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An Allied Perspective on the News Coverage of Military Aid Towards Ukraine: A Case Study of the Netherlands

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An Allied Perspective on the News Coverage of Military Aid Towards Ukraine: A Case Study of the Netherlands

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Abstract

This thesis aims to examine the news coverage of military aid sent to Ukraine after the escalation of the conflict on February 24th 2022. Over a period of one year, 169 news articles from the six most popular Dutch news outlets are analysed. The prevalence of five media frames is examined through a deductive study and framework set out by prior research. Whereas the conflict, economic consequences and responsibility frames are all found to be used in Dutch news coverage on the delivery of arms to Ukraine, the human impact and morality frames fail to reach the 0.5 threshold. Differences between news outlets are found when ranking them on a sensationalist-serious axis as well as their attitude towards the military aid. Additionally, seven phases of military aid are identified in which several important actors and context are disclosed to affect the arms send to Ukraine.

Keywords: Russia-Ukraine war; military aid; media framing; sensationalism

Chapter 1. Introduction

On the 24th of February 2022, Russian forces launched a nation-wide invasion of Ukraine (Savelyev, 2023). The invasion of Ukraine actually began in 2014, with the illegal occupation of the Crimean peninsula and the backing of pro-Russian separatists in the Luhansk and Donetsk republics in Eastern Ukraine. The 2022 decision of President Putin to fully escalate the conflict led to the biggest mobilisation of forces since World War II (Iddon, 2022). As of writing this thesis, a bloody war is fought between the two nations. The basic principles of international law have been violated by Russia as illustrated by a United Nations (UN) report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR, 2022). The report provides details of the Russian occupation of several Ukrainian villages in the first weeks of the full-scale invasion. Most predominantly the town of Bucha, where the Russian occupation of less than a month led to the murder of 73 civilians with allegedly 105 more. The report concludes with strong indications that the Russian troops are guilty of the war crime of wilful killing. Throughout the war, Ukraine has enjoyed wide support from Western nations, including the Netherlands.

Even though Ukraine is not a member of the European Union (EU) or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), it is a legitimate nation-state as manifested by its membership in the UN (United Nations, n.d.). Ukraine's sovereignty is breached by Russia and its full-scale invasion is condemned by 141 nations within the UN (Wright, 2023). Moreover, the war is unfolding directly at the borders of the two international organisations, which seek to preserve their sovereignty. Most members of both organisations have become entangled in the conflict by supporting Ukraine thoroughly and as a result, drastically worsening relations with Russia. The Netherlands, a member of the EU and NATO, has expressed public support for Ukraine and has sent humanitarian as well as military aid to Ukraine (Government of the Netherlands, 2022a). This aid ranks among the highest when looked at a per capita ratio. It includes over one billion euros in military aid, with the Dutch military sending tanks as well as sophisticated artillery pieces such as Howitzers (Leeson, 2022). The Netherlands has also announced a further 2.5 billion euros to be given in aid throughout 2023 (Government of the Netherlands, 2022b).

In order to keep providing Ukraine with more sophisticated weaponry, public opinion on this military aid needs to maintain at a high level. Currently, the Dutch are next to their considerable support packages also among the biggest supporters of Ukraine. With a support rating of 93%, the Netherlands ranks third within the EU, only behind Sweden and Finland

(European Parliament, 2022). These numbers also translate into support for military aid, with 90% of the population in favour of sending military equipment to Ukraine (Eurobarometer, 2023). However, the type of military aid that is sent to Ukraine has changed drastically over the period of one year. On 18 February 2022, a few days before the war started, the Netherlands sent 3000 helmets, five radars and 100 snipers to Ukraine. Less than a year later, on 7 February 2023, the government announced the delivery of tanks to Ukraine after already sending other heavy equipment such as artillery (Ministry of Defence, 2023). The switch to sending heavier equipment to Ukraine is experiencing more criticism due to the rising costs within the energy crisis (Bayer, von der Burchard & Caulcutt, 2022). Additionally, the fact that the new military gear can be used in offensive operations instead of defensive ones also stirs debates. The end of this aid is not in sight given the drawn-out state of the war and the new discussions about providing aircraft to Ukraine (Reuters, 2023). The high support among the Dutch population for continuing military aid to Ukraine is thus not a given.

It is crucial for the Ukrainian government that it keeps enjoying widespread support from its Western allies. One possible factor of this support is the way in which the news about the military aid is framed in Dutch news coverage on this topic. News agencies provide the audience with a slightly different narrative in order to capture their attention. For example, whereas some news outlets focus on the humanitarian side of the war, others highlight the political wrongdoings of certain actors. The frames that are used by news outlets are known to influence the perception of their audience on certain topics (Cappella and Jamieson, 1996; Valenzuela, Piña & Ramírez, 2017). By understanding which frames are used in the context of the war in Ukraine and the delivery of military equipment, one can better understand why their perceptions might change. This is needed before the effects of these frames and their effect on public support of arms deliveries in Western countries can be researched. Moreover, news outlets can also be ranked on their sensationalist way of presenting news. Whereas framing the news in a specific way will not necessarily harm public opinion towards Ukraine, combining these frames with sensationalist news possibly does. This research will provide the foundation of the research that can eventually help to understand the reasoning for the altering of support for Western arms deliveries.

The aim of this thesis is to research how military aid towards Ukraine is covered in the media by its allies. Thus, it seeks to answer the research question: *“How is the military aid sent towards Ukraine covered in the media of its allies?”*. This will be done by analysing which news frames are used in which Dutch media outlets within the context of the military aid sent to Ukraine. By using a foundation of established frames, it deductively finds the presence of

the five most common news frames in the six biggest news outlets in the Netherlands. The Dutch news coverage will provide a case study of news narratives in an allied and committed state that seeks to assist Ukraine militarily. This thesis also aims to examine if certain frames are more present in news outlets that have a more sensationalist way of displaying the news. It is important to acknowledge that this research will not go into the effects media frames have on the Dutch news audience. Given that these effects are not evaluated easily, this would require a separate study. However, establishing evidence for the existence of this set of general frames within the context of the war in Ukraine is a logical first step.

