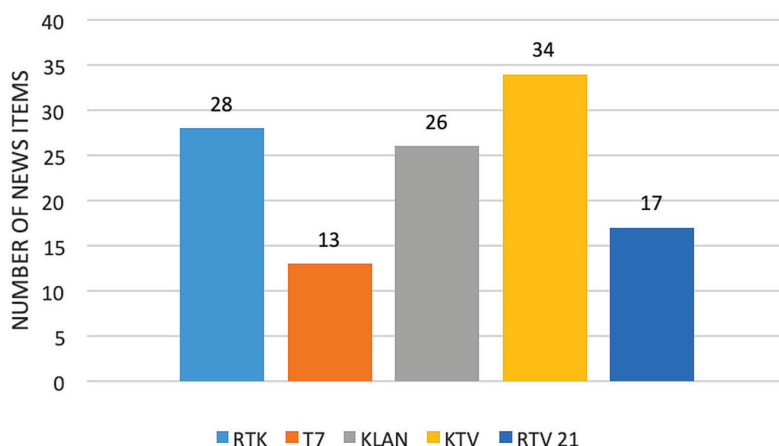
Source: Own survey conducted for this study.

As concerns the attributes that Kosovar media have given to these news stories, pro-Ukraine and anti-Russia reporting completely dominates, with the former portraying the latter as the aggressor. Further, regarding the sources used for reporting on the war in Ukraine, in most cases Kosovar television channels have relied on Western media: AP, CNN, Reuters and BBC. The considerable attention and orientation of Kosovo's media to the war in Ukraine, alongside deriving from attitudes formed as a result of historical circumstances against Serbia, also reflect the experience that Kosovo has undergone in attracting the attention of the world's media. As Balabanova (2007: 53) notes, "the kind of human tragedy that the Kosovo conflict has produced – with the ranks of refugees, ethnic conflict and even genocide (according to some), along with the backlash provoked by international military involvement, was potentially the kind of news that would attract the attention of the media. This raised questions about the possible role of the media in exposing the conflict and in developing policy responses". In this context, exposure to the conflict in Ukraine has caused a great deal of concern among Kosovo citizens regarding the risk of the war expanding. When asked how much television reporting had influenced their concern with the risk of the war expanding to the Balkans, only 20.3% of respondents indicated that it had *not* influenced them *at all*. The share of citizens who have been *greatly influenced* corresponds to the share of citizens who feel *very*

afraid (10%) of the risk of a new conflict developing in Kosovo, confirming the effect of repeated exposure to the same topic.

Figure 7: PUBLIC FEAR OF THE RISK OF A NEW CONFLICT IN KOSOVO
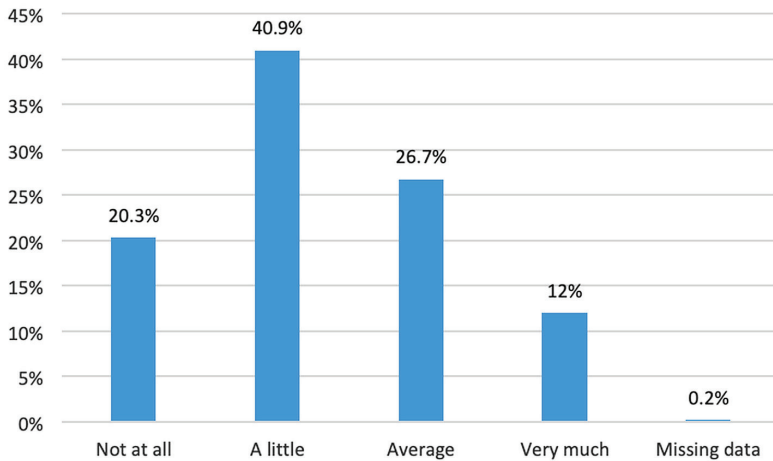
Source: Own survey conducted for this study.

However, opinions on the risk of a new conflict emerging in Kosovo were proportionally divided: 33.2% believed that such a risk exists, 30.4% believed that there is no risk, while 35.8% answered "I don't know". The relatively low level of public fear can be explained by the professional media reporting and messages from Western officials that have ruled out the risk of a new conflict developing in the Balkans (RTK 2022).

