



International Political Dialogues in the Process of Regional Changes

Naqibullah Kakar

School of Political Science and Public Management, Shanxi University, Taiyuan, China

Email: naqibkakar@163.com

How to cite this paper: Kakar, N. (2023) International Political Dialogues in the Process of Regional Changes. *Open Access Library Journal*, 10: e10242.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1110242>

Received: May 11, 2023

Accepted: June 11, 2023

Published: June 14, 2023

Copyright © 2023 by author(s) and Open Access Library Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

When it comes to war, communication is ultimately a political communication issue. Political communication during war reflects the political interests and goals of all parties involved and serves as a medium for reflecting the war. Political communication has played a significant role in various forms throughout wars, from World War I to the current “Russia-Ukraine Conflict”. In this conflict, public opinion has become a critical factor that affects the direction and outcome of the conflict, replacing its previous role as an auxiliary element of military action. The weaponization of social media in the “Russia-Ukraine Conflict” has created a new international political communication scene, indicating a shift from macro political propaganda to micro political communication. This means that social media, which is primarily used by individuals, is profoundly changing international political communication, which has traditionally been based on mass communication. The “Russia-Ukraine Conflict” provides valuable insights for China’s international political communication, emphasizing the need for the academic community to develop a high level of theoretical awareness regarding “international political communication”. Additionally, China should utilize excellent international political discourse skills to evade Western media’s “discourse trap”, respond to and counter questioning and defamation of China, strengthen the construction of internet information platforms, master the sovereignty of cyberspace, and view social media as a strategic factor for national security.

Subject Areas

International Politics

Keywords

International Political Dialogues, Media, Russia-Ukraine War

1. Introduction

The ongoing “Russia-Ukraine conflict” that has not yet ended is causing intense turbulence in the world’s political landscape and political order, while also igniting a global information and public opinion war among different political camps. It can be said that the new world landscape created by the “Russia-Ukraine conflict” is the most worthwhile and necessary to be observed and considered from the perspective of political communication. Political communication theory urgently needs to provide explanations and guidance that align with the pursuit of human social justice values and bring benefits to all humanity. This article observes and reflects on the “Russia-Ukraine conflict” from the perspective of international political communication.

2. Political Communication in International War

War is the use of military force to resolve political conflicts between political communities or organizations. The brewing, mobilization, struggle, and negotiation in war all rely on information dissemination. Information dissemination in war can generally be divided into two categories: military intelligence dissemination within the military system to better coordinate and accomplish combat tasks, and political communication between participating countries and their people, as well as neutral countries and hostile countries. The former is part of the battle tactics and disseminates objective military information, belonging to the field of military research. The latter involves a broader range of political subjects and interest groups beyond armed personnel directly participating in combat, disseminating political information with political value and political emotion, belonging to the field of political communication research.

Political communication activities refer to the organic system operation process of the diffusion, acceptance, recognition, internalization, and other political information of political communities, as well as the flow of political information within and between political communities [1]. As can be seen, the definition of political communication already includes political communication activities between countries. During the war, the background of political communication reflects a specific international political order. The subject and object of political communication have specific political identities and positions, the content of political communication contains specific political values and political consciousness, and the purpose of political communication also has a practical direction. Therefore, political communication in war has very clear political characteristics. Moreover, from large-scale military conflicts between countries and diplomatic games to the separation of ordinary people in war and homelessness, all will trigger the audience’s political associations. Ultimately, all political and non-political phenomena will be attributed to politics. Therefore, the communication problem in war is ultimately a political communication problem. Political communication in war reflects the political interests, political consciousness, and political goals of all parties in the war, which is a medium

mapping of war and therefore has very important research value.

In history, the first person to pay attention to political communication in war was Harold D. Lasswell. Lasswell's book "Propaganda Technique in World War" was published in 1927 and has been nearly a century since. From a political perspective, this hundred year is a hundred years of deepening world history and a hundred years of extremely turbulent world pattern. From a communication perspective, this hundred year is also a hundred years of revolutionary changes in media technology and communication forms. Therefore, from "Propaganda Technique in World War" to the highly active social media in the "Russian-Ukrainian Conflict" addressed in this article, the form of political communication in war has undergone fundamental changes. Its main manifestations are: from a historical background perspective, Lasswell studied World War I, which affected many countries, while the "Russian-Ukrainian Conflict" occurred during a local conflict era with "peace and development" as its theme; from the perspective of media technology, during the two world wars, countries mainly used print and radio as communication tools, while today's "Russian-Ukrainian Conflict" mainly uses internet-based communication [2].

