THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
ISTANBUL KENT UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THE REFLECTIONS OF THE 2015-16 TÜRKİYE-RUSSIA CRISIS IN RUSSIAN NEWSPAPERS

MASTER'S THESIS

MADINA ADKHAMOVA

İSTANBUL – 2024

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THESIS ADVISOR: PROF. DR. OZAN ÖRMECİ

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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

The defense date of the thesis titled "The Reflections of the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia Crisis in Russian Newspapers" prepared by Madina ADKHAMOVA was made on 19/12/2024 and it was accepted as the Master's Thesis of the Department of Political Science and International Relations of the Graduate Education Institute of Istanbul Kent University by majority vote by the jury given below.

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DECLARATION

I declare that scientific ethics rules have been followed in writing this thesis, that in case of utilization of the works of others, references have been made in accordance with scientific norms, that no falsification has been made in the data used, and that no part of the thesis has been presented as another thesis study at this university or another university.

MADINA ADKHAMOVA

19.12.2024

PREFACE

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and respect to my advisor Prof. Dr. Ozan ÖRMECİ, who has followed my work meticulously by embracing it during the writing phase of this thesis, for his valuable contributions and efforts. He has been with me in every sense throughout the whole process and has never withheld his support and contributions. During the defense exam, the jury members also made valuable contributions to the finalization of my work. On this occasion, I would like to thank all my professors and my relatives who have helped me during the final reading of my thesis. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my mother and family, whose efforts I will never be able to repay in reaching this day.

MADINA ADKHAMOVA

19.12.2024

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ABSTRACT

Istanbul Kent University Postgraduate Education Institute

The Reflections of the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia Crisis in Russian Newspapers

Madina ADKHAMOVA

Master Thesis

Department of Political Science and International Relations

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ozan ÖRMECİ

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This thesis examines how Russian newspapers framed the 2015-16 crisis in Türkiye-Russia relations, focusing on the coverage of two key events: the downing of a Russian Su-24 warplane by Turkish forces and the assassination of the Russian Ambassador to Türkiye, Andrei Karlov. Drawing on media framing theory, the study analyses the narratives and themes constructed by four major Russian newspapers —Kommersant, Russia Today, TASS, and Sputnik— to understand how the media coverage influenced public perception and diplomatic relations between the two countries. The research employs a qualitative approach, conducting a thematic analysis of the selected newspapers' coverage from November 2015 to June 2016. The findings reveal that Russian newspapers employed specific framing techniques to portray Türkiye as an aggressor and a threat to regional stability. The media coverage emphasized themes of nationalism, patriotism, and security concerns, often presenting Russia as a victim of Türkiye's hostile actions. The framing of the Su-24 shoot down and the Karlov assassination in the Russian media reflected broader geopolitical narratives that aligned with the Russian State's interests. The study suggests that the media's portrayal of the crisis played a significant role in shaping public opinion in Russia and influenced the subsequent diplomatic responses of the Russian government. The research contributes to the understanding of media framing in the context of international crises and highlights the complex relationship between media, public opinion, and foreign policy in Russia.

Keywords: *Media framing, Türkiye-Russia relations, Su-24 shootdown, Andrei Karlov assassination, Russian newspapers.*

ÖZET

İstanbul Kent Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü

2015-2016 Türkiye-Rusya Krizinin Rus Gazetelerindeki Yansımaları

Madina ADKHAMOVA

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Bu tez, Rus gazetelerinin 2015-2016 Türkiye-Rusya ilişkilerindeki krizi nasıl çerçevelediğini inceleyerek, iki önemli olayın, yani Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri tarafından düşürülen Rus Su-24 savaş uçağı ve Rusya'nın Türkiye Büyükelçisi Andrey Karlov'un öldürülmesinin ele alınış biçimlerine odaklanmaktadır. Medya çerçeveleme teorisinden yararlanan çalışma, dört büyük Rus gazetesi -Kommersant, Russia Today, TASS ve Sputnik- tarafından oluşturulan anlatıları ve temaları analiz ederek, medya kapsamının kamuoyu algısını ve iki ülke arasındaki diplomatik ilişkileri nasıl etkilediğini anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Araştırma, nitel bir yaklaşım benimseyerek, Kasım 2015'ten Haziran 2016'ya kadar seçilen gazetelerin kapsamlarının tematik analizini gerçekleştirmektedir. Bulgular, Rus gazetelerinin Türkiye'yi saldırgan ve bölgesel istikrara yönelik bir tehdit olarak tasvir etmek için belirli çerçeveleme teknikleri kullandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Medya yayınları, milliyetçilik, vatanseverlik ve güvenlik endişeleri temalarını vurgulamış ve Rusya'yı sıklıkla Türkiye'nin düşmanca eylemlerinin kurbanı olarak sunmuştur. Su-24 uçağının düşürülmesi ve Karlov suikastının Rus medyasında çerçevelenmesi, Rus Devleti'nin çıkarlarıyla uyumlu daha geniş jeopolitik anlatıları yansıtıyordu. Çalışma, medyanın kriz tasvirinin Rusya'daki kamuoyunu şekillendirmede önemli bir rol oynadığını ve Rus hükümetinin sonraki diplomatik tepkilerini etkilediğini öne sürüyor. Araştırma, uluslararası krizler bağlamında medya çerçevelemesinin anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunuyor ve Rusya'da medya, kamuoyu ve dış politika arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyi vurguluyor.

Anahtar kelimeler: Medya çerçevelemesi, Türkiye-Rusya ilişkileri, Su-24 uçağının düşürülmesi, Andrei Karlov suikastı, Rus gazeteleri.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the Republic of Türkiye (Türkiye in short) and the Russian Federation (Russia in short) has been shaped by a complex history of cooperation and rivalry. These two nations, both influential in Eurasia, have shared a long-standing geopolitical significance that is reflected in their interactions, from their historic enmity during the Ottoman-Russian Empire confrontations to more recent strategic partnerships in areas like energy, trade, and regional security. Despite periods of intense rivalry, particularly during the Cold War, the post-Soviet era has seen an evolution toward mutual cooperation, especially in economic and geopolitical spheres. However, this relationship remains deeply impacted by underlying tensions, often brought to the surface during times of crisis.

The 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis stands as one of the most significant tests in recent history, marked by two dramatic events: the downing of a Russian Su-24 warplane by Turkish forces and the assassination of the Russian Ambassador to Türkiye, Andrei Karlov. These events not only resulted in a severe diplomatic rift but also exposed the fragile nature of the bilateral relationship. The Su-24 shootdown, a result of escalating military tensions in Syria, and the assassination, which occurred at a time of high emotional and political volatility, were pivotal moments that risked escalating into a broader geopolitical conflict. Yet, despite these tensions, both nations managed to quickly restore diplomatic relations, highlighting the resilience and pragmatism at the core of their interaction.

This thesis aims to explore how these critical events were framed in Russian media, focusing particularly on newspapers, which serve as a significant vehicle for shaping public opinion and diplomatic narratives. By analyzing the framing of the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination of Ambassador Karlov, this study seeks to understand the narratives constructed by Russian newspapers and their impact on public perception and diplomatic discourse.

The central objective of this research is to identify the key themes, narratives, and framing techniques used by Russian journalists during the 2015-16 crisis. By critically analyzing the media coverage, this thesis will provide insight into how media narratives can influence international relations and public opinion, particularly in times of crisis.

CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Understanding the dynamics of Türkiye-Russia relations is critical to grasping the broader geopolitical challenges in Eurasia. These two nations, bound by complex histories and strategic interactions, often find themselves at the crossroads of cooperation and conflict. The 2015-16 crisis, marked by the Su-24 warplane shootdown and the assassination of the Russian Ambassador Andrei Karlov, stands as a pivotal episode reflecting this duality. This thesis investigates how these events were framed in Russian media, exploring their impact on public perception and diplomatic narratives, thereby contributing to the understanding of media's role in international crises.