Figure 8: PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE RISK OF A NEW CONFLICT DEVELOPING IN KOSOVO
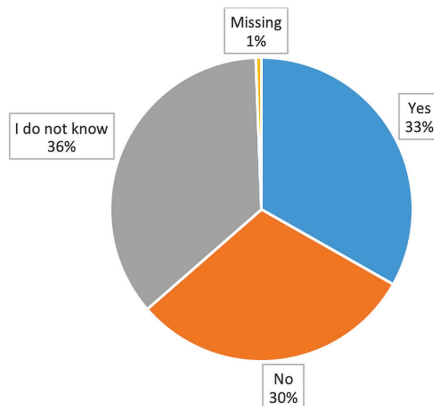
Source: Own survey conducted for this study.

In response to the question concerning what might bring the threat of a new war in Kosovo, the majority of citizens (54.3%) referred to the unresolved conflict with Serbia, some (14.8%) mentioned the references by Putin to Kosovo, a smaller share (6.8%) highlighted the unsettled problems in the region, while the rest gave answers by combining the options: the unresolved conflict with Serbia and the mentions of Kosovo by Putin (14.1%), and the unsettled conflict with Serbia and problems in the region (6%).

Figure 9 – FACTORS THAT THREATEN A NEW WAR IN KOSOVO
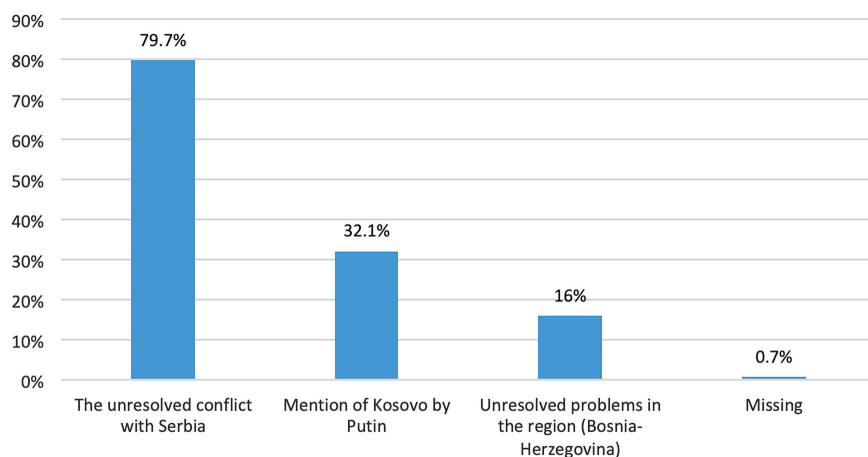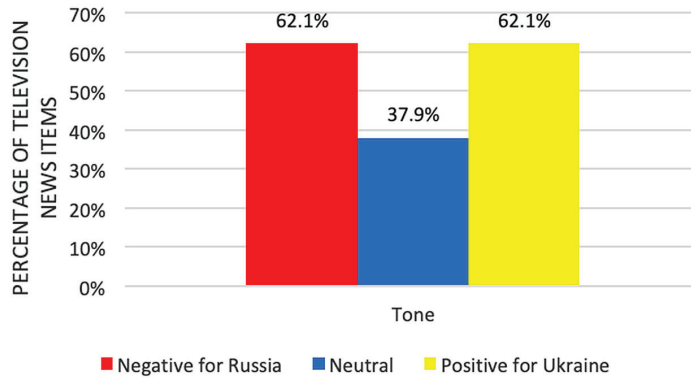
Source: Own survey conducted for this study.

The culprit for the war

Another finding of the study is that international media sources have dominated in the reporting by Kosovar television stations, as well as the narrative that blames Russia for the war in Ukraine: 62.1% of news items had a negative tone for Russia and a positive tone for Ukraine, whereas 37.9% of news items had a neutral tone.