In his book, Laswell wrote, "Today, people are examining more closely than ever before the role of propaganda in international politics, especially during wartime. This is due to many reasons. Around the world, people have developed a new curiosity about this issue." Despite being heavily influenced by social media in daily life, modern people are still surprised by the use of social media in modern localized wars and the results it brings, and like Laswell, have a strong interest in the wartime application of media tools. "The role of public opinion in international politics is particularly worth studying because the importance of this issue is increasing day by day. We have witnessed the development of a world public, and this public has been partly aroused and organized by international propaganda." The phenomenon of the "world public" formed through the media in Laswell's writing can still accurately describe the situation of opinion clashes and hidden undercurrents in social media during the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Contemporary people seem to share a similar awareness of the problem with Laswell. Compared to Laswell's time, the tactics design, strategic layout, organizational structure, discourse practice, and conceptual construction of modern wartime propaganda have undergone iterations and presented the situation of "war in the palm of your hand [3]". Therefore, the use of social media in the "Russia-Ukraine conflict" has become a milestone event in the history of political communication and even human warfare, triggering extensive discussion and research.

3. Performance and Spectating: New Features of Political Communication in Modern Local Wars

In an era themed around "peace and development", compared to the immense scale and intensity of the world wars, the number of warring countries and the

number of casualties and losses in local conflicts are limited. However, the “strategic” characteristics of modern local wars are more prominent. This strategic intent is reflected in the fact that modern local wars do not primarily aim for national extinction or complete occupation of another country’s territory, but rather hope to achieve more far-reaching strategic goals through war means and win victories beyond military ones. To achieve these strategic objectives, political communication methods are needed to destroy the opponent’s will, express one’s own intentions, create public opinion momentum, occupy the moral high ground, magnify the fruits of military victories, and expand the deterrent effect of military wars. Therefore, compared to world wars, modern local wars require more attention to the use of political communication methods and attach greater importance to the feelings and evaluations of neutral countries and spectators, and the characteristics of “performance” and “spectating” are thus particularly prominent.

In modern local wars, the number of people in spectator countries far exceeds the number of people in participating countries. Therefore, it is crucial to make neutral “spectators” develop favorable thinking towards one’s own side. “The most effective role of propaganda is to mobilize social members to hate the enemy, maintain friendly relations with neutral and allied countries, induce neutral countries to turn against the enemy, and crush the enemy’s unbreakable resistance. In short, it is the important impact of propaganda on international attitudes during wars that gives it special significance [4].” The “international attitude” here profoundly affects the national image of participating countries. The national image during wars is crucial, especially in modern local wars.

In the “Russia-Ukraine conflict”, countries that did not actually participate in the conflict have become key players in influencing the situation. The conflict began when Ukraine expressed its intention to join NATO, which made Russia feel threatened. However, NATO’s relatively indifferent attitude after the conflict broke out put Ukraine in an awkward position. The “Russia-Ukraine conflict” first began in cyberspace. On February 18, 2022, US President Biden’s statement that he was convinced Russia would “invade” Ukraine was quickly spread on major social media platforms, putting great pressure on Russia. By February 21, before Putin ordered Russian troops to enter Donbass, social media was already full of various messages about the Russian army crossing the border, creating pre-war panic in Ukraine. The United States used political propaganda before the conflict and coordinated with European countries to impose harsh sanctions on Russia after the conflict, which also exacerbated the severity of the situation to some extent. Even before the outbreak of the conflict, the United States had predicted Russia’s military action. Although there was a time deviation, this move created a very tense atmosphere in the global public opinion field. Although the United States did not directly intervene in the “Russia-Ukraine conflict”, it always used its international discourse hegemony to exert pressure on Russia. The United States and Western countries stirred up trouble in the public opinion field and played tit-for-tat, shaping global public opinion to provide

support for Ukraine. Some Western countries even imposed “sanctions” and “bans” on Russia’s flora, fauna, and artistic works, reflecting “nonsense” and “small-mindedness” in political propaganda issues, but having a negative effect on their own image construction. In the “Russia-Ukraine conflict”, China also became the focus of international public opinion. Western countries used the China-Russia relationship as an excuse to politically smear and discredit China, believing that China had the conditions to stop the conflict but was evading responsibility and even reaping benefits. This false information and “discourse traps” not only damage China’s image and distort its stance, but also trigger the split of domestic public opinion through infiltration and influence on China’s domestic media and network [5].