This research will add to the existing literature on media framing and additionally contribute to the understanding of the recent escalation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Numerous media frames have been identified in various contexts and different countries. The prestigious work of Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) provides a clear foundation for the general media frames used in Dutch media outlets. However, their study is already over twenty years old and the circumstances have changed. Whereas other studies focus on the division between newspaper and television news, this thesis solely analyses online newspapers. Instead, it emphasises the sensationalist nature of media coverage, as will be explained in the following chapter. Additionally, media framing in the context of the escalated Russian invasion of Ukraine is still a mostly unexplored terrain. The data used within this research derives from 2022 or 2023, making the results of the analyses topical and relevant to the conflict. With changes occurring often, more research is a necessity. This thesis will give an academic insight into the way in which this recent conflict is framed in Dutch media. The results can provide a foundation for further research on the war in Ukraine.

Following the introduction, this paper continues by providing an overview of the existing literature regarding framing theory and sensationalism. Following the theoretical framework, the methods used in the paper will be explained including the decision on data selection. The next chapter will illustrate the answers to analyses and more qualitative research on the five frames and the variables possibly affecting them. These results will be discussed and linked back to the literature. Lastly, a conclusion is given which summarises the thesis and is followed by recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Framing is a wide and heavily researched topic. Within this chapter, the scope of framing theory is narrowed to a specific set of five general media frames as presented by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). This will act as the foundation of this thesis on which different literature is tested. The theory of sensationalism in the context of media coverage is described given its importance and relation with framing theory.

2.1 Framing theory

Framing plays an important role in portraying the news in a certain light or narrative. It is thus necessary to understand framing theory in order to describe how military aid is covered within the media. Many authors refer to frames in the media as ‘packages’ of information or value given to the news or stories (Schuck & de Vreese, 2006, p. 6). Frames are used widely by the media to give structure to the information given to the audience. It is these certain frames that make the news interesting, shocking or exciting to read. Moreover, they have been proven to have a significant effect on consumers of news in the field of politics (McMenamin, Flynn, O’Malley & Rafter, 2012, p. 169). It is important to distinguish between the different definitions and uses of framing theory.

There exists an excessive amount of literature on the topic of framing. Whereas many researchers delve into the types of frames used (de Vreese, Peter & Semetko, 2010; Gronemeyer & Porath, 2017), other studies focus on the effects of these frames on the audience and policy outcomes (Cappella and Jamieson, 1996; Valenzuela et al., 2017). These two types of frames are split into *media frames* and *audience frames*. As outlined in the introduction, this thesis focusses on the type of frames that are used in order to provide a foundation for further research on the effect of these frames. Thus, the focal point of this research is on media frames. The definition of a media frame remains a debated topic but some consensus can be found in the literature. In essence, a frame is a way in which everyday reality is portrayed and organised (Segvic, 2005, p. 470-471). This portrait of reality needs to have an element of repetition or a pattern to become an established frame. Similarly, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000, p. 94) combine the many definitions of the media frame into a conceptual tool in which media is illustrated which sets boundaries, is persistent and encompasses at least some sort of reality. Iyengar & Simon (1993, p. 369) highlight the use of ideology, in the form of certain phrases, stories or stereotypes in the media to create a certain narrative.

Within the dimension of media frames, it is necessary to distinguish between *issue-specific frames* and *general frames*. Both types of frames are used in the literature to research the origin and effects of framing in media (de Vrees et al., 2010). They do, however, serve different types of studies better. A study on issue-specific frames will most likely focus on one event in which certain, distinct frames are used. These frames are only found in events that are directly linked or that are similar to the one researched. This approach allows for specialised research with a narrow perspective but makes generalisation to a broader topic difficult. In contrast, the approach using general frames will not experience any challenges in generalising the results given the fact that the frames chosen to analyse are already wide and well-established in the literature (McMenamin et al., 2012). The emphasis of these studies usually lies in the existence and use of these generic frames. Similarly, this paper will also use general frames that were used in previous research and try to find their presence in Dutch media coverage of military aid towards Ukraine.

2.2 Foundation of general frames

A set of general frames has been identified to occur in the media in the Western world (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Most research on general media frames is deductive in nature. A certain set of established frames is tested within a new context, such as a specific topic or a new country. Whenever the absence of a frame is disproven, it strengthens the argument that this frame exists within a certain context. The more literature on a certain frame, the more generalisable this frame is for different contexts. This study too, will be based on a foundation of five frames that have a strong support in existing literature: the conflict, economic consequences, human impact, morality and responsibility frames.

Within the literature on general media frames, the *conflict frame* and the *economic consequences frame* are the most established. (de Vreese et al., 2010). The conflict frame is one of the most widely used frames that can be mainly found in political news. The frame focuses on a certain struggle or clash between two or more actors to illustrate a certain narrative. It is found to be an ideal way of securing the interest of the public. Numerous studies have identified aspects of the conflict frame throughout Western media. Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992) illustrate that the conflict frame is well-endowed in the media of the United States. Moreover, a more recent study by Gronemeyer and Porath (2017) also finds evidence for the existence of the conflict frame in Chilean media. Thus, the conflict frame can be hypothesised to exist in Dutch media coverage of military aid towards Ukraine for two reasons.

Its presence in politically themed news and prior research in other Western media. The economic consequences frame is also well-established in current literature and emphasises the possible economic loss for a certain actor (de Vrees et al., 2010). Within the context of Western arms deliveries, the monetary aspect will likely be highlighted given the amount of public money being spent. The frame was found to be of moderate importance in Dutch news, slightly less than the conflict frame by Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000. Nonetheless, its presence in Dutch news and the accent on the costs of the military equipment sent to Ukraine make its presence likely.

Next to these two frames, Neuman et al. (1992) found additional frames that are used in the media in the United States. They presented two more frames that appear frequently in news covering politics, the *human impact frame* and the *morality frame*. The human impact frame refers to the societal and personal side of news stories. The frame highlights the real effects of certain phenomena on a specific group of people or society as a whole. By giving the story a face, the human impact frame helps to give attention to a certain narrative. The frame is found to be present in Dutch media covering European news (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The morality frame gives the cause or solution to a news narrative to a certain belief or moral within the population (Valenzuela et al., 2017). The effects of religion or ideology are highlighted within the story or news item. Usually, this frame is not given from the news outlet's perspective, given the fact that they brand themselves as neutral, but from the perspective of a certain group or person. Within the context of this thesis, the morality frame is expected to fulfil less of a role than the other. Not only are the aspects of religion or ideology anticipated to be less important, but the frame also enjoys the least academic support. The existence of this frame has been disputed given the minimal results in the literature (Neuman et al., 1992; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). However, the frame is still included in the framework of most literature and had a small but significant presence in the study by Gronemeyer and Porath, 2017.