1.1 Background of the Study

The relationship between the Republic of Türkiye and the Russian Federation is marked by a long and complex history. As neighboring countries, Türkiye and Russia have experienced a series of ups and downs in their bilateral relations over the centuries. Historically, Ottoman-Russian relations were predominantly shaped by enmity and confrontation, particularly during the periods when the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire competed for influence in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Eastern Europe. However, the early 20th century marked a significant shift in their relations, largely due to the diplomatic efforts of two influential leaders — Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Türkiye, and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the founder of the Soviet Union.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Türkiye and the Soviet Union maintained amicable ties, characterized by mutual respect and cooperation. This period was one of the few instances in history when the two nations worked closely together, setting aside their differences to pursue common goals. However, this period of cooperation was short-lived. The outbreak of the Cold War in the late 1940s led to a deterioration in Türkiye-Russia relations. Türkiye's rapprochement with the United States (U.S. in short) and its subsequent membership in NATO in 1952 heightened tensions with the Soviet Union, leading to a period of intense rivalry and competition that lasted until the end of the Cold War.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the subsequent emergence of the Russian Federation as a non-communist state opened a new chapter in Türkiye-Russia relations. Both countries, having liberalized their economies, found common ground in developing economic ties. The 1990s and 2000s saw a significant increase in trade and investment between Türkiye and Russia, with both countries recognizing the mutual benefits of a strong economic

partnership. Russia emerged as one of Türkiye's most important trading partners, while Türkiye became a key market for Russian businesses. Despite occasional political differences, the leadership in both countries demonstrated a strong determination to maintain and strengthen their bilateral relations. Moreover, due to Russia gradually becoming Türkiye's most important energy (both natural gas and oil) provider, bilateral relations gained a strategic dimension. This was further developed by two countries' partnership in nuclear energy.

However, the period of 2015-16 was marked by a significant crisis in Türkiye-Russia relations. Two major incidents —the downing of a Russian Su-24 warplane by Turkish forces and the assassination of the Russian Ambassador to Türkiye, Andrei Karlov— tested the resilience of the relationship between the two countries. These events not only strained diplomatic relations but also had a profound impact on public perception and media coverage in both Türkiye and Russia. The manner in which these incidents were reported in the Russian media, particularly in prominent newspapers, is the focus of this thesis.

1.2 Problem Statement

The 2015-16 crisis in Türkiye-Russia relations, particularly the incidents involving the Su-24 warplane and the assassination of Ambassador Karlov, garnered extensive media coverage in Russia. Russian newspapers played a crucial role in shaping public perception of the crisis, framing the events in ways that reflected both national sentiment and state interests. This thesis seeks to explore how Russian newspapers framed the Türkiye-Russia crisis, with a focus on understanding the narratives constructed by the media and their implications for diplomatic relations and public opinion.

The problem addressed in this study is the need to critically analyze the media coverage of the 2015-16 crisis in Russian newspapers. Given the significant role that media plays in international relations, particularly in shaping public opinion and influencing diplomatic outcomes, it is essential to understand the narratives that were promoted in the Russian press during this period. This research aims to uncover the underlying themes and framing techniques used by Russian newspapers to report on the crisis, and to analyze how these narratives influenced the perception of Türkiye in Russian society.

1.3 Research Questions

To guide the research, the following key questions will be addressed:

1. How did Russian newspapers portray the events surrounding the downing of the Su-24 warplane and the assassination of Ambassador Andrei Karlov?
2. What were the dominant narratives and themes in the Russian media coverage of the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis?
3. How did the framing of these events in Russian newspapers influence public perception and diplomatic relations between Türkiye and Russia?
4. How did the media framing evolve over the course of the crisis, from the initial shootdown to the subsequent normalization of relations?

These research questions are designed to explore the depth and complexity of media framing in the context of an international crisis. By answering these questions, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role that Russian newspapers played in shaping the discourse around the Türkiye-Russia crisis.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the framing of the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis in Russian newspapers. The study aims to identify the key themes, narratives, and framing techniques used by Russian journalists to report on the crisis. In doing so, the research will contribute to a broader understanding of the role of media in international relations, particularly in the context of crises that have the potential to escalate into broader conflicts.

Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Conduct a thematic analysis of the coverage of the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination of Ambassador Karlov in selected Russian newspapers;
2. Explore the ways in which Russian newspapers framed Türkiye's actions and responses during the crisis;
3. Assess the impact of media framing on public perception and its potential influence on diplomatic relations between Türkiye and Russia.

1.5 Hypothesis

This study explores the media's role in shaping public perception and supporting state narratives during the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis. The hypotheses are formulated to examine how Russian newspapers framed the crisis and aligned their narratives with state objectives. The following three hypotheses are central to this study:

Hypothesis 1: Russian newspapers systematically employed media framing techniques to portray Türkiye as an aggressor and a threat to regional stability during the Su-24 shootdown incident and the assassination of Andrei Karlov. This framing emphasized themes of nationalism, security concerns, and victimization to align public perception with state narratives. By highlighting Türkiye's actions as deliberate provocations, the media sought to justify Russia's strong response both domestically and internationally. For instance, terms like "aggression" and "threat to sovereignty" were frequently employed to galvanize national unity and support for the government's stance.

Hypothesis 2: Russian media prepared its audience for economic and diplomatic sanctions against Türkiye by strategically framing the latter's actions as provocations warranting strong responses. Through extensive coverage of the economic and geopolitical consequences of the crisis, the media emphasized the necessity and proportionality of sanctions. This narrative was supported by detailed reporting on Türkiye's economic dependency on Russia, illustrating how these measures would serve both punitive and protective functions for Russian interests. The framing aimed to ensure public approval and preempt potential criticism of the government's policies.

Hypothesis 3: The editorial policies of Russian state-controlled media, such as TASS and Sputnik, deliberately framed the crisis to minimize potential backlash against Russia's diplomatic efforts to restore relations, particularly after the assassination of Karlov. These policies emphasized themes of unity against terrorism, shared geopolitical interests, and the resilience of bilateral ties despite challenges. By reframing the tragedy as an opportunity for collaboration rather than confrontation, the media aligned public opinion with the state's pragmatic approach to resolving tensions and pursuing long-term strategic goals.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to several limitations that must be acknowledged. Firstly, the focus on Russian newspapers may introduce a bias in the analysis, as the selected newspapers may reflect the dominant narratives promoted by the Russian State. Additionally, the study is limited by the availability of archival material and the potential for incomplete or biased reporting in the selected newspapers. Furthermore, the study's reliance on qualitative analysis may limit the generalizability of the findings, although efforts will be made to ensure the rigor and reliability of the analysis.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured to provide a comprehensive analysis of the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis, with a particular focus on media framing in Russian newspapers. Following this introductory chapter, the thesis will be organized as follows:

- **Chapter 2 - Literature Review:** This chapter will review existing literature on Türkiye-Russia relations, media framing theory, and the role of media in international relations. The chapter will also identify gaps in the literature that this study aims to fill.
- **Chapter 3 - Methodology:** This chapter will outline the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques used in the study. The chapter will also discuss the selection of newspapers and the timeframe of analysis.
- **Chapter 4 - Historical Background:** This chapter will provide an overview of the historical context of Türkiye-Russia relations, with a focus on the events leading up to the 2015-16 crisis. The chapter will also discuss the geopolitical implications of the crisis.
- **Chapters 5 and 6 - Analysis:** These chapters will present the findings of the thematic and discourse analysis of the selected newspapers. Chapter 5 will focus on the coverage of the Su-24 shootdown, while Chapter 6 will analyze the coverage of the assassination of Ambassador Karlov.
- **Chapter 7 - Results:** This chapter will summarize the key findings of the study and discuss their implications for public perception and diplomatic relations.
- **Chapter 8 - Discussion:** This chapter will interpret the results in the context of existing literature and theoretical frameworks. The chapter will also discuss the limitations of the study and suggest directions for future research.
- **Chapter 9 - Conclusion:** This chapter will provide a final summary of the study's findings and contributions to the field.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

A robust theoretical framework is essential for guiding the research process. This section explores the theoretical concepts and models that underpin the study, providing a foundation for understanding how media representations of international crises shape public opinion and influence diplomatic relations.