In terms of political communication, Russia, which takes a preemptive approach, appears to be somewhat passive. The focus of Russian political communication is to explain the compulsion and helplessness of “special military operations”, attribute the causes of the conflict to Ukraine, the United States, and NATO countries, and strive to maintain its own image of peace and justice. Russian President Putin made a self-defense in his television speech on March 16, 2022, proposing that this special military operation was to prevent the Donbass people from genocide and slaughter. He accused the Kiev authorities of violating the Minsk agreement, attempting to possess nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles, intending to join NATO, and conducting biological weapons research projects with US support. These behaviors have seriously threatened Russia’s security. Russia is taking a defensive action, and Ukraine is the “aggressor”. Putin emphasized that the Russian military action was not to occupy Ukraine but to make it a neutral country, achieve demilitarization and de-Nazification, and make every effort to minimize the loss of Ukrainian civilians. Putin also specifically mentioned the related issues of political communication. He believed that the global Internet was massively attacking Russia, and an unprecedented information war was beginning. The objectivity and independence proclaimed by Western media were completely untrustworthy. They intentionally ignored the tragedy that occurred in Donetsk. Putin condemned a US social networking site that allowed “network hunting orders” against ordinary Russian citizens to be posted on its platform. Putin also hoped that the people of Europe and the United States would realize that the sanctions imposed on Russia by these countries were completely “to add fuel to the fire”, which caused a surge in domestic gasoline, energy, and food prices, and had nothing to do with Russia [6]. It can be seen that Putin’s rhetoric and logic can correspond to what Lasswell called “propaganda techniques in the world war”. Russia has also set up humanitarian channels multiple times in special military operations, allowing ordinary Ukrainian civilians to evacuate from the war zone. Short videos circulated on the Internet also show Russian tank troops taking detours to protect Ukraine’s street facilities, which have to some extent improved Russia’s image of being denounced as an “aggressor”.

Ukraine, which is in a defensive position in military combat, has a natural ad-

vantage in political communication. With its asymmetric influence in global information flow, Ukraine, which is in a disadvantaged position in reality's geopolitical game, has gained a certain asymmetric advantage. Zelensky fully utilized the global public opinion platform that Western countries created to suppress Russia and transformed himself into a political symbol with significant political mobilization value among Western audiences [7]. From Zelensky's series of speech videos, it can be seen that Ukraine's discourse strategy is to bundle its own situation and security with the interests of Western countries, hold high the banner of freedom and democracy to oppose tyranny, occupy the moral high ground, and actively align with the Western camp in pursuing values. Zelensky also timely released videos to express personal emotions from a first-person perspective, presenting a completely different political communication effect from traditional official news shots. In the short videos, Zelensky often appears on the front line of the war zone, expressing his concern for the people and highlighting Ukraine's courage and determination to resist aggression. Ukraine has also carried out a variety of propaganda activities, such as releasing images of Russian military vehicles that were destroyed or captured, and spreading false news to the Russian military to induce them to make mistakes.

4. Weaponization: The New Function of Social Media in International Political Communication

As mentioned earlier, in modern local wars, the warring parties attach more importance to their own image and care more about the evaluation and attitude of international public opinion. The pursuit of political strategic goals is far more important than military victories. Social media can play a huge role in influencing the "onlookers' perception, shaping the national image, and exerting public opinion pressure on hostile countries. It can be said that the communication requirements of modern local wars and the advantageous characteristics of social media are complementary, making social media play an important role in modern warfare and even causing significant changes in the communication forms and strategic thinking of war. Therefore, the "weaponization" of social media is not just a metaphor for image building. Social media can exert pressure on hostile countries through international public opinion, help the warring parties achieve their strategic intentions, achieve effects that general military weapons cannot achieve, and even directly or indirectly affect the outcome of the war [8] [9]. The physical battlefield is no longer the most important conflict stage, and the narrative of war is more important than the actual behavior that usually controls the war.

4.1. From Broadcasting and Television to Social Media: War Propaganda in Different Media Environments

During the two World Wars, the warring parties primarily used flyers, radio, newspapers, booklets, and other means of communication to conduct war propaganda. The Vietnam War, on the other hand, mainly relied on television propa-

ganda and was therefore called the “first television war”. Television utilized images and sounds to accurately depict the reality and cruelty of the battlefield, making it an important medium in stimulating anti-war sentiment among the American people. In the Gulf War of 1991 and the Iraq War of 2003, television news played an important role in political communication [10]. Thus, it can be seen that the critical wars in human modern history have been accompanied by the use of emerging media in warfare, and the warring parties will use all available media means to launch propaganda wars, information wars, and public opinion wars.

Participation in reporting and discussion of wars on social media is not a new phenomenon. Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, social media has played a prominent role in the conflict. In the 2020 Azerbaijan-Armenia war, both sides utilized social media to quickly disseminate war news, with both sides spreading combat scenes through edited short videos and live streaming real-time battle conditions. In the 2014 Donbass War, pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian factions in Ukraine engaged in heated debates on social media and interpreted military actions from their respective standpoints [4].

Some scholars believe that the “Russia-Ukraine conflict” is a war that highly integrates local conflicts in physical space and global integration of public opinion wars in cyberspace. Public opinion has risen from a supporting and auxiliary role in past military actions to a critical role and become a key factor in influencing the direction and outcome of conflicts, including the role of the United States in the run-up to the conflict, the role of the media in persuading public opinion and mobilizing public opinion, and the selective concealment and falsification of information [11]. The live broadcast and TikTok inaction of the war have also raised demands for peace in public opinion to the highest level. At the same time, the 2022 “Russia-Ukraine conflict” was called the first “short video war” with global live broadcast features in the era of mobile internet and the first war reported on TikTok by individuals who only have smartphones but have been super empowered. The New Yorker even coined a new term for the conflict: “WarTok”. Therefore, the international political communication in the “Russia-Ukraine conflict” is no longer a public diplomacy war between the warring parties in the traditional sense of military conflict, but a new type of communication that mainly relies on social media platforms to shape and strengthen people’s perceptions, presenting characteristics of information explosion, full public participation, and full-process live broadcast [12].