Built upon this foundation of frames, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) researched the existence of these frames in Dutch media covering European politics. Next to the four frames mentioned, the *responsibility frame* was also added to the framework. This frame assigns the responsibility for a certain problem or phenomenon to an individual or group of people. Usually, the aspect of a governmental body is added within this narrative given its role in many of today's decisions. Within the news coverage on military aid towards Ukraine, the role of the Dutch government as well as other governmental organisations, such as the EU or NATO are expected to be highlighted given their power to make decisions within the international theatre.

Thus, the responsibility frame is believed to play a decisive role in Dutch news coverage on this topic. This same set of five generic frames has proven to be a basis for different studies (Gronemeyer & Porath, 2017). The responsibility frame blames a certain actor for certain societal issues presented in the media. Previous literature on this frame is limited, however, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) found that this frame prevailed over the both well-established conflict- and economic consequences frame.

2.3 Sensationalism and media framing

The theories of media framing and sensationalism are closely related and have been found to be correlated with each other (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 104). The concept of sensationalism derives from discourse theory and relates to the way of presenting information in news articles in a (slightly) more interesting or trending way than it in reality is (Molek-Kozakowska, 2013, p. 174). Media outlets usually try to trigger a certain emotion that makes it more likely to read their article over others. For example, a writer might choose to focus on empathy or anger in order to capture the reader. This is where the theory of sensationalism is linked to media framing. As said before, frames are also used by news outlets to give a package to the information given to their audience.

In their study, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) tried to find any difference in the frames used by TV news compared to newspapers. However, a much bigger difference was found in the so-called sensationalist versus more serious and sober news outlets. A sensationalist news outlet uses an exciting and sometimes exaggerated way of presenting news. Even though most pieces are usually shorter, a sensational news outlet is not perse a tabloid-like outlet. On the other side of the spectrum, a serious news outlet presents a longer and more in-depth narrative which can be characterised as practical and sober. The frames that are more linked to emotion, such as the human interest frame, were found to be more present in sensationalist media outlets. In contrast, the remaining three frames were found more often in serious media outlets.

Chapter 3. Methodology

This research follows a qualitative content analysis design to answer the research question, elaborating on the Dutch news coverage of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The frames used by news outlets and variables that possibly explain the use of these frames are disclosed. The selection of newspapers is explained, followed by a discussion of the coding applied to the data sources.

3.1 News outlets

For this research, the four most popular newspapers in the Netherlands are chosen. These are, in order of popularity, the *Algemeen Dagblad (AD)*, *Telegraaf*, *Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad (NRC)*. Additionally, the two largest news sites by monthly unique users, *NOS.nl* and *NU.nl*, are also included in the analysis to encompass the six biggest news outlets of the Netherlands. The reason for not including televised or radio news lies in the fact that written news differs significantly in the possible use of frames. Radio news is excluded from using any visual references whereas televised news tends to be more personal than written news (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 106). By only choosing one form of news, the data will be as comparable as possible, while still being able to differentiate between different news outlets. The biggest news outlet, *AD* has a reach of little over half of the Dutch people at 51,1% (NOM, 2022). This means that within one month, 51,1% of the Dutch population has at least read one article of *AD*. Following this logic, *Telegraaf* is the second biggest news outlet given its reach of 45,9% of the population. The *AD* and *Telegraaf* are by far the biggest newspapers in the Netherlands with *Volkskrant* coming third with a reach of 27,5%. *NRC* closely follows with a reach of 24,7%. When taking into account the news sites, *NOS.nl* and *NU.nl* supplement the top 4 together with *AD* and *Telegraaf* with a reach of eight million or approximately 45,6% of the population each (Brandenburg, 2021). Together, the six main news outlets combine a wide reach of the Dutch population ranging from politically left to right and from briefer and short articles to more in-depth longer news.

None of the six media outlets discussed in this research is categorised as a tabloid on the level of, for example, the UK's Daily Mail. They can, however, still be ranked on a sensationalist scale ranging from sensationalist to serious and information-packed news providing outlets. Based on Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) ranking of Dutch news outlets, the following assumptions can be made. Ranging from most sensationalist to serious, the first on the list is *Telegraaf*. Although much more serious in their news coverage than typical

tabloids, *Telegraaf* has a relatively high sensationalist approach compared to other Dutch news outlets. The online newspaper, *NU.nl* has a relatively high sensationalist score due to its fast way of presenting news. The third news outlet, *AD*, is widely seen as neutral and has a more sober approach than *Telegraaf*. It does mainly publish articles that are relatively easy to access for everyone and lacks very in-depth news. *NOS.nl* is relatively similar to *AD* in its presentation as a neutral news outlet. However, *NOS.nl* has a slightly more in-depth way of presenting news. Following the list, *Volkskrant* has a more information-packed and serious approach than the two main news outlets. It still publishes mainstream news items but usually with a more in-depth view. Lastly, *NRC* is the most serious and elaborate in its news coverage. The main headlines found on the other bigger news outlets are usually not found at *NRC*. It has long and information-packaged articles.

3.2 Sample

The six newspapers each wrote amply about the war in Ukraine and the situations surrounding it, including the delivery of arms to Ukraine which has been a popular topic given the active involvement of the Dutch government. Only the news articles that completely focus on the military aid sent to Ukraine are included in the analysis. The unit of analysis is the entire article presented in the news outlets, including any potential images and excluding videos. The online version of each news source is chosen given the ability to search for keywords within a certain period. The time frame chosen in this research starts on the day the Dutch government announced its first arms delivery to Ukraine, 18 February 2022. It ends a little over three weeks after the last big arms announcement (as of the writing of this thesis), on 26 February 2023. Within this period of just over a year, all news articles that contain several keywords are selected.