2.1.1 Media Framing Theory

Media framing theory is central to understanding how events and issues are presented to the public through various media outlets. First introduced by Erving Goffman in 1974, the concept of framing suggests that the media plays a pivotal role in shaping how audiences interpret information. Framing involves selecting certain aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicative text. By emphasizing specific themes, using particular language, and employing recurring narratives, media outlets can influence the public's understanding of events.

Robert Entman further developed the concept by identifying four key functions of framing: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies. In the context of international relations, media framing can significantly impact how a country's foreign policy actions are perceived both domestically and internationally. For instance, during times of crisis, media framing can either escalate tensions by portraying an adversary in a negative light or promote diplomatic solutions by emphasizing common interests.

This thesis utilizes media framing theory to analyze how Russian newspapers framed the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis. By examining the narratives and themes emphasized in the coverage of the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination of Ambassador Andrei Karlov, the study aims to uncover the underlying messages that were communicated to the Russian public.

2.1.2 The Role of Media in International Relations

The role of media in international relations has been extensively studied, particularly in the context of conflict and diplomacy. Media outlets act as intermediaries between governments and the public, providing information that shapes public opinion and influences foreign policy decisions. Scholars such as Shanto Iyengar and Donald Kinder have argued that the media not only reflects but also constructs reality through agenda-setting and framing. In international

crises, the media can play a dual role — either as a tool for propaganda or as a platform for public discourse.

In authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes, where media outlets are often state-controlled, the media's role in international relations is particularly complex. In such contexts, the media may serve as an instrument of state policy, reinforcing government narratives and justifying foreign policy actions. This is particularly relevant to the Russian context, where media outlets like Kommersant, Russia Today, TASS, and Sputnik are known to align closely with the government's perspective on international issues.

This study explores the role of Russian newspapers in the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis, examining how the media's portrayal of events influenced both public perception and diplomatic relations.

2.2 Historical Context of Türkiye-Russia Relations

A thorough understanding of the historical context of Türkiye-Russia relations is essential for interpreting media coverage of the 2015-16 crisis. This section offers an overview of key historical developments that have shaped the relationship between the two countries, from their imperial past to their post-Cold War interaction.

2.2.1 Ottoman-Russian Relations

The origins of Türkiye-Russia relations can be traced to the interactions between the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire, which were characterized by a series of territorial and religious conflicts. The Russo-Turkish Wars, which spanned from the 17th to the 19th centuries, were driven by competition over control of strategic regions, particularly in the Black Sea and the Balkans. These prolonged conflicts established a legacy of mistrust and rivalry that would shape the relationship between the two countries for centuries.

Beyond military conflicts, there were also periods of diplomatic engagement, particularly in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, as both empires sought to counterbalance Western powers. Despite these interactions, the Ottoman Empire and Russia remained locked in competition for regional dominance, setting the stage for the tensions that would persist into the 20th century.

2.2.2 The Soviet Era

The relationship between Türkiye and Russia took a different turn during the early years of the Soviet Union. Following the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the two countries developed a pragmatic relationship based on mutual interests. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Vladimir Lenin, the founding leaders of modern Türkiye and the Soviet Union respectively, shared a common interest in resisting Western imperialism. This led to a period of cooperation during the 1920s and 1930s, characterized by diplomatic support and economic collaboration.

However, the onset of the Cold War in the late 1940s brought a new phase of tension and rivalry. Türkiye's alignment with the United States and its membership in NATO positioned it as a strategic adversary to the Soviet Union. The Cold War period saw both countries engaging in a complex power struggle, often finding themselves on opposite sides of global conflicts.

2.2.3 Post-Cold War Relations

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the beginning of a new era in Türkiye-Russia relations. Both countries, now under different political and economic systems, began to explore opportunities for cooperation. The 1990s and 2000s witnessed a significant increase in economic ties, particularly in the areas of energy trade and tourism. Russia became one of Türkiye's largest trading partners, and the two countries worked together on several large-scale energy projects, including the Blue Stream and TurkStream natural gas pipelines.

Despite occasional political differences, such as disagreements over conflicts in the Caucasus and the Middle East, Türkiye and Russia managed to maintain a relatively stable relationship. However, the events of 2015-16 posed a significant challenge to this stability, as the two countries found themselves in a serious diplomatic crisis.

2.3 Previous Research on Media Representation of International Crises

The media representation of international crises has been widely studied, with scholars examining the ways in which media outlets frame conflicts and shape public perception. This section reviews key studies that have explored how media outlets represent international crises, with a particular focus on the role of state-controlled media in these processes.

2.3.1 Case Studies of Media Framing in Conflict

Numerous case studies have examined how media outlets frame international conflicts. For example, studies on the Iraq War have shown how Western media often framed the conflict in terms of a struggle between good and evil, with the U.S. and its allies portrayed as liberators and the Iraqi regime depicted as a tyrannical enemy. Similarly, research on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has highlighted the different narratives promoted by Israeli and Palestinian media, each reflecting their respective national interests.

In the context of Russia, several studies have analyzed how the Russian media frames conflicts involving Russian interests. For instance, research on the Russo-Georgian War of 2008 has demonstrated how Russian media emphasized themes of nationalism and patriotism, portraying Georgia as an aggressor and Russia as a protector of ethnic Russians in South Ossetia. These studies highlight the role of media in constructing narratives that align with state policies and serve to justify foreign policy actions.

2.3.2 Media Representation of the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia Crisis

While there has been significant research on media representation of international conflicts, the specific case of the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis has received relatively less attention. Some studies have examined the coverage of the Su-24 shootdown in the Turkish and Russian media, noting the stark differences in how the incident was reported. Turkish media generally framed the shootdown as a defensive action, emphasizing Türkiye's sovereignty and right to protect its airspace. In contrast, Russian media portrayed the incident as an act of aggression, accusing Türkiye of jeopardizing regional stability and acting in the interests of NATO.

Similarly, the assassination of Ambassador Andrei Karlov was covered extensively in the Russian media, with reports focusing on themes of terrorism, security threats, and the martyrdom of Karlov. The Russian media framed the assassination as an attack not only on Russia but on the entire international community, reinforcing the narrative of Russia as a victim of terrorism.

This study builds on existing research by providing a more detailed analysis of how the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis was framed in four major Russian newspapers. By examining both the Su-24 shootdown and the Karlov assassination, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of media representation in the context of international crises.

2.4 The Influence of State-Controlled Media in Russia

The role of state-controlled media in Russia is a critical factor in understanding the framing of the Türkiye-Russia crisis. In Russia, major media outlets such as Kommersant, Russia Today, TASS, and Sputnik operate under varying degrees of state influence, which often shapes their coverage of both domestic and international events.

2.4.1 The Structure of the Russian Media Landscape

The Russian media landscape is characterized by a mix of state-owned and privately owned outlets, with the state maintaining significant control over the most influential channels. Television remains the dominant source of news for most Russians, and state-controlled channels such as Channel One and Russia-24 play a key role in disseminating the government's perspective on national and international issues.

Print media, while less influential than television, also plays an important role in shaping public opinion. Newspapers such as Kommersant and Izvestia are known for their close ties to the government, often reflecting official narratives in their reporting. Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik, both of which are funded by the Russian government, serve as key instruments of Russia's international media strategy, providing news coverage that aligns with the Kremlin's foreign policy objectives.

2.4.2 The Impact of Media Control on Public Perception

State control over the media in Russia has significant implications for public perception of international events. Research has shown that Russian media often employs framing techniques that reinforce the government's narrative, particularly in times of crisis. By controlling the flow of information and emphasizing certain themes, the Russian State can effectively shape public opinion and garner support for its foreign policy actions.

In the case of the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis, the Russian government's control over the media likely played a role in shaping the public's perception of Türkiye as an adversary. The framing of the Su-24 shootdown and the Karlov assassination in the Russian media reflected broader geopolitical narratives that positioned Russia as a victim of aggression and terrorism. This, in turn, may have influenced the Russian public's support for the government's diplomatic and military responses to the crisis.

2.5 The Role of Media in Shaping Diplomatic Relations

Media plays an influential role in shaping diplomatic relations between countries, especially in the context of international crises. This section delves into the reciprocal relationship between media portrayals and diplomatic interactions, examining how media framing can either support or disrupt international negotiations, conflict resolution, and the broader diplomatic landscape.