While Russia's image in the discourse of Kosovo's media establishments before the invasion of Ukraine varied between favourable and unfavourable reporting (Mavraj and Tahiri, 2019), in the view of the citizens this approach changed after the invasion when 86.4% of respondents considered Russia to be responsible for the war, with 69.8% rating the television reporting as good or very good. The intersection of these findings proves that the framing of the television stations concerning the war in Ukraine generally reflects the perceptions held by the citizens of Kosovo, which is an outcome of Russia's attitude to the state of Kosovo and Russia's friendly relations with Serbia.

Figure 10: TONE OF THE REPORTING IN TELEVISION

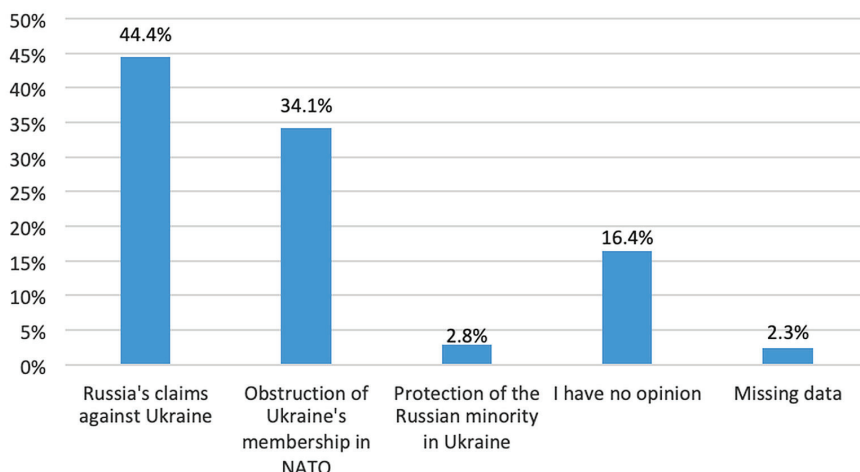
Source: Own survey conducted for this study.

Figure 11: THE CULPRIT FOR THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Source: Own survey conducted for this study.

Moreover, as regards the causes that led to the beginning of the war, 44.4% of citizens believed that they relate to Russia's claims against Ukraine, 34.1% to the obstruction of Ukraine's membership in NATO, while just 2.8% see the need to protect the Russian minority in Ukraine as the cause of the war. Nevertheless, 16.4% stated that they held no opinion, and 2.3% of the answers were missing.

Figure 12: REASONS FOR THE START OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Source: Own survey conducted for this study.

The mentioned results confirm the effects related to the second level of Agenda-Setting, i.e., the attributes that the media ascribes to the issues it reports on, influencing the public's perception of those issues. A comparison with the data obtained from the questionnaire shows the share of citizens who assessed the media reporting as bad is almost the same as the share that believed Russia is not to blame for the war. Here, we must account of the possible effects of the wide social media use and the circulation of misinformation online. According to a report by the fact-checking platform *hibrid.info* and the Journalism Department of the University of Prishtina published in March 2022, in the period just from 24 February to 11 March, 38 pieces of disinformation and incorrect content were identified, albeit the authors accept that the number may be much higher. Most of this content was produced outside of Kosovo in languages other than Albanian, translated and then distributed by online media in text, photo, video or a combined form. Social media, dominated by Facebook (with more than 50% of disseminated content) and followed by Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, are the channels most frequently used for disseminating misinformation (Osmani and Zeneli, 2022). A number of these items of disinformation have linked the war in Ukraine with the context of Kosovo, meaning that such framing has been able to influence the audience to a certain extent. For this reason, within the framework of the sanctions against Russia and to prevent propaganda Kosovo has temporarily banned the broadcasting of media originating from the Russian Federation (IMC, 2022).

Conclusions

Television continues to be the biggest source of information for the citizens of Kosovo, who have positively evaluated the media reporting on the war in Ukraine. The effects of this reporting are *cumulative*, which means they are the result of consistent media coverage and other factors that determine the political context. Cumulative effects are caused by consistent and repeated media coverage over time: If the majority of media outlets report repeatedly and consistently on certain topics, people have little chance of avoiding that information (Peter, 2004; Koch and Arendt, 2017). According to McCombs and Show (1972), cumulative effects are limited to cognitive (beliefs and the acquisition of attitudes) and affective (emotional reactions) effects. Agenda-Setting is therefore a cumulative effect arising from the ongoing relationship between the media and the public. Since Kosovo is no exception in terms of changes in the media environment, and considering the rise in the number of actors acting as agenda-setters following the emergence of digital technology, setting the agenda should be seen as intermedia agenda setting, even though research shows that television continues play the dominant role here (McCombs and Gahnem, 2001).