4.2. “Weaponized” Social Media

Social media is a media form based on internet applications, built on the foundation of Web 2.0 technology, that allows for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. The 2012 book “Like War: The Weaponization of Social Media” argues that social media is evolving in a weaponized direction. The internet is changing war and politics just as war and politics are changing the in-

ternet. Through the weaponization of social media, “Twitter wars” have caused real-world casualties [13]. The viral spread of misinformation not only changes the outcome of wars but also alters the destiny of nations. The result is that war, technology, and politics have fused into a new battlefield on mobile phones [14]. The weaponization of social media is reflected in three ways: first, the participants in public opinion wars are no longer limited to the conflicting parties but have expanded to global netizens; second, the war process is broadcasted to the public, and the internet synchronizes public information and situational developments, with the concretization of war leading to an increase in public opinion pressure on the conflicting parties; third, internet technology companies that control social media platforms have powerful dominance over public opinion trends through means such as account closures and information dissemination. The influence of polarized public opinion in the internet era on the course of conflict has greatly increased, and it may even influence or alter the military deployment of the conflicting parties. In a sense, the internet space public opinion war is a network war over the legitimacy of war and the right to interpret the war process [15].

Therefore, social media not only plays a powerful role in political mobilization and organizational communication but also demonstrates unprecedented abilities in shaping public opinion and setting agendas. It has already integrated into the mechanism of information warfare and affects the process and even outcome of war [16]. In the “Russia-Ukraine conflict”, the attacks and curses in social media language are as fiery and intense as those on the real-world battlefield, in the struggle for the moral high ground and defense. Citizens of neutral and on looking countries also join the “online battles” on social media, enthusiastically “taking sides” and expressing their views, becoming a unique international political communication landscape in modern warfare. In the era of social media, the open information network enables audiences of all parties to receive political information, so the integrative ability of international political communication entities is crucial, and social media has already developed into an important sub-battlefield.

4.3. Weaponized “Discourse”

The use of language, rhetoric, narration, and other means to launch a comprehensive attack against opponents is not a new phenomenon in the context of armed conflicts. However, in modern local wars, with the support of new media technology, the means and performances of the warring parties in the “propaganda war” have become more diverse and aggressive, with greater “offensiveness” and “lethality”. After experiencing two world wars, modern people are very sensitive and averse to words such as “armed aggression”, “fascism”, “nuclear war”, etc., and these terms have become weapons of discourse and dissemination tags in the “propaganda war” between modern nations. Zelensky once said that Russia is the country that supports terrorism the most in the world, and

this special military action also has the nature of terrorism, in order to deconstruct the legitimacy of Russia's "special military action". Information dissemination is the primary function of social media, so the "offensiveness" in the dissemination of language and rhetoric has become a prominent feature of the "weaponization" of social media.

4.3.1. Weaponization of "Truth"

"The truth is the first casualty of war." In a state of war or conflict, it may seem like there is an explosion of information and a constant stream of various sources of information about the conflict, but many pieces of information are difficult to verify or disprove [17]. The flow of information is not as smooth as during peacetime, especially for issues related to "humanitarian" concerns. This can easily arouse emotions among the audience and lead to overlooking the truth of the matter. Social media content can mislead people, resulting in the phenomenon of "post-truth". Therefore, many official and unofficial media outlets organize fact-checking efforts, and even use "fact-checking" as an important strategy for weaponizing social media. By emphasizing the truthfulness of their own published or disseminated information, or by refuting and clarifying some rumors, they aim to establish a positive image of themselves. During the initial outbreak of the "Russia-Ukraine conflict", social media platforms spread "real-time footage" fabricated by war games, as well as "real-time scenes" using videos of the conflict between the Russian and Ukrainian military from previous years. In addition, the Ukrainian side continuously released unverifiable news, such as Russian troops being systematically eliminated, and high-ranking Russian military leaders being killed, in order to cover up the real situation on the battlefield and to stimulate the fighting spirit of their own troops. Chechnya even hired a "special actor" who resembled Zelensky to shoot a video of Zelensky being arrested, admitting his mistakes, and surrendering publicly. The highly authentic video was widely disseminated on social media, not only confusing people's perception but also undermining the enemy's will. During the conflict, the safety of the world's largest plane, the AN-225, has aroused widespread attention from netizens worldwide. As early as February 24, 2022, there were rumors on various social media platforms that the plane had been destroyed, followed by "refutation" messages. After confirming that the plane had been damaged during the war, both the Russian and Ukrainian sides accused each other of being responsible. At this point, AN-225 had become a political symbol, embodying the global public's concern about the conflict and their desire for peace, and also a point of public opinion confrontation for both the Russian and Ukrainian sides to maintain their positive images and condemn each other's "unjust behavior". As fake news is a tool for political actors to clarify their positions on specific issues and shape domestic and international public opinion, it serves as a strategic narrative. Creating false news stories is not only for reporting events but also for building identity and changing audience perceptions [18]. Essentially, so-called "fact-checking" is just a utilitarian discourse strategy to cover up one's own