2.5.1 Media as a Tool for Diplomacy and Conflict Management

In times of international tension, media can serve as a tool for diplomacy and conflict management. Governments often rely on media outlets to communicate their foreign policy messages, maintain public support, and shape the international community's understanding of their actions. Media framing during international crises can either exacerbate conflict or foster diplomatic engagement.

For instance, during the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis, media outlets played a pivotal role in amplifying the narrative of aggression or victimhood, depending on the country of focus. In Russia, state-controlled media outlets, such as Russia Today (RT) and Channel One, portrayed the Su-24 shootdown as an unprovoked attack on Russia by Türkiye, which was framed as a member of NATO. This portrayal led to a general sentiment of betrayal among the Russian populace and was used by the Russian government to justify retaliatory measures and policy shifts. Conversely, the Turkish media framed the incident as a legitimate response to Russian incursions into Turkish airspace, focusing on national sovereignty and the necessity of protecting Turkish territorial integrity.

When media framing shifts in times of diplomatic rapprochement, media outlets can also play an instrumental role in mediating public perceptions and promoting peace. In the aftermath of the crisis, both Russia and Türkiye used media as a strategic tool to manage the conflict's resolution. Russian and Turkish state media portrayed the diplomatic talks and subsequent reconciliation efforts in a favorable light, emphasizing mutual respect and shared interests in regional stability, economic cooperation, and energy security.

Thus, media plays a central role in diplomacy, as it can amplify narratives that either foster conflict or facilitate negotiation. The framing of the 2015-16 crisis in both Turkish and Russian media was not merely a reflection of events but was intentionally crafted to guide public opinion and influence international diplomacy.

2.5.2 The Media's Role in Post-Crisis Reconciliation

In the aftermath of an international crisis, media outlets continue to shape public perception and the reconciliation process between nations. The media plays a crucial role in framing how the public perceives the normalization of relations after a conflict. The strategic use of media to promote reconciliation or prolong hostility can significantly influence the future trajectory of bilateral relations.

For example, in the case of the Türkiye-Russia crisis, both Turkish and Russian media outlets framed the post-crisis phase in ways that aligned with their respective national interests. After the crisis de-escalated, Russian media outlets framed the resolution as a diplomatic victory for the Kremlin, focusing on Russia's strategic strength and ability to extract an apology from Türkiye. This narrative reinforced the notion that Russia had achieved its foreign policy objectives, further enhancing the image of the government's effectiveness in safeguarding national interests.

On the other hand, Turkish media focused on sovereignty and the re-establishment of normal diplomatic relations, framing the normalization process as a win for Turkish diplomacy. Turkish outlets highlighted how Türkiye had navigated a complicated geopolitical situation to maintain its independence and national security while ensuring continued cooperation with Russia in areas such as trade and energy.

This media framing during the reconciliation process is crucial for shaping public perception and influencing future diplomatic exchanges. By promoting narratives that emphasize cooperation, mutual understanding, and shared economic interests, media can help to heal the wounds caused by international crises. However, the narratives that emerge also depend on the long-term political objectives of each government, which often use media as an instrument to support broader geopolitical strategies.

2.6 Media, Nationalism, and International Crises

The role of nationalism in media coverage of international crises is critical for understanding how national identity, sovereignty, and state power are reinforced through media narratives. Nationalist discourse often finds expression in media coverage, shaping the public's understanding of international conflicts and influencing the state's foreign policy. This section explores the intersection of media, nationalism, and international crises, particularly in the context of the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis.

2.6.1 Nationalism as a Narrative Strategy in Media

In many international crises, media serves as a vehicle for nationalism, particularly when a country's sovereignty or territorial integrity is at stake. Nationalism in media coverage can manifest in the framing of foreign actions as direct threats to the nation's interests, invoking patriotic sentiment and unity in the face of external aggression. The 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis is an apt example of how nationalism was utilized as a framing device in both Russian and Turkish media.

Following the shootdown of the Su-24, Turkish media outlets often invoked nationalistic rhetoric, emphasizing the need to defend Turkish airspace against foreign encroachment. The framing of the crisis, in this case, focused on Türkiye's national pride, portraying the shootdown as a necessary response to Russian provocations. This framing also invoked Turkish nationalism by portraying the Russian actions as disrespectful and harmful to Turkey's sovereignty, thus justifying the government's hardline stance.

Russian media, in turn, framed the crisis as a direct affront to Russian sovereignty, with narratives focusing on the country's victimization at the hands of a NATO-aligned adversary. The media presented Russia as being unjustly attacked, framing the shootdown as a violation of Russian airspace that symbolized broader Western efforts to undermine Russia's status on the global stage. This media framing reinforced nationalist sentiment within Russia, casting the incident as yet another example of Russia's struggle to assert itself against Western powers.

Both countries utilized media framing to solidify national identity and bolster state power through a nationalist discourse. These framing strategies were not only reactive but also strategically employed to garner domestic support for the respective governments' foreign policy responses.

2.6.2 The Impact of Nationalism on Diplomatic Relations

Nationalism in media coverage also affects diplomatic relations between countries. By portraying the opposing side as a national enemy or as threatening the nation's values, media can hinder diplomatic dialogue and make it more difficult to engage in cooperative negotiations. In the case of the Türkiye-Russia crisis, both countries' media coverage contributed to the escalation of tensions by framing the crisis through a nationalist lens, which complicated the process of de-escalation and normalization.

Nationalist media narratives can create an atmosphere of hostility that makes it difficult for governments to engage in constructive dialogue. In this sense, the media does not just reflect public opinion but actively shapes it, reinforcing in-group/out-group distinctions and deepening national divides. As a result, the role of media in fostering nationalism has profound implications for how conflicts unfold and how states navigate post-crisis diplomacy.

2.7 Media and Public Opinion in Russia: A Longitudinal View

Public opinion in Russia, particularly in relation to foreign policy and international crises, is heavily influenced by the media. Given the prevalence of state-controlled media outlets in Russia, the public's perception of international crises, such as the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis, is shaped by the narratives constructed by these media outlets. This section explores the role of media in influencing public opinion in Russia, with a specific focus on the long-term effects of media framing on public attitudes toward Türkiye and foreign policy.

2.7.1 The Long-Term Effects of Media Framing

Media framing is not only significant in shaping short-term public perceptions but also has long-lasting effects on public opinion and foreign policy attitudes. In the case of the 2015-16 crisis, Russian media coverage of the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination of Ambassador Andrei Karlov likely influenced how the Russian public viewed Türkiye in the years following the crisis. Through the consistent portrayal of Türkiye as a hostile actor and a member of the NATO alliance, Russian media reinforced negative stereotypes and fostered a climate of distrust toward Türkiye.

Over time, these media portrayals could have contributed to a more entrenched and polarized public opinion in Russia, making it difficult for diplomatic efforts to succeed. Even after the crisis was resolved, the media's framing of the events likely continued to shape public attitudes toward Türkiye, potentially making future diplomatic engagement more challenging.

However, it is also important to recognize that media framing in Russia is not monolithic. While state-controlled outlets promote a particular narrative, independent and alternative media outlets may offer contrasting viewpoints. These alternative narratives could, to some extent, mitigate the long-term impact of government-controlled media on public opinion. In addition, changing geopolitical circumstances, such as shifts in economic cooperation or security arrangements, could also influence public opinion and foreign policy attitudes, making media's role more dynamic and responsive to broader political shifts.

2.8 Theoretical Implications of Media Framing in International Crises

The theoretical framework of media framing provides valuable insights into the role of media in shaping public perception during international crises. This section examines the theoretical implications of media framing, discussing how the theory enhances our understanding of media's influence on diplomacy, national identity, and foreign policy. Specifically, it explores the concept of "framing contests" in the media and how different actors attempt to shape public understanding of events.

2.8.1 The Role of Framing Contests

In international crises, the media often serves as the battleground for framing contests, where different actors—governments, media outlets, and international organizations—compete to control the narrative surrounding an event. These framing contests shape how the public perceives the crisis, which in turn influences diplomatic efforts, public opinion, and foreign policy decisions.