The war in Ukraine is an important event for the Kosovar public due to the political context and the economic crisis that has ensued and has dominated the television agenda in Kosovo. The research results show that television has been the main source of information about the war in Ukraine, while the 59.1% of news items negatively framing Russia during its reporting corresponds to the opinion held by the citizens about the culprit for the war. This confirms the first hypothesis of this study. According to the findings of the questionnaire, the absolute majority of citizens believe that the media reporting has brought back memories of the war in Kosovo (40.8%), especially for those in the 65+ age group.

The second hypothesis is partially supported because the effects of television reporting vary based on the audience's demographic characteristics (gender, age, education, settlement). As for the feeling caused by the news items about the war in Ukraine, fear was found to be higher among women (42.7%) than men (28%), while the result based on age, education and place of residence was similar. Further, regarding the risk of a new conflict developing in Kosovo, the effects of the reporting vary by the audience's age, education, gender and residence. The results show that young people aged 18–35 (52.2%), those less educated – pre-university education (60.9%), women (57.9%) and those from urban areas (48.3%) believed that there is no risk of a new conflict. The data obtained during the television monitoring (716 new items in 59 days, 44% of which appeared were listed in the top three stories in news editions) also show that the agenda of Kosovar media

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was translated into the public agenda (86.4% of citizens saw Russia as being responsible for the war). Given that, with 18.7%, social media was the second-most used source, the contents shared about the war in Ukraine have generally been in line with those of television. Therefore, despite the nature and ease of disseminating misinformation and fake news, social media have not hindered the effects of the media's Agenda-Setting. Moreover, based on the findings concerning the second level of Agenda Setting (the attributes that the media has ascribed to the news about the war in Ukraine) the almost complete dominance of pro-Ukraine reporting, as also reflected by the main sources of Kosovo television programmes (AP, Reuters, CNN, BBC), can be explained by the dominant attitude among citizens (86.4%) who consider Russia to be guilty for having started the war. On the other hand, they are divided over the perception of the risk of a new war developing in Kosovo (33.2% believed there is a risk, 30.4% believed there is no risk, 35.8% answered "I don't know"). Regarding the factors that pose a threat, most respondents singled out the unresolved conflict with Serbia (54.3%) and the continuous mentioning of Kosovo by Putin (14.8%).

Even the data collected during desk research show the pro-Ukrainian attitude of politicians and the public, not as a result of Kosovo's ties with that country[5] but because of what Russia has represented in the context of the war and the state building of Kosovo. Immediately after the invasion, the government of Kosovo imposed sanctions on Russia in line with the EU and USA's sanctions (Gazeta Express, 2022) and stood in solidarity with Ukraine by sheltering journalists who had been forced to leave their country (Reuters, 2022). Citizens have also shown their solidarity with Ukraine through various initiatives to help the citizens of that country (Zeqiri, 2023).

However, this research also has some limitations. These mainly relate to the lack of monitoring of online media as it is another important source of information for Kosovar citizens. Another limitation refers to social media and the impossibility of measuring the effects caused by using them due to the large volume involved and their interactive nature with traditional media. While the exclusion of online media in the research was a consequence of the lack of archives in most mainstream online media outlets, making it impossible in this research to monitor the contents published during the analysed period, the effects of social media cannot be measured outside of their interaction with traditional media. Accordingly, noting the growing use of social media and so as to achieve the most complete research results, future research on this topic should aim to include online media and more rigorously measure the interaction of social media with traditional media.

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[5] *Ukraine is among the countries that have yet to recognise the Republic of Kosovo, which means that Kosovo and Ukraine do not even have diplomatic relations.*

Still, this article may be useful as an attempt to explain the effects of media reporting in a particular political context. Namely, despite its limitations, the article will contribute to the local literature on media effects studies given that this topic has not received adequate attention thus far.

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