propaganda warfare intentions, under the guise of “fact-checking”, to lure audiences into letting their guards down. While there is an element of seeking the truth in fact-checking, it often goes beyond the specifics of the matter, and its essence is the fierce competition between parties with vested interests over the narrative and definition of the conflict.

4.3.2. The Weaponization of “Morality”

Social media not only spreads information, but also outputs values. The use of universally recognized moral principles for criticism and attack is not exclusive to the social media era. Compared to world wars, modern localized wars focus more on humanitarian protection and reducing civilian casualties. Social media, through the restoration and display of the war scenes, keeps armed conflicts constantly subjected to questioning and consideration of humanitarian values [19]. In the “Russia-Ukraine Conflict”, more and more Ukrainian users use social media to pick up their phones in unarmed situations, documenting the tragic scenes of living beings and homes being destroyed, arousing the broad sympathy of the international community, and using social media as a weapon to make up for the country’s lack of armed forces. During this period, a video was circulating on TikTok, showing a group of unarmed Ukrainian civilians forcing an armed Russian soldier to step back, while they shouted at him, “Shoot, the reporter is here”, and the Russian soldier could only helplessly fire a warning shot into the air, not daring to shoot to kill. This stark contrast between military and civilian behavior is quite ironic, with the spread of tools “winning” over weapons. This also reflects a previous reality, in which in the world wars of the past, the basic objective of war and battle was often to maximize the elimination of enemy forces, whereas in modern localized wars under the influence of social media, any military action may be exposed, with many imperceptible details being amplified by social media and many secret actions being made public. Even more subversive is that the immediacy, openness, and casualness of social media communication make it difficult for “political gatekeepers” to react in time, and matters that require secret deliberation, temporary decisions, and secret action can no longer be completed, thereby reshaping the internal and external order of political communication and the flow of information during wartime.

The greatest “achievement” of social media in the “Russia-Ukraine Conflict” is that even as “onlookers”, people around the world can experience the cruelty of war, making them cherish peace even more. Faced with the bloody, merciless, and brutal nature of war, modern people who have lived in peace for a long time have been strongly shocked. In particular, social media uses text, images, sound, video, and other media to provide multidimensional emotional stimulation to audiences, creating a strong sense of immediacy. War scenes recorded and spread in short video form can make audiences feel sympathy, pain, sadness, and other empathetic emotions in just a few seconds, with extremely high dissemination efficiency. All of these also inevitably trigger people’s reflection and resonance, making them undergo a virtual “war trial” on the internet [20].

4.3.3. Weaponized “Platforms”

In the era of social media, the acceleration of platformization in the international communication pattern has become increasingly obvious, and the digital power held by super internet platform companies presents monopolistic and centralized features. The commonly used social media platforms are controlled by a few American multinational companies, making the political communication relationship between modern localized warfare countries appear very complicated and subtle. Western countries use administrative regulations to notify media operating platforms, to block, seal, and even delete accounts that publish information favorable to Russia. They even modify the platform operating rules to allow non-compliant information that is unfavorable to Russia, including hate speech and very typical false information, to gain the right to unidirectional passage on the platform [21]. This situation is very unfavorable to Russia, which is equivalent to Western countries controlling Russia’s “speech”, while Russia is powerless. According to foreign media reports, due to pressure from European officials on major social media platforms to take restrictive measures against “pro-Russian” propaganda, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have announced restrictions on content published by Russian state media on their platforms. Meta (Facebook’s parent company) will block information published by the Russian news agency RT and Sputnik in EU countries after receiving “requests from government and EU officials for further action against Russian state media”. They also shut down a “pro-Russian” fake news propaganda website and implemented “algorithm restrictions” on the accounts of Russian state media to reduce the speed and scope of their content dissemination. Twitter also tries to block Russian state media from publishing messages on Twitter as much as possible. YouTube, one of the world’s largest video websites, has blocked accounts and content related to Russian state media, including “Today’s Russia” (RT), within Ukraine and significantly reduced the recommended amount of content related to Russian state media on its platform. TikTok and Microsoft have also banned “Today’s Russia” and Russian Sputnik from spreading in EU countries. Russian users have also encountered problems when using the above social media software. This seems to explain why we always hear voices from Ukraine on social media, but the threat posed by NATO’s eastward expansion to Russia is relatively weakened because the voices supporting Russia are difficult to spread through social media outside of Russia. Compared with economic sanctions, this “platform sanction” has caused Russia immeasurable “internal injuries” in the conflict. In the era of social media, countries such as the United States may use the backend privileges of large multinational Internet companies to block a certain country, making its media system completely “silent” or even paralyzed [22].