For instance, in the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis, Russian media outlets and Turkish media outlets engaged in a framing contest over the events surrounding the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination of Ambassador Andrei Karlov. Both sides sought to portray themselves as victims, while also framing the other side as the aggressor. The framing contest escalated the tensions between the two nations, complicating efforts to resolve the crisis.

By analyzing media framing through the lens of framing contests, researchers can better understand how international crises unfold in the media and how competing narratives influence public attitudes and diplomatic actions. This approach highlights the complex relationship between media, public opinion, and international diplomacy.

2.9 Gaps in the Literature

Despite the extensive body of research on media framing and international relations, several gaps remain in the literature. First, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that examine the framing of the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis across multiple Russian newspapers. Most existing studies focus on individual incidents or specific media outlets, rather than providing a holistic analysis of the crisis as a whole.

Second, there is limited research on the long-term impact of media framing on Türkiye-Russia relations. While some studies have explored the immediate effects of media coverage on public

opinion, there is a need for more research on how these narratives have influenced diplomatic relations and public perception over time.

This study aims to address these gaps by conducting a detailed analysis of the media coverage of the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis in four major Russian newspapers. By examining the framing of both the Su-24 shootdown and the Karlov assassination, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Russian media shaped the discourse around the crisis.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is qualitative, with an emphasis on content analysis. This approach is particularly well-suited for examining the ways in which the Russian press portrayed the Türkiye-Russia crisis, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the narratives and framing techniques employed.

3.1.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis is chosen for its ability to delve deeply into the content of media articles, exploring the underlying themes, narratives, and framing techniques. Unlike quantitative content analysis, which focuses on the frequency of specific words or phrases, qualitative content analysis allows for a richer interpretation of the media's portrayal of the crisis. This approach is essential for understanding how the Russian press presented the events of the crisis, particularly the downing of the Su-24 fighter jet and the assassination of Ambassador Andrei Karlov.

The goal of this analysis is not to count occurrences but to interpret the meanings embedded in the text, to reveal how these events were framed to shape public opinion and influence diplomatic relations.

3.1.2 Case Study of the Türkiye-Russia Crisis

This study employs a case study approach, focusing on the specific events of the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis as covered by Russian newspapers. The case study method is ideal for this research because it allows for an in-depth examination of a complex, real-world event within its specific context. The Türkiye-Russia crisis, marked by significant incidents such as the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination of Andrei Karlov, serves as a critical case for understanding the dynamics of media framing in international relations.

The case study approach provides a detailed exploration of how these events were represented in the Russian media, offering insights into the broader implications for public perception and diplomatic relations.

3.2 Data Collection

Data collection is a crucial aspect of this study, involving the systematic gathering of articles from key Russian newspapers that covered the Türkiye-Russia crisis. The selection of newspapers and articles was guided by specific criteria to ensure the relevance and comprehensiveness of the data.

3.2.1 Selection of Newspapers

The study focuses on four major Russian newspapers/media outlets: Kommersant, Russia Today (RT), TASS, and Sputnik. These newspapers were selected based on their influence, reach, and the role they play in shaping public opinion in Russia. Each newspaper offers a different perspective, ranging from more independent reporting to state-controlled narratives, providing a well-rounded view of the media landscape.

1. ***Kommersant:*** A leading business and political daily, known for its relatively independent stance.
2. ***Russia Today (RT):*** An international broadcaster with a significant focus on Russian foreign policy, often reflecting the official government line.
3. ***TASS:*** A state-owned news agency that provides official news and government viewpoints.
4. ***Sputnik:*** Another state-controlled outlet, known for its global reach and its role in promoting Russian perspectives internationally.

The selection of these newspapers allows for a comprehensive analysis of the different ways the Türkiye-Russia crisis was framed across various media outlets.

3.2.2 Justification for Choosing Pro-Government Newspaper

The selection of pro-government newspapers such as TASS, Sputnik, and RT is based on their pivotal role in shaping public opinion and their widespread reach within the Russian Federation. These outlets were chosen because they are among the most popular sources of information for the Russian public, offering narratives that often align with governmental policies and perspectives. Pro-government media are instrumental in disseminating state-aligned narratives, particularly during geopolitical crises, making them a rich source for studying media framing.

TASS, being a state-owned agency, serves as an authoritative source of official news and reflects government viewpoints directly. Sputnik and RT, with their global reach and significant focus on Russian foreign policy, provide additional perspectives on how state narratives are communicated internationally. By including these outlets, the study ensures comprehensive coverage of media framing that reflects both domestic and international aspects of Russian policy during the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis.

This selection was also influenced by the objective of analyzing media most likely to impact public perception and diplomatic narratives. While independent or opposition media could offer contrasting views, their limited reach and differing audience profiles make them less central to understanding the state's influence over public opinion.

3.2.3 Time Frame of Analysis

The analysis focuses on the period from November 2015 to December 2016, a critical time frame that encompasses the key events of the crisis:

1. **November 24, 2015:** The downing of a Russian Su-24 by Turkish forces, leading to a significant diplomatic fallout.
2. **December 19, 2016:** The assassination of Russian Ambassador Andrei Karlov in Ankara, an event that further strained relations between Türkiye and Russia.

This time frame allows the study to capture both the immediate media reactions to these events and the ongoing coverage that shaped public perception over time.

3.2.4 Importance of November 2015 and December 2016

The months of November 2015 and December 2016 hold critical importance in understanding the dynamics of media framing during the Türkiye-Russia crisis. These months mark pivotal moments in the timeline of events, with November 2015 capturing the immediate aftermath of the Su-24 shootdown and December 2016 reflecting the repercussions of Ambassador Andrei Karlov's assassination.

November 2015: This month represents the height of diplomatic tensions following the Su-24 shootdown, which was perceived as a direct provocation by Russia. The media's portrayal during this period was characterized by heightened nationalism, security concerns, and calls for retaliatory measures. Themes of sovereignty, aggression, and NATO's involvement were heavily emphasized to galvanize public support for Russia's response, including economic

sanctions. The intensity of coverage during this time provides insights into how media framing can influence national sentiment and justify policy actions.

December 2016: December 2016, marked by the assassination of Ambassador Andrei Karlov, holds significant emotional and political weight. Media narratives during this month focused on mourning and condemnation, highlighting the attack as a breach of diplomatic norms and a symbol of terrorism. This event became a turning point in Türkiye-Russia relations, with both nations emphasizing unity against terrorism and the importance of maintaining diplomatic ties. The media's framing of Karlov's assassination as a national tragedy underscores its role in shaping public opinion and bolstering governmental narratives of resilience and cooperation.

By focusing on these two months, the study captures the most critical phases of the crisis, providing a comprehensive understanding of how media narratives evolve in response to significant geopolitical events.

3.2.5 Data Collection Process

The data collection process involved the retrieval of articles, editorials, opinion pieces, and news reports related to the Türkiye-Russia crisis from the archives of the selected newspapers. Specific keywords were used to search for relevant content, including "Su-24 shootdown", "Türkiye-Russia relations", "Andrei Karlov assassination", and "Türkiye crisis".

A total of 150 articles were selected for analysis, with approximately 30-40 articles from each newspaper. These articles were chosen based on their relevance to the research topic and their coverage of the key events in the crisis. The selection process was methodical, ensuring that the articles reflected a variety of perspectives and framing techniques.

Table 1: Total Number of Article overviewed

Newspaper	Number of Articles Analyzed	Period Covered
Kommersant	35	Nov 2015 - Dec 2016
Russia Today (RT)	40	Nov 2015 - Dec 2016
TASS	40	Nov 2015 - Dec 2016
Sputnik	35	Nov 2015 - Dec 2016

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis involved the application of both thematic analysis and discourse analysis to the selected articles. These techniques were chosen to uncover the key narratives and framing strategies used by the Russian media during the crisis.

3.3.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to identify and analyze the main themes that emerged from the newspaper articles. This method involves coding the text and grouping similar codes into broader themes that reflect the media's portrayal of the crisis.