In total three different searches are performed in which the articles need to contain all keywords to be added to the sample. First, the articles containing the keywords ‘*Oekraïne*’¹ and ‘*wapen*’² are added to the sample. The second search included the keywords ‘*Oekraïne*’ and ‘*lever*’³. The keyword ‘*lever*’ is chosen to include both the verb and the noun (*levering*)⁴ variants of the word. Lastly, all articles with the keywords ‘*Oekraïne*’ and ‘*overheid*’⁵ are

¹ Translated: ‘Ukraine’

² Translated: ‘Weapon’

³ Translated: ‘Deliver’

⁴ Translated: ‘Delivery’

⁵ Translated: ‘Government’

included. Out of this first sample, only articles that specifically focussed on the military aid to Ukraine are included in the final sample. The only exemption from this sample gathering is the articles from *NU.nl*. The search engine of this news outlet worked differently in that it showed all articles that contain one of the keywords instead of both. Thus, the keyword of 'Oekraïne' is excluded from the searches at *NU.nl*. Previous tests with an ample amount of keywords were performed in order to obtain the most optimal sample of articles. This resulted in a total amount of 169 articles with *AD* N=24; *Telegraaf* N=32; *Volkskrant* N=30; *NRC* N=32; *NOS.nl* N=32; *NU.nl* N=19.

3.3 Coding procedure

The operationalisation of the five general frames happens through the framework set out by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Their set of 20 questions used in quantitative content analyses has been used throughout the literature (de Vreese et al., 2010; Gronemeyer & Porath, 2017). Their set of indicator questions each represent one of the five frames and is presented in Table 1. The framework of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) is relevant to this study due to their application to European politics and conflict before. Moreover, due to the inclusion of visuals within the questions, it allows for the analysis of the entire article. Each question is answered by a binary code, a yes (= 1) or a no (= 0) in order to establish their presence in each article. These answers are added up and divided by the number of indicator questions per frame. This results in an index for each frame ranging from 0, meaning the frame is not present, to a 1, meaning the frame is completely present. In order to label a frame as existing within a sample, a minimum score of 0.5 is necessary as defined by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000).

Next to the indicators of the five frames, the articles are also analysed for the variable of their main actor. This is operationalised by the government or organisation which was labelled as the most important actor of the articles. The variable included the Dutch government (= 1), the EU (= 2), NATO (= 3), the American government (= 4), the German government (= 5) and the Polish government (= 6). This given the fact that in several articles the role of the Dutch government is not central or present at all. For example, many arms deliveries of the Dutch government have been a reaction to American initiative, German acceptance or Polish pressure. Next to the variable of main actor, different variables are created to check for the appearance of the actors too. This provides additional information on the role of these actors within the Dutch news on the arms deliveries. This variable is coded as a dummy variable with the actors being named (= 1) and not being named (= 0). The EU is only coded as present when

the union itself or one of its organisations is named, such as the European Council. When journalists wrote about Europe in the context of the continent, this is excluded.

A variable on the attitude towards the arms deliveries to Ukraine is created by identifying each article as negative (= -1), neutral (= 0) or positive (= 1) towards these deliveries of arms. A simple three-answer scale was chosen over, for example, a Likert scale in order to maintain higher reliability. This variable provides insight into which frames are used in which tone towards the arms deliveries as well as which news outlets are more critical on this topic.

The last variable that is coded for is the phase of the war in which the article is published. In total seven phases of the war in Ukraine are identified in which different types of arms are sent to Ukraine (coded 1 until 7). These phases are based on the arms deliveries of the Dutch government (Ministry of Defence, 2023) and the phases that prelude it. For example, while the Dutch announced their first deliveries of 'heavy' arms, such as armoured vehicles, on the 19th of April 2022, the phase started on the 5th of April due to the initiation of talks on these types of arms by the United States and Ukraine in the *Volkscrant* (Ramdharie, 2022).

Coding was solely done by the author of this thesis. Following Krippendorff (1989), this might result in lower reliability than desired. This restraint of the research is limited by choosing simpler variables in which the possible answers are narrow and objective.

3.4 Varimax rotation and Cronbach's Alpha

Before analysing the main data derived from the research, the set of 20 indicator questions is tested for their identification with their specific frame. This is done by stripping the indicators from their frame and performing a principal component analysis with varimax rotation (Park, Dailey & Lemus, 2002). This factor analysis identifies several factors in which the 20 indicator questions are categorised based on their similarity. The results of this analysis are illustrated in Table 1. The varimax rotation of the five factors can explain 56.9% of the data on the frames used within the news articles. As portrayed by their high factor score, factor 1 can be identified as the human interest frame, factor 2 as the conflict frame, factor 3 as the economic consequences frame and factor 5 as the morality frame. Factor 4, however, can only be identified as the responsibility frame by the first three indicator questions of that frame. The last two questions are more comparable to factor 1, the human interest frame. Thus, these indicator questions (*Does the story suggest that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the problem/issue?*; *Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?*) are excluded from further analyses. Moreover, each indicator should have a factor

score of at least 0.5 in order to be clustered with one of the five frames, a threshold used throughout the literature (Gronemeyer & Porath, 2017). This leads to the exclusion of the fourth indicator question of the human interest frame (*Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?*) due to its low comparability with the human interest frame. Thus, after performing the principal component analysis, seventeen indicator questions remain in which the frames are identified. The exclusion of certain indicator questions is common and helps to increase internal reliability (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Gronemeyer & Porath, 2017).

After the remaining frames have been properly linked to a frame, the reliability of each frame is calculated independently. The internal consistency is determined by the Cronbach's Alpha of all the indicators per frame. The results of the test are as follows: conflict frame ($\alpha = .747$); economic consequences frame ($\alpha = .851$); human interest frame ($\alpha = .706$); morality frame ($\alpha = .742$); responsibility frame ($\alpha = .739$). All the alpha values of the frames not only meet the threshold of 0.5, but also pass the desired 0.7 value for a high internal consistency (Bujang, Omar, Baharum, 2018).