In summary, in the “Russia-Ukraine conflict”, both sides have waged a virtual information war and public opinion war through social media in addition to military fighting. The “Russia-Ukraine conflict” marks the transition of international political communication from the “living room war” of the television era to the “hand-held war” mode of the intelligent media era, showing strategic,

short video, and emotional characteristics. The focus of the public opinion war has shifted from “information dissemination” to “cognitive construction”.

5. From Macro to Micro: New Trends in International Political Communication

In the ongoing “Russia-Ukraine conflict”, compared with Russia’s “grand national narrative”, Ukrainian President Zelensky’s “micro-difference narrative” displayed through social media has seized the “moral high ground” in international public opinion. The resulting fragmented “personal narratives” of global netizens have become a new variable in the game of international political communication [23]. What does this fact mean in theory? It means that international political communication is evolving from macro political propaganda to micro political communication, and the form of international political communication dominated by social media with individuals as the subject is strongly impacting and fundamentally changing international political communication, which has always been based on mass communication. This judgment is not only applicable to political communication in international wars or military conflicts, but is increasingly applicable to overall international political communication.

The so-called micro political communication is defined as “the organic process of information dissemination, acceptance, recognition, and internalization based on micro social life within the political community empowered by modern communication technology and centered on the individual [24]. This definition shows that micro political communication is not simply defined by micro media such as Weibo, WeChat, and short videos, but emphasizes that under the influence of modern media technology, the old macro political propaganda centered on national politics and using mass communication as the main tool is shifting towards micro political communication dominated by social media, and making the entire political communication focus more on narrative logic, discourse selection, value pursuit, and meaning competition, tilting towards social individuals.

The opposition between “macro” and “micro” in military wars has existed since ancient times. However, due to the limitations of media technology, in the past, the turbulent flow of war in macro political propaganda overshadowed the joys and sorrows of individuals, and the narrative logic of “the winner takes all” concealed people’s accusations of war and prayers for peace. From macro political propaganda to micro political communication, the form of political communication has shifted from single-point dissemination to multi-point dissemination. The difficult-to-suppress voices of diversity have broken the monopoly of macro political propaganda on information, allowing ordinary people’s reflection on war to be transformed into media agendas and have a huge impact. In the “Russia-Ukraine conflict”, a short video recorded a Ukrainian resident playing a music piece on a piano after returning to their home bombed by artillery. The melodious and soothing piano sound contrasts sharply with the ruins of the

bombed-out walls, evoking deep sympathy. In these few seconds, the success or failure of right and wrong, and honor or disgrace in the war seem no longer important, people only want to save ordinary people who are displaced by war.

The advancement of internet technology has empowered ordinary people with the right to record and express themselves. At least from the perspective of communication opportunities and conditions, human beings have entered an unprecedented world of freedom and equality, and the general public is also immersed in it. The development of mobile internet technology has reduced the cost of communication, allowing more individuals to participate in political communication and making political communication more diversified. This is the new trend of international political communication from macro to micro.

6. The Enlightenment of “Russia-Ukraine Conflict” to China’s International Political Communication

The ongoing “Russia-Ukraine Conflict” reflects the typical characteristics of modern partial wars with the participation of major powers, both in terms of communication and warfare, and is bound to become a landmark historical event. It will have a significant impact on the world’s political and economic structure and the state’s power situation, giving us endless food for thought both in practice and theory.

Firstly, from a theoretical perspective, the contemporary Chinese academic community should form a conscious theory of “international political communication”. Currently, “international communication” has become a hot topic in academia, but the research on “international communication” is scattered and confined to the single discipline and theoretical framework of communication studies, lacking sufficient explanatory power for the reality that is happening. We believe that it is urgent to extract a new theory of “international political communication” from the broad category of “international communication” in order to expand the disciplinary perspective of “international communication”, accommodate and merge, and form a joint force. Moreover, for “international political communication”, “micro international political communication” is a new research direction [25].

Secondly, China and Russia have maintained very friendly diplomatic relations in recent years, and the armed conflict between the two is a huge test of China’s diplomatic ability. Faced with the complex international situation, China has shown a very high level of foreign communication wisdom and international political communication standards. It has adhered to its own position and attitude on principle issues, starting from the right and wrong of the matter itself, highlighting the highest value pursuit of “peace”, and working hard to ease the situation, resolve the crisis, and rebuild peace. At the same time, through the art of political discourse, it has effectively avoided the “discourse traps” set by individual Western media and calmly responded to and countered the questioning and slander against China. Up to now, the “Russia-Ukraine conflict” has not yet

ended, and China should summarize its experience and take this as an opportunity to enhance its own international political communication capabilities, lead the construction of a community of human destiny, and embody China's responsible major power mission.