The process of thematic analysis included the following steps:

1. **Initial Coding:** Each article was carefully read, and segments of text were coded based on recurring ideas or themes. For example, codes such as "nationalism", "security concerns", and "diplomatic tension" were frequently identified.
2. **Theme Development:** The codes were then grouped into broader themes that captured the essence of the media's framing. Major themes identified included "nationalism and patriotism", "security and military concerns", and "diplomatic repercussions".
3. **Theme Refinement:** The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the data. This involved checking for consistency and coherence within each theme.

The thematic analysis revealed the dominant narratives used by the Russian press to frame the Türkiye-Russia crisis, highlighting the emphasis on national security and the portrayal of Türkiye as a significant geopolitical actor. The table below summarizes the key themes identified in the analysis:

Table 2: Theme Frequency Across Chosen Newspapers

Theme	Description	Frequency
Nationalism and Patriotism	Emphasis on Russian national pride and the defense of national interests	50
Security and Military Concerns	Focus on the military aspects of the crisis and the implications for national security	45
Diplomatic Repercussions	Analysis of the diplomatic fallout and the impact on Russia-Türkiye relations	40
Economic and Energy Issues	Discussion of the economic consequences, particularly in the context of energy dependencies	35
Media and Public Perception	Exploration of how the media shaped public opinion and influenced the narrative surrounding the crisis	30

3.3.2 Discourse Analysis

In addition to thematic analysis, discourse analysis was conducted to examine how language and rhetoric were used to construct narratives about the crisis. This method focused on the specific ways in which the media framed the events, including the use of language, tone, and rhetorical strategies.

The discourse analysis involved:

1. **Language and Tone:** Analysis of the language used in the articles, including word choice, tone, and sentence structure. For example, the use of aggressive language or militaristic metaphors was noted as a way to frame the crisis as a conflict or confrontation.

2. **Rhetorical Strategies:** Identification of rhetorical strategies used by the media to persuade or influence public opinion. This included the use of emotional appeals, such as highlighting the tragedy of the Su-24 shootdown or the assassination of Karlov, to evoke a sense of outrage or patriotism among readers.

3. **Narrative Structures:** Examination of how the articles were structured to tell a particular story about the crisis. For example, some articles framed Türkiye as a provocateur, while others highlighted Russia's response as measured and justified.

The discourse analysis provided insights into the ideological underpinnings of the media coverage, revealing how the Russian press sought to shape public perception and diplomatic narratives through strategic use of language and rhetoric.

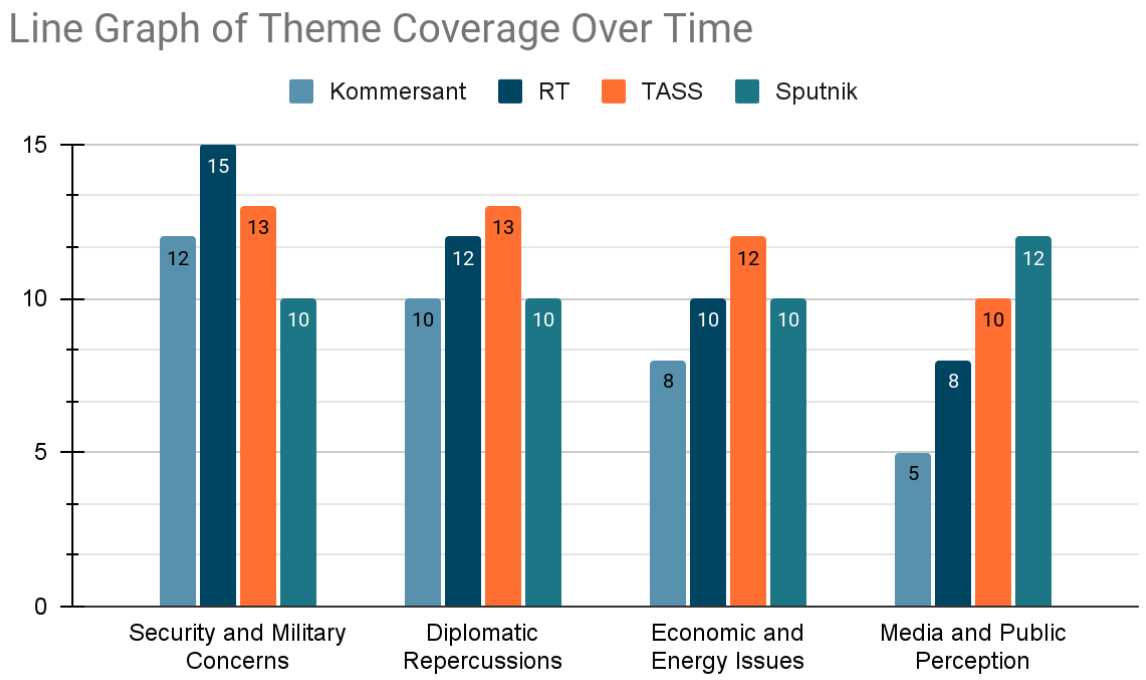
3.4 Statistical Data and Visual Aids

To complement the qualitative analysis, statistical data and visual aids were incorporated to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the media coverage. The following sections present some of the key findings from the statistical analysis, along with relevant visual aids.

3.4.1 Frequency of Themes

The frequency of the main themes identified in the articles was calculated to provide an overview of the media's focus during the crisis. The table below shows the distribution of these themes across the four newspapers:

Graph 1: Frequency of each theme over the period of (November 2015 to December 2016) in Kommersant, RT, TASS and Sputnik Newspaper



The graphs illustrate the thematic distribution and frequency of media coverage over time, highlighting significant variations across key periods. During the initial months, November 2015 and December 2016, the data shows spikes in coverage related to the Su-24 shoot down and Ambassador Karlov's assassination, respectively. Themes of nationalism, security, and diplomatic tensions dominate during these periods, reflecting the heightened public and governmental reactions to these incidents.

For example, in November 2015, the frequency of articles emphasizing nationalism and patriotism peaked, aligning with the immediate fallout from the Su-24 shoot down. This framing reinforced narratives of Russian sovereignty under threat and justified retaliatory measures, such as economic sanctions. Similarly, December 2016 shows an increase in coverage focusing on mourning and condemnation, as well as diplomatic tensions following Karlov's assassination. This reflects the emotional and political weight of the event, which galvanized both public and official responses.

In contrast, subsequent months exhibit a decline and stabilization in thematic frequency. This moderation aligns with evolving diplomatic efforts, such as economic negotiations and cooperative measures to de-escalate the crisis. By examining these trends, the graphs provide a

visual representation of how media framing shifted in response to the crisis' trajectory, highlighting the interplay between political events and media narratives.

3.4.2 Example of Analysis of each Newspaper.

3.4.2.1 Kommersant

1) **Example of Analysis:** An article published in Kommersant on November 25, 2015, titled "Russia Responds to Provocation", emphasized themes of nationalism and security. The article framed the Su-24 shootdown as a calculated provocation by Türkiye. This framing was evident in the language used, such as "deliberate aggression" and "defense of Russian sovereignty". The analysis coded these recurring terms as part of a broader theme of "Nationalism and Patriotism".
2) **Selection of Theme:** The theme was selected based on its prominence in the initial reactions across Russian media, reflecting Kommersant's audience — politically aware readers who value analysis of national pride and sovereignty.

3.4.2.2 Russia Today (RT)

1) **Example of Analysis:** A broadcast segment aired on RT on December 20, 2016, following the assassination of Ambassador Karlov, framed the incident as an act of terrorism undermining Russia's diplomatic efforts. The segment repeatedly emphasized words like "terrorist attack", "global threat", and "diplomatic martyrdom". The analysis identified these as part of the "Terrorism and Security Threats" theme.
2) **Selection of Theme:** The "Terrorism and Security Threats" theme was chosen to reflect RT's alignment with state narratives and its focus on justifying Russia's international policies to a global audience

3.4.2.3 TASS

1) **Example of Analysis:** TASS's article, "Türkiye's Role in Regional Stability" published on November 26, 2015, highlighted economic implications following the Su-24 shootdown. The article discussed sanctions imposed on Turkish imports and their broader impact on bilateral trade, using phrases like "economic repercussions" and "necessary countermeasures".