Table 1

Varimax Rotation Matrix

Indicator Question	Factor Components				
	Factor 1.	Factor 2.	Factor 3.	Factor 4.	Factor 5.
<i>Conflict frame</i>					
1. Does the story reflect disagreement between parties/individuals/groups/countries?	.145	.807	-.020	-.004	.008
2. Does one party-individual-group-country reproach another?	.189	.557	-.117	-.006	.242
3. Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the issue/problem?	.084	.786	.060	.158	.029
4. Does the story refer to winners and losers?	.052	.818	-.026	.272	.042
<i>Economic interest frame</i>					
1. Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?	.031	.027	.820	.029	-.058
2. Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved?	.080	-.097	.899	.002	.019
3. Is there a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?	.101	-.012	.884	.084	.089
<i>Human interest frame</i>					
1. Does the story provide a human example or “human face” on the issue?	.741	.110	.075	-.079	.122
2. Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy, caring or sympathy?	.557	.108	-.023	-.100	.526
3. Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?	.755	.136	.026	-.034	.050
4. Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?	.299*	-.005	.155	.028	.004
5. Does the story contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy, caring or sympathy?	.541	.150	.050	.045	.276
<i>Morality frame</i>					
1. Does the story contain any moral message?	.209	.051	-.015	.086	.784
2. Does the story make reference to morality, God, and other religious tenets?	-.035	.063	.078	.007	.527
3. Does the story offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?	.099	.046	-.048	.055	.760
<i>Responsibility frame</i>					
1. Does the story suggest that some level of government had the ability to alleviate the problem?	-.026	.067	.092	.802	.009
2. Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?	.020	.116	-.009	.804	.004
3. Does the story suggest solution(s) to the problem/issue?	.119	.145	.063	.777	.078
4. Does the story suggest that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the problem/issue?	.535*	.086	-.040	.215	-.065
5. Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?	.468*	.034	-.063	.414	.090

* Indicator questions removed from the analysis

Chapter 4. News Coverage of Military Aid Towards Ukraine

The aim of this thesis is to illustrate how military aid sent to Ukraine is portrayed in Dutch news outlets. It does this through a thorough analysis of 169 news articles from six different Dutch news outlets. Both statistical as well as more qualitative research show that this military is indeed framed in particular ways by Dutch media. A one-way ANOVA test is performed to assess if other variables might influence the presence of the five frames. Moreover, seven different phases of the war are identified within the arms deliveries.

4.1 Presence of each Frame

Evidence for the presence of the conflict, economic consequences and responsibility frame is found. As illustrated by Table 2 within the ‘total’ column, these three frames have a presence higher than 0.5 or 50% in the data and thus pass the threshold presented by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Even though some evidence for the human interest is found, it is only present with a mean score of 41.2% within the articles. The morality frame is found least with a mean presence of just 8.6%.

The conflict frame is found amply within the news articles on the arms deliveries to Ukraine with a mean score of 73.1%. This might not come as a surprise given the fact that the news articles reflect the conflict of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Whenever a news article not only presented the deliveries of arms but also the war itself, the conflict frame is highly likely to be found. Moreover, the debate surrounding the arms deliveries also caused a rise in the presence of the conflict frame. For example, indicator question one (*Does the story reflect disagreement between parties/individuals/groups/countries?*) is answered by a yes in many of these instances. These debates on the military aid towards Ukraine happened, for example, between Germany and Poland when the latter wanted to export Leopard tanks towards Ukraine. Another debate occurred when the government of the Netherlands announced it would send howitzers to Ukraine. Officers within the Dutch army, who worries about the already depleted Dutch military, voiced their concern in Dutch media (AD, 2022; Berkhout, 2022; Savelberg, 2022)⁶.

Next to the conflict frame, the economic consequences frame also passed the threshold with a mean score of 60.1%. This is consistent with the literature on media framing where these two frames are found most often (de Vreese et al., 2010). Within articles that use the economic

⁶ References are news articles sampled from the 169 articles used in the analyses

consequences frame, the author mentions the costs or expected value of a certain actor. In this case, most articles delve into the costs of the military equipment sent to Ukraine. Within the arms deliveries to the Ukrainian government, the factor of costs plays a significant role given the large amounts of public money spent. It thus comes as no surprise that this frame is used within the media coverage of the arms deliveries to Ukraine.

The largest presence within the news article is the responsibility frame. This frame has a mean score of 94.9% ranking higher than both the conflict and economic consequences frame. Two main reasons exist for this presence. First, the responsibility frame emphasises the role of the government in the first two indicator questions. The governments of the Western states that provided arms to Ukraine are the main actors in many of the articles. Actors such as the Ministry of Defence or the heads of state play a decisive role in the military aid. The second reason for the high presence is the exclusion of the last two indicator questions by the principal component analysis discussed in the previous chapter. These two questions are least present within the articles compared to the other three indicator questions. For example, question four (*Does the story suggest that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the problem/issue?*) highlights the individual aspect of the responsibility but ultimately did not count within the analysis.

The human interest frame, with a mean score of 41.2%, does not reach the 50% threshold and can thus not be ruled present within the Dutch news coverage of military aid to Ukraine. The relatively high score is mainly due to the personal touch some of the articles included. These articles included stories of how Western arms helped the Ukrainian soldiers on the front or how air defence is needed due to the constant shelling of civil infrastructure. This includes articles that use pictures of destroyed buildings or muddy Ukraine soldiers. However, the human interest frame did not meet the 50% threshold. This is partly due to the fact that many articles included in the analysis are brief and only provided basic information about which weapons were to be sent and excluded the human touch.

Lastly, the morality frame is found least within the data with a mean score of 8.6%. The morality frame is used scarcely throughout the article since moral beliefs or religion played a small role in the Dutch news coverage of the arms deliveries to Ukraine. Whereas several articles referred to the 'duty' the Western nations have to protect the Ukrainian nation-state, many left out this aspect. However, as with all the frames, different news outlets used this frame significantly less than others.