Thirdly, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of the Internet information platform and firmly grasp the national sovereignty of the cyberspace. In this "Russia-Ukraine conflict", the United States has greatly weakened Russia's political communication ability in the international community by using Internet platforms to impose sanctions. In the age of the Internet, social media platforms are operated by large Internet companies and are not directly controlled by their own countries. This means that many countries' network "microphones" are likely to be confiscated by other countries at any time. Therefore, developing Internet information platforms, especially cultivating social media platforms with strong influence and a wide audience, has significant strategic significance and political value both in peacetime and wartime.

Since entering the Internet age, China has been working to develop a relatively independent Internet platform matrix, with a relatively low degree of dependence on American Internet giants. This has laid a good historical beginning and political direction for the development of China's Internet political communication. However, in the era of deepening Internet development, how to further maintain national sovereignty in cyberspace, make various social media platforms such as instant messaging and short videos bigger, stronger, more refined, and more excellent requires the cultivation and support of national policies and multi-faceted efforts in technology, marketing, services, products, innovation, and other aspects.

7. Conclusion

To this day, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has not yet ended, and it is difficult to determine the outcome of the war. Although social media cannot fully compensate for Ukraine's relative military weakness, the new trends and changes in political communication in modern localized military conflicts have become very apparent. The underlying logic has quietly changed in the physical realm of cyberspace, information infrastructure, and perception. "Political governance of communication", a country's political and economic interests remain the decisive factor in determining its relations with other countries. Each country can only use communication methods to achieve its strategic objectives to the greatest extent possible based on its objective strength. With the iteration of communication technology, each country has different abilities to control and utilize emerging media, leading to a more prominent cognitive gap between major powers on security, order, and values, and international political communication capacity building will also be of concern to various countries. Therefore, whether from the perspective of the development of the international order after the Cold War or the strategic game of national strategy under the influence of

internet technology, the “Russia-Ukraine conflict” will have a profound impact on the future, and we look forward to deeper observation and thinking in the theoretical community.

Main Innovations:

Focus on Political Communication: The article highlights the importance of political communication in modern localized military conflicts. It recognizes the evolving trends and changes in this domain and their implications for the conduct and outcomes of such conflicts.

Emphasis on Objective Strength: The article emphasizes that a country’s objective strength determines its ability to utilize communication methods to achieve strategic objectives. It acknowledges that each country has different abilities to control and utilize emerging media, leading to cognitive gaps between major powers.

Impact on International Political Communication: The article suggests that the Russia-Ukraine conflict has implications for international political communication capacity building. It highlights the varying abilities of countries to control and utilize communication technology and the resulting disparities in security, order, and values.

Shortcomings:

Lack of Specific Examples: The article does not provide specific examples or case studies to support its arguments and claims. Future scholars may benefit from a more detailed analysis with concrete instances of how political communication has evolved in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Limited Exploration of Consequences: The article briefly mentions the profound impact of the conflict on the future but does not delve into the specific consequences or outcomes. Future research could explore the potential consequences in greater depth, considering geopolitical implications, regional stability, and the impact on international relations.

Absence of Alternative Perspectives: The article presents a particular viewpoint regarding the impact of the conflict on the future of international order and the strategic game of national strategy. It would be beneficial for future scholars to consider alternative perspectives and potential counterarguments to foster a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

To better study the Russia-Ukraine war, future scholars should consider addressing the mentioned innovations and shortcomings. This includes providing specific examples, exploring the consequences in greater depth, considering alternative perspectives, and conducting further research on the evolving nature of political communication in localized military conflicts.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

- [1] Setiawan, A., Saputra, H.A. and Fridayani, H.D. (2021) Political Communication