2) **Selection of Theme:** The "Economic Impacts" theme was chosen due to TASS's focus on providing detailed, factual reporting that aligns with Russia's strategic narratives, appealing to a readership interested in policy outcomes.

3.4.2.4 Sputnik

1) **Example of Analysis:** Sputnik's feature on December 22, 2016, titled "Shared Goals Amidst Tragedy" emphasized cooperation between Türkiye and Russia despite Karlov's assassination. The analysis revealed a "Diplomatic Tensions" theme, with Sputnik using conciliatory phrases like "unity against terrorism" and "strengthened bilateral ties" to frame the tragedy as an opportunity for collaboration.
2) **Selection of Theme:** The theme reflected Sputnik's global reach and its focus on projecting Russia's diplomacy as resilient and adaptive in the face of crises.

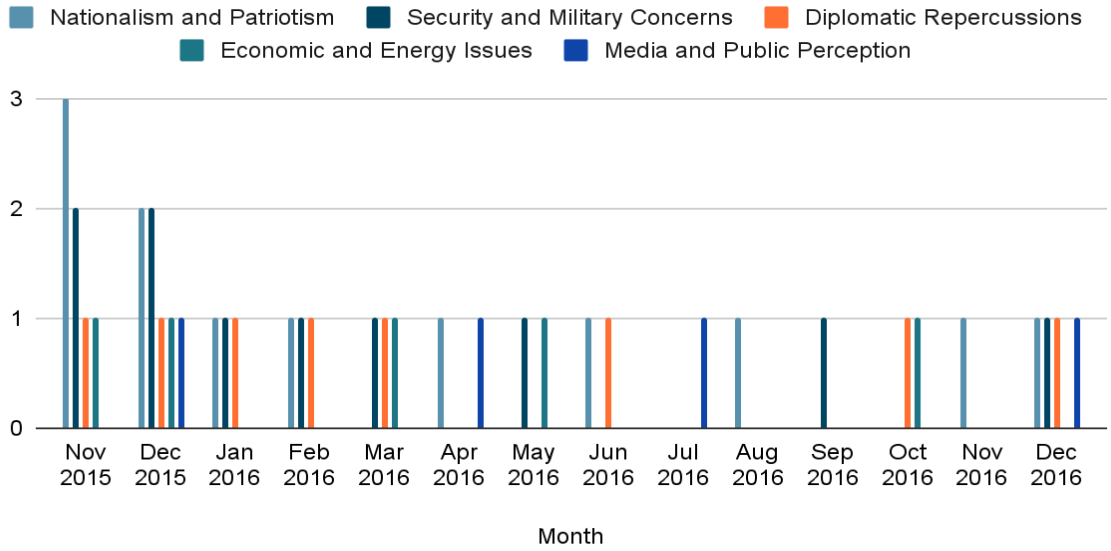
3.4.2 Frequency of Each Theme over the Period (2015-16) in each Newspaper

To further illustrate the findings, several visual aids were created, including charts and graphs that depict the frequency of themes and the distribution of coverage over time. These visual aids help to contextualize the data and provide a clearer understanding of the media's portrayal of the crisis.

1) ***Kommersant***:

- **Coverage Focus:** The analysis shows that Kommersant had the highest number of stories on "Nationalism and Patriotism" (12), followed by "Security and Military Concerns" (10).
- **Trends:** Initially, in November 2015, nationalism and military concerns were the dominant themes. Over time, coverage on these topics declined, with occasional peaks in diplomatic repercussions and economic issues.
- **Public Perception:** Media and public perception was covered the least, indicating a stronger focus on direct political and security issues.

Graph 2: Frequency Of Each Theme Over The Period

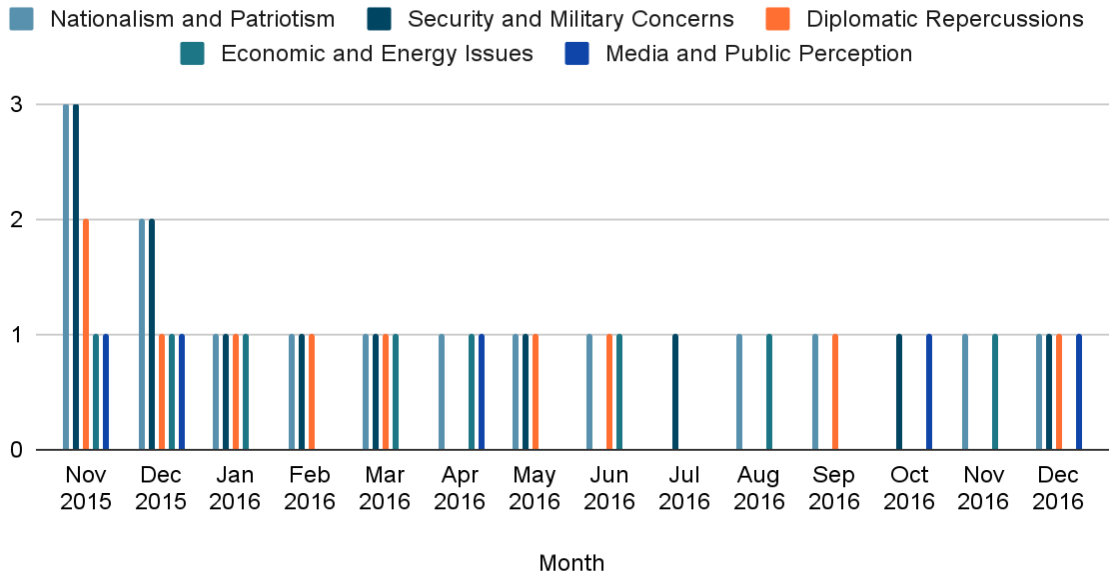


Source: Kommersant Newspaper (2015-2016). https://www.kommersant.ru/ (2024.11.20)

2) *Russia Today:*

- **Coverage Focus:** RT had a similar focus on "Nationalism and Patriotism" (15) and "Security and Military Concerns" (12), but slightly more balanced across categories.
- **Trends:** RT consistently covered these topics throughout the year, with peaks in the first few months after the crisis began. "Economic and Energy Issues" also received attention, reflecting RT's interest in broader geopolitical impacts.
- **Public Perception:** Like Kommersant, RT gave limited attention to media and public perception, focusing more on nationalism and security.

Graph 3: Frequency Of Each Theme Over The Period

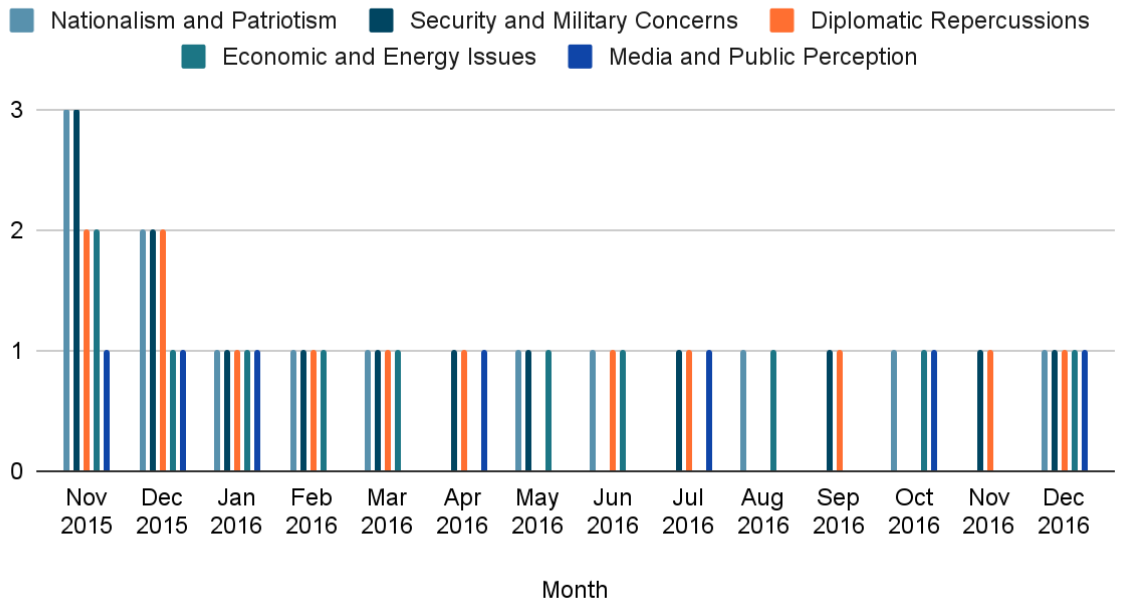


Source: Russia Today (2015-2016). https://www.rt.com (2024.11.18)

3) TASS Newspaper:

- **Coverage Focus:** TASS had a strong focus on "Security and Military Concerns" (13) and "Nationalism and Patriotism" (13), with significant attention also to "Diplomatic Repercussions" (12).
- **Trends:** TASS provided consistent coverage of security, diplomatic, and economic issues throughout the period. This outlet covered "Economic and Energy Issues" (10) more thoroughly than Kommersant and RT.
- **Public Perception:** TASS gave more attention to media and public perception than the other outlets, indicating a broader scope of analysis.