Table 2
Presence of frames per news outlet

Indicator questions	News Outlets						
	Total	NRC	Volkskrant	NOS.nl	AD	NU.nl	Telegraaf
Conflict Frame	.731	.703	.758	.758	.635	.810	.727
Economic Consequences Frame	.601	.740	.600	.593	.431	.667	.604
Human Interest Frame	.412	.367	.442	.461	.395	.393	.406
Morality Frame	.086	.094	.055	.198	.042	.079	.031
Responsibility Frame	.949	.948	.967	1.000	.819	.984	.958

4.2 Differences in News Outlet

This analysis includes six news outlets which all differ in the use of frames. Table 2 additionally illustrates the media frames per news outlet. The most important change between the news outlets is that the economic consequences frame is not present when only taking *AD* into account. This is due to its score of 43.1%, which fails to reach the 0.5 threshold. However, other significant differences still exist when comparing the six news outlets.

The news outlets can be ranked on the previously mentioned serious-sensationalist axis, determined in the previous chapter. Table 2 shows the six outlets in order from serious to sensationalist which allows for comparison. For all five frames, the mean is taken from which a one-way ANOVA test is performed. However, all tests performed are not found to significantly predict the differences in means for the five frames. Thus, the distinguishment between serious and sensationalist news is not found to predict the frames used by these news outlets. Instead, by plotting the means, two outliers are found within the data. First, *AD* stood out for its lower score in all framing categories. In all but the human interest frame the news outlet scored by far the lowest. This is possibly a result of the *AD* presenting itself as a neutral newspaper (Beukers, 2021). For the conflict, economic consequences and responsibility frame, this resulted in the data following a ‘U-shaped’ curve, meaning that both the most sensationalist as well as most serious news outlets used these frames most often. This correlates with the fact that the economic consequences frame is not proven to be present in the articles of the *AD* and

is mostly used by *NRC*, the most serious news outlet analysed in this research. Additionally, *NOS.nl* is found to use the human interest and morality frame significantly more than other news outlets. This shows that *NOS.nl* is more likely to use a personal approach when covering the military aid to Ukraine. Moreover, the responsibility frame is used widely throughout all outlets, *NOS.nl* again ranks the highest with a score of 1, meaning that in all articles all of the three indicator questions are answered with a 'yes'.

Next to sensationalism, the news outlets are also ranked on their attitude towards the arms deliveries to Ukraine. Based on the individual attitude scores of each article, the mean is taken per news outlet. Ranking from most critical to most supporting of the military aid the news outlets rank as follows, *Telegraaf*, *NRC*, *NOS.nl*, *AD*, *Volkskrant* and *NU.nl*. Interestingly, the most sensational as well as the most serious news outlet top the list of being most critical towards the military aid. When comparing this variable with the five frames certain assumptions can be made. *AD* is still the outlier in both the conflict and the responsibility frame. However, if this news outlet is excluded from the analysis, the variable of attitude can moderately predict the two frames: if the news outlet is more positive towards the military aid sent to Ukraine, the articles written use the conflict and responsibility frame more often. An explanation of this, albeit moderate, relation can be found in the fact that these news articles emphasise the conflict more and frame the Russian state as responsible. Thus, the need for the delivery of arms is seen as more necessary. For both frames, a one-way ANOVA test is performed in SPSS. Whereas the relation between the mean of the conflict frame and attitude is not found to be significant ($p > .005$), the responsibility is found to be significantly predicted by the attitude towards military aid to Ukraine ($p < .005$).

4.3 Analysis over time

Another way to categorise the data is by looking at the published dates of the articles. For each of the five frames, a simple linear regression is performed between the mean of each of the five frames and the date of publication of the articles. The date of publication is chosen over the variable of the seven phases in order to allow for a more thorough regression between the variables due to more data being available. Next to the five frames, this process is also repeated with the variable of the overall attitude of the articles towards the military aid.

Overall, time is not identified as a significant predictor of the use of the five frames in the context of this study. Only the conflict frame was found to be remotely significant with $p = .075$. The relation between time and the conflict frame is positive with $B = 3.16E-4$. This

entails that each day the presence of the conflict variable, measured between 0 and 1, grows by $3.16E-5$. Thus, within the entire year of the study, the mean score of the conflict frame only rose with .012 with a slightly insignificant score. Similarly, the variable of attitude was slightly insignificant with $p = .056$. A beta score of $B = 6.19E-5$ means that over the course of one year, the variable of attitude, measured between -1 and 1, rose with .023. The overall mean of this variable was 0.28 implying that the news articles are in general positive about the military aid sent towards Ukraine. Thus, the fact that time is not a significant predictor of the attitude of the news articles is not unfavourable for Ukraine given the fact that the sentiments are already positive.

4.4 Phases of the War ⁷

The monitoring of the dates of publishment of all articles additionally allows for a comparison in the frames used over time. The escalation of the war made Ukraine's allies rethink their military aid towards it. In many of the reporting, there are references to new phases of deliveries of arms that were formerly seen as unthinkable. Several of these red lines were crossed throughout the first year of the war. I argue that this has two main reasons. First, the context of the war plays an important role in which type of aid is sent. Second, several actors are identified that initiated certain types of weapons to be delivered to Ukraine. With the help of these indicators, all 169 articles are coded for the phase of the war it is presented. In total, seven phases of the war are distinguished within the year the articles are analysed. The phases are identified by a qualitative analysis of the news articles and the public statements on the military aid to Ukraine by the Dutch government (Ministry of Defence, 2023). The phases follow these announcements of military aid as well as the periods leading towards this. This usually means that discussions of delivering a certain type of weapon are held by Western allies throughout the media which eventually led to the Netherlands or its allies sending a particular weapon, followed by other states.

Table 3 illustrates the seven phases of military aid identified in this research. The last article analysed was published on the 26th of February thus marking the end of this thesis and the last phase. Additionally, Table 3 presents the type of military aid, the initiating state and the context of the war. It is apparent that the arms delivered by the Dutch government gradually get more sophisticated as well as more expensive, a trend seen throughout the Western states. Whereas the Netherlands, and for example Germany, started by delivering mostly non-lethal

⁷ All references in chapters 4.4 and 4.5 are news articles sampled from the 169 articles used in the analyses

weaponry, this changed when Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022. Starting with lighter weaponry carried by army personnel such as anti-tank and anti-air weapons, it quickly moved to heavy armaments such as artillery, armoured vehicles and eventually tanks.