- and Public Sphere Democracy (An Analysis: The Hashtags Usage of Rejection the Omnibus law 2020 on Twitter). *Profetik Jurnal Komunikasi*, **14**, 51-59. <https://doi.org/10.14421/pjk.v14i1.2106>
- [2] Rabbi, M.F., Ben Hassen, T., El Bilali, H., Raheem, D. and Raposo, A. (2023) Food Security Challenges in Europe in the Context of the Prolonged Russian-Ukrainian Conflict. *Sustainability*, **15**, Article 4745. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15064745>
- [3] Pereira, P., Zhao, W., Symochko, L., Inacio, M., Bogunovic, I. and Barcelo, D. (2022) The Russian-Ukrainian Armed Conflict Impact will Push back the Sustainable Development Goals. *Geography and Sustainability*, **3**, 277-287. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geosus.2022.09.003>
- [4] Koval, N., Kulyk, V., Riabchuk, M., Zarembo, K. and Fakhurdinova, M. (2022) Morphological Analysis of Narratives of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict in Western Academia and think-Tank Community. *Problems of Post-Communism*, **69**, 166-178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2021.2009348>
- [5] Pasitselska, O. (2022) Better Ask Your Neighbor: Renegotiating Media Trust during the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict. *Human Communication Research*, **48**, 179-202. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hcr/hqac003>
- [6] Agyei, S.K. (2023) Emerging Markets Equities' Response to Geopolitical Risk: Time-Frequency Evidence from the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict Era. *Heliyon*, **9**, e13319. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e13319>
- [7] Bossman, A. and Gubareva, M. (2023) Asymmetric Impacts of Geopolitical Risk on Stock Markets: A Comparative Analysis of the E7 and G7 Equities during the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict. *Heliyon*, **9**, e13626. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e13626>
- [8] Mariotti, S. (2022) A Warning from the Russian-Ukrainian War: Avoiding a Future that Rhymes with the Past. *Journal of Industrial and Business Economics*, **49**, 761-782. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40812-022-00219-z>
- [9] Li, L.L., Liang, P., Jiang, S. and Chen, Z.Q. (2022) Multi-Scale Dynamic Analysis of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict from the Perspective of Night-Time Lights. *Applied Sciences*, **12**, Article 12998. <https://doi.org/10.3390/app122412998>
- [10] Vus, V. and Esterlis, I. (2022) Support of the Population within the Russian-Ukrainian War: Insider's Perspective. *Chronic Stress*, **6**. <https://doi.org/10.1177/24705470221101884>
- [11] Studinski, V. (2022) The Lublin Triangle in Europe's Economic Security System in the Context of the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014-2022. *University Economic Bulletin*, No. 53, 132-138. <https://doi.org/10.31470/2306-546X-2022-53-132-138>
- [12] Valion, O. (2021) Belarus' Economic Relations with Ukraine and Russia. Trends, Dynamics, Challenges (2014-2021). *Codrul Cosminului*, **27**, 355-378. <https://doi.org/10.4316/CC.2021.02.003>
- [13] Kravchenko, V.V. (2022) The Russian War against Ukraine: Cyclic History vs Fatal Geography. East/West: *Journal of Ukrainian Studies (EWJUS)*, **9**, 201-208. <https://doi.org/10.21226/ewjus711>
- [14] Miarka, A. (2022) Social Mobilization in Belarus-The Polish Perspective. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2022.2152839>
- [15] Puleri, M. (2023) Ukrainian, Russophone, (other) Russian: Hybrid Identities and Narratives in Post-Soviet Culture and Politics. Peter Lang, Berlin.
- [16] Rudnytska, N. (2022) Contesting Ukrainian Nationhood: Literary Translation and the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict. *Respectus Philologicus*, **42**, 94-109.

- <https://doi.org/10.15388/RESPECTUS.2022.42.47.111>
- [17] Semotiuk, O. (2022) Russian-Ukrainian Military Conflict: Terminological and Discursive Dimensions. *Вісник Львівського університету Серія Журналістика*, 96-105. <https://doi.org/10.30970/vjo.2022.51.11399>
- [18] Hurak, I. and D'Anieri, P. (2022) The Evolution of Russian Political Tactics in Ukraine. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 69, 121-132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2020.1819162>
- [19] Chernov, G. (2023) The Russian-Ukrainian War: Persistence of Frames and the Media Issue-Cycles. *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications*, 9, 1-13.
- [20] Gülboy, B.S. and Ercan, A. (2023) Nuclear Deterrence and a Prospective Assessment of the Russian-Ukrainian War. *Journal of Applied and Theoretical Social Sciences*, 5, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.37241/jatss.2023.81>
- [21] Basciani, A. (2022) *Sectarianism and Renewal in 1920s Romania: The Limits of Orthodoxy and Nation-Building*; by Roland Clark, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2021, 222 pp., £ 85 (hardback), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2022.2027088>
- [22] Kyrydon, A. and Troyan, S. (2022) The Russian-Ukrainian War (2014-2022): Basic Preconditions and Causes. *Balkan Social Science Review*, 20, 157-179. <https://doi.org/10.46763/BSSR2220157k>
- [23] Zotova, M., Gritsenko, A. and von Löwis, S. (2021) Friends or Foes? Changes in Cross-Border Practices and Attitudes toward Neighbors along the Russian-Ukrainian Border after 2014. *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie*, 4, 220-236.
- [24] Tkachuk, O. (2022) Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict after 2014. *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe*.
- [25] Lunov, V. (2023) Neuropsychology of the Russian-Ukrainian War. Selected Comments by Bohdan Tkach, the Founder of the Ukrainian Scientific Neuropsychological school. Selected Comments by Bohdan Tkach, the Founder of the Ukrainian Scientific Neuropsychological School. SSRN. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4380623>