Graph 3: Frequency Of Each Theme Over The Period

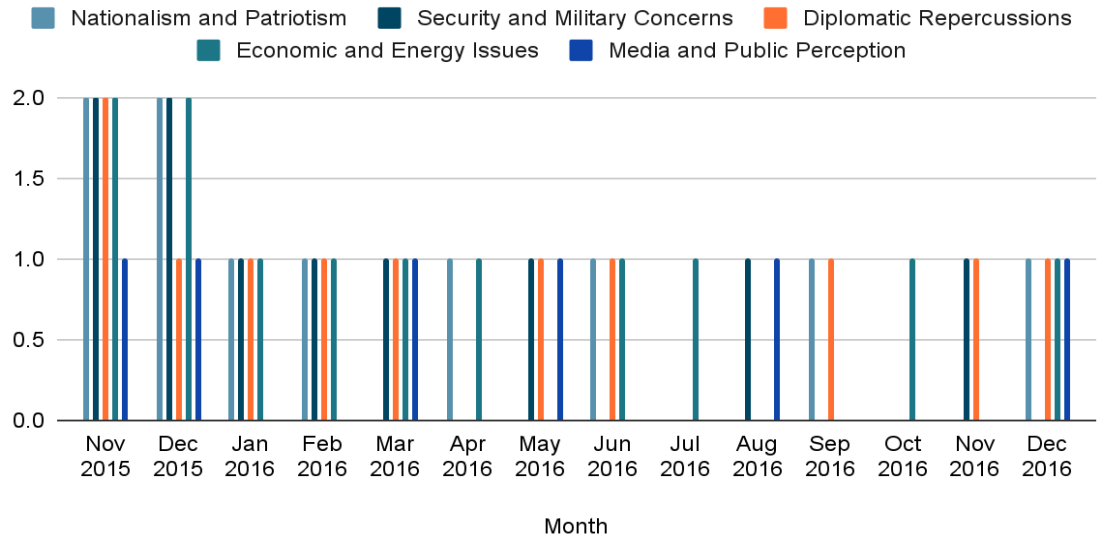


Source: Source: TASS Russian News Agency (2015-2016). https://tass.com (2024.11.15)

4) Sputnik Newspaper:

- **Coverage Focus:** Sputnik had a more even distribution across themes, with the highest coverage in "Economic and Energy Issues" (12), reflecting its focus on geopolitical and economic impacts.
- **Trends:** Sputnik's coverage was balanced, with attention to both nationalism and security concerns, and consistent coverage of economic issues.
- **Public Perception:** Sputnik had a moderate focus on media and public perception, similar to TASS but more balanced across all themes.

Graph 4: Frequency Of Each Theme Over The Period



Source: Sputnik News (2015-2016). https://sputniknews.com (2024.10.12)

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, particularly its focus on international relations and media portrayal during a diplomatic crisis, ethical considerations were carefully addressed. All sources of data were publicly available, and the analysis was conducted with respect for journalistic integrity and the ethical standards of content analysis.

CHAPTER 4: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Overview of the Türkiye-Russia Crisis

The Türkiye-Russia crisis of 2015-16 was a significant turning point in the bilateral relations between the two nations. It was marked by a series of dramatic events that strained diplomatic, economic, and military ties. Understanding this crisis requires a detailed examination of the historical, political, and economic factors that shaped the relationship between Türkiye and Russia over the years.

4.1.1 Events Leading to the Crisis

4.1.1.1 Historical Tensions in Bilateral Relations

The relationship between Türkiye and Russia has been characterized by a long history of both cooperation and conflict. The two nations share a complex history that dates back to the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire, marked by numerous wars and rivalries. This historical backdrop set the stage for the periodic tension that would later influence their modern interactions.

During the Cold War, Türkiye, a member of NATO, found itself on the opposite side of the ideological divide from the Soviet Union. This period was marked by significant geopolitical tension, as Türkiye aligned with the West against Soviet influence in the region. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 opened a new chapter in Türkiye-Russia relations, leading to a period of pragmatic cooperation, particularly in trade, energy, and tourism.

Despite the thawing of relations after the Cold War, underlying tensions persisted. The geopolitical landscape of the 21st century, especially in the Middle East, where both nations have vested interests, further complicated their relationship. The Syrian Civil War, in particular, became a focal point of disagreement, with Türkiye supporting the opposition forces and Russia backing the Assad regime. This divergence in foreign policy priorities was a critical factor that eventually led to the crisis in 2015.

4.1.1.2 Key Political and Economic Factors

Economically, Türkiye and Russia had developed a strong relationship by the early 21st century, particularly in the energy sector. Russia is one of the largest suppliers of natural gas to Türkiye, with energy cooperation forming the backbone of their bilateral ties. Additionally,

Turkish construction companies were highly active in Russia, and millions of Russian tourists visited Türkiye each year, contributing significantly to the Turkish economy.

However, political factors often strained this economic partnership. Türkiye's increasingly assertive foreign policy, particularly under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, began to clash with Russia's regional ambitions. The Syrian Civil War exacerbated these tensions, as Türkiye's goal of ousting Bashar al-Assad directly contradicted Russia's objective of supporting the Assad regime.

Furthermore, Türkiye's internal political dynamics, including the rise of nationalism and the government's crackdown on dissent, also influenced its foreign policy decisions. The intersection of these political and economic factors created an environment of increasing friction, which eventually culminated in the 2015 crisis.

4.1.1.3 Influence of External Actors (e.g., NATO, EU)

External actors, notably NATO and the European Union, played a significant role in the Türkiye-Russia dynamic. As a NATO member, Türkiye's actions, particularly its military engagements, were closely scrutinized by the alliance. The downing of the Russian Su-24 fighter jet in 2015 brought NATO into the spotlight, as the incident had the potential to escalate into a broader conflict involving multiple countries.

NATO expressed support for Türkiye's right to defend its airspace but also urged restraint and diplomatic resolution. This incident highlighted the complexities of Türkiye's position within NATO, as it balanced its alliance commitments with its national interests. The European Union, dealing with its own challenges with Russia, particularly following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, also influenced the broader geopolitical context in which the Türkiye-Russia crisis unfolded.

The involvement of these external actors further complicated the crisis, as Türkiye had to navigate its relationships with both Russia and its Western allies. The crisis thus served as a stark reminder of the delicate balance that Türkiye must maintain in its foreign policy, particularly in a region as volatile as the Middle East.

4.1.2 The 2015 Su-24 Shootdown

4.1.2.1 Description of the Incident

On November 24, 2015, a Turkish F-16 fighter jet shot down a Russian Su-24 bomber near the Syria-Türkiye border. Türkiye claimed that the Russian aircraft had violated its airspace and had been warned multiple times before being engaged. Russia, on the other hand, denied that the aircraft had crossed into Turkish airspace, insisting that it had remained over Syrian territory.

The incident resulted in the death of one Russian pilot, who was shot by rebel forces on the ground after ejecting from the plane. The other pilot was rescued, but the incident marked the first time a NATO member had downed a Russian aircraft since the Korean War. This event triggered a severe diplomatic crisis between Türkiye and Russia, leading to a sharp deterioration in their relations.

The shootdown of the