Initiating states were important in breaking barriers and persuading or pressuring other states to send military aid. The Netherlands applied heavy pressure on the German government in the initial stages of the war to provide deadly weaponry to Ukraine (Hoedeman & Keultjes, 2022). However, the US played a significant role throughout the entire war by pioneering in sending new and heavier arms. Poland and other Eastern European states also played a significant role in breaking taboos on sending armoured vehicles and tanks. They were also the first to send fighter jets, a debate that is being played out at the moment. The role of Germany, at least up until February 26th 2023, was mostly one of giving approval to other states to export German arms to Ukraine. This is because most of the equipment that the Netherlands and Eastern European states possess, is of German manufacturing. These states have signed contracts which prohibit them to give or sell this equipment to third states without German approval. However, since the German public and government have more pacifist sentiments than other allies this caused friction on several occasions. Poland even threatened to send its Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine without German approval if it was denied by German officials (Andersen, 2023)

Next to initiating states, the context of the war also influenced the military aid sent to Ukraine. For example, when the Russian military ramped up its bombardments within Ukraine and started to focus on civilian infrastructure right before and throughout the winter, Western allies provided air defence systems such as the Patriot system (Ministry of Defence, 2022). Additionally, when the Russians regrouped in the Eastern Donbas region after a failed attempt to capture Kyiv, it provided Ukraine with the opportunity to ask for heavy weaponry. This was given in the form of artillery, such as the howitzers, and armoured vehicles (Ramdharie, 2022). It is these states that are named amply throughout the articles, indicating that they play a role in the coverage of military aid towards Ukraine.

Table 3

Seven phases of Dutch military aid to Ukraine

Phase	Dates	Dutch military aid	Initiating state	Context
1.	February 18 – February 25	Defensive gear; radars; 100 sniper rifles	The Netherlands	Imminent threat of Russian invasion of Ukraine
2.	February 26 – April 4	50 Panzerfaust anti- tank weapons; 200 Stinger anti-air rockets	The Netherlands	Germany allowed for the export of 'deadly' weapons of German origin to Ukraine.
3.	April 5 – May 19	Howitzers*, armoured vehicles (no tanks)	United States	Regrouping of Russian forces from Kyiv to the eastern Donbas to start a new assault. Ukraine asks for heavy arms such as tanks and artillery.
4.	May 20 – October 7	3 more howitzers, training personnel to Germany and UK	United States	Successful Ukrainian counter- offensive at Kharkiv. The US send HIMARS.
5.	October 8 – January 15	Anti-air missiles; Modernised T-72 tanks from Czechia to Ukraine	United States	Heavy bombardment of civilian infrastructure. The US send its Patriots system.
6.	January 16 – January 22	Parts of 2 Patriot system	United States, Germany	Dutch PM travels to the US and makes sure the Netherlands joins Germany and the US in sending more Patriots to Ukraine.
7.	January 23 – February 26	100 Leopard 1 tanks with Denmark	Poland	Poland threatens to send Leopard 2 tanks without German approval. Germany eventually sends tanks after the US agree to send Abram tanks.

*amounts send not disclosed by Dutch government

4.5 Different actors ⁸

A last analysis is performed by focussing on the different actors that play a role in the Dutch military aid towards Ukraine. These actors have been identified by the qualitative analysis which distinguished between the seven phases of military aid sent to Ukraine. Next to the Dutch government, these actors are the EU, NATO and the German, American and Polish governments. Descriptive statistics show that Germany and the US are most prevalent in Dutch news coverage with a 70% and 69% presence in the news articles. These two actors are followed by NATO (53%), Poland (36%) and the EU (24%). Next to the presence of the actors, the articles are also coded for which actor is considered most prevailing. In around half of the articles with 49.1%, the government of the Netherlands is considered the main actor. Again, the most prevalent actors thereafter are Germany with 18.9% and the US with 17.8%. These actors are followed by NATO (5.3%), the EU (4.7%) and Poland (4.1%).

Not entirely unexpected, the Dutch involvement in military aid towards Ukraine is the biggest in Dutch media coverage. However, in over half the articles that were analysed, other actors are seen as more essential. This shows that the arms deliveries by a relatively small state such as the Netherlands are dependent on bigger states such as Germany and the US. These two states play an important, yet different role in affecting Dutch military aid to Ukraine. The US is the biggest supplier of arms to Ukraine and thus plays a major role in the facilitation of these arms. The Netherlands needed the support of both the Americans as well as the Germans in the delivery of the sophisticated Patriot air-defence system to Ukraine. This is highlighted by the visit of Prime Minister Rutte to the White House where the Dutch leader announced it would partake by sending parts of the Patriot system (Postma, 2023). Germany's role at the beginning of the war was one mostly of hampering military aid. It needs to give permission to re-export arms made by German producers, something which most other states allow but Germany halted on several occasions (Wallraff, 2022). Next to that, the role of NATO is also highlighted in Dutch media coverage. Even though all military aid happens bilateral, the organisation is still amply present in the articles through its increased presence in Eastern Europe and facilitating role (Borst, 2022). Poland is mainly portrayed as a barrier breaker in sending military equipment to Ukraine. Especially their role in pressuring the German government to allow the shipment of Leopard tanks to Ukraine is illustrated in the articles (Telegraaf, 2023). The role of the EU is relatively small throughout the articles. The European

⁸ All references in chapters 4.4 and 4.5 are news articles sampled from the 169 articles used in the analyses

Peace Facility (EPF) fund is mainly covered, even though most articles only talk about ‘a European fund’ (NU.nl, 2022: van den Dungen, 2022).

Chapter 5. Discussion

News coverage of military aid sent towards Ukraine can be explained through three general frames. The conflict, economic consequences and responsibility frames are each used by Dutch journalists to help narrate the strong and expensive help Ukraine's allies are providing. These findings correspond with the findings of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) who established the prevailing presence of the responsibility frame in Dutch media. Moreover, both the conflict and economic consequences frame are most endorsed throughout the literature (de Vreese et al., 2010). Studies by both Neuman et al. (1992) and Gronemeyer and Porath (2017) correspond with the finding of the conflict and the economic consequences frame. A more thorough qualitative analysis also backs these findings. The Dutch media coverage of military aid is dominated by public actors such as the Dutch Ministry of Defence, the German government or President Biden. The conflict frame finds its presence in the violent origin of the war and the debate surrounding the delivery of lethal weapons to Ukraine. Lastly, the economic aspect of the arms deliveries is highlighted by the news outlets given the spending of substantial public funds.

Additional analyses illustrate that no significant differences exist between the media frames used by serious or sensationalist news outlets. This fails to coincide with Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) who established the possible relationship between sensationalism and the use of the five frames. Instead, several outliers are identified when comparing the news outlets. First, *AD* uses all five frames significantly less than its counterparts. This corresponds with the neutral stance of the news outlets which portray themselves as and which is amplified by its middle score of the sensationalist-serious axis. Another outlier is *NOS.nl* which tends to highlight the human interest, morality and responsibility frame the most. Lastly, the most serious news outlet, *NRC* ranks highest in the use of the economic consequences frame.

A quantitative analysis of the data shows that time is not a significant predictor of the five frames or the attitude towards Ukraine. This means that in the first year of the war, the types of frames used to cover the military aid sent to Ukraine did not change significantly. In theory, this is positive for Ukraine as it already enjoys widespread support since the beginning of the war. A change in the perception of the military aid towards Ukraine will most likely have led to a change in the frames used by news outlets. This is further backed by the fact that time is also not found as a predictor of the attitude of the news articles towards military aid. An in-depth analysis of the articles, their published date and the publications of the Dutch Ministry of Defence allows for the categorisation of seven phases of military aid towards Ukraine. It

becomes apparent that the context of the war in Ukraine plays a role in the sending of military aid towards Ukraine. Likewise, several initiating states, such as Germany, the US and Poland also fostered the deliveries of arms to Ukraine. It should be noted that this thesis only examined articles until 26 February 2023. It can be argued that the eighth phase of the war is already underway with the discussion on Western fighter jets and the delivery of long-range missiles to Ukraine.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

The continuation of military aid towards Ukraine is of utmost importance for Ukraine as well as its Western allies. As stated by the President of the European Commission von der Leyen, Ukraine is fighting for “everything we Europeans cherish” (European Commission, 2023). Even though current support for the arms deliveries is high throughout Europe, this might not last if the war in Ukraine drags on for longer and the type of military aid keeps getting more sophisticated. One possible factor that can influence public opinion is the way in which news is framed. That is why this thesis aims to answer the central question of how the military aid towards Ukraine is covered in the media of its allies. The Netherlands, being one of these outspoken allies, is chosen as venue for a case study. The research question is answered with the help of framing theory, of which a foundation of five general frames is tested for their presence in Dutch media coverage of the military aid towards Ukraine.

Over a period of one year, a total of 169 news articles from the six biggest news outlets in the Netherlands have been analysed. This happened through a framework of twenty indicator questions set out by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). The five frames tested for are the conflict, economic consequences, human interest, morality and responsibility frames. Of these frames, the conflict, economic consequences and responsibility frames were found most often and surpasses the 0.5 threshold set out by the literature (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Thus, the military aid towards Ukraine is covered through these three lenses which emphasise different aspects of the military aid. The most common frame, the responsibility frame highlights the active role of the Dutch government as well as other governmental bodies such as other governments, ministries, NATO and the EU. The conflict frame, second most common in Dutch news coverage, mainly found its use in either portraying the cruelty of the war or the internal debates about the deliveries of arms such as the tension between Germany and Poland or between the Dutch government and officials of the Dutch military. Lastly, the economic consequences frame is used by the media to accentuate the costs of the military gear sent by Ukraine’s allies. The military aid towards Ukraine is an excessive sum of public money that is spent and thus also controlled by the media.

Additionally, the news outlets are ranked on a sensationalist to serious scale as well as a scale ranging from most supporting to most critical. However, both variables do not produce significant results and cannot predict the media frames used by the news outlets. Differences between the news outlets did exist when looking at each of them individually. First, *NRC*, the most sensationalist outlet, used the economic consequences frame the most. Within the news

articles of *AD*, the economic consequences did not meet the 0.5 threshold and thus cannot be concluded to be present. Overall, *AD* used the least frames of all news outlets and is identified as an outlier in the data. When excluding the articles of *AD*, the variable of attitude towards military aid could moderately explain the use of the responsibility frame in the data.

Additional analyses comparing the publication dates of the article with the frames used did not yield significant results. Thus, it cannot be concluded that the media of allies of Ukraine changed their way of covering the military aid towards Ukraine. Given the positive attitude starting the war, this might prove to be beneficial for the continuation of military aid. An in-depth analysis and categorisation of all the articles also concluded with the distinguishment of seven phases of military aid. Two main conclusions can be taken from this. First, the arms deliveries towards Ukraine have become more expensive and more sophisticated. Second, both the context as well as initiating states have an impact on the type of aid being sent towards Ukraine. Lastly, the articles are also coded for the presence of several actors and the role of these actors in the articles. Whereas the US plays an important role in initiating military aid, Germany plays a decisive role in allowing the re-export of its arms to Ukraine. The role of Poland was one of mostly breaking barriers and pressuring other states to deliver certain types of arms, such as Germany's Leopard tanks. Both NATO and the EU played supporting roles with a less important role for the EU and its institutions.

This thesis both adds to the literature on framing theory as well as a better understanding of the military aid towards Ukraine. First, it adds to the growing literature on the five most common media frames. Given the deductive nature of framing theory, more research on the existence of the frames will provide more clarity on the existence of them. This generalisable effect is strengthened by using the same foundation within a different context. Second, the escalation and full-blown war in Ukraine is a recent and thus relatively unresearched topic. This research helped to better understand the war from a Western and allied perception of the war in Ukraine. Further research should build on this foundation where evidence is found for the conflict, economic consequences and responsibility frame in the context of the war in Ukraine. That the use of frames can affect an audience is already known in the literature (Valenzuela et al., 2017). Additional research should combine these two findings and aim to understand how the three frames affect public opinion on the military aid towards Ukraine. As of writing this thesis, peace is far from reality in Ukraine and continued Russian aggression and occupation of Ukrainian territory will not help the process. While the decisions of Putin have unified Europe and the US in their support of Ukraine, the perpetuation of military aid

towards Ukraine is not certain. However, given Ukrainian men and women fight for everything we cherish, a Ukrainian victory is a victory for democracy and liberty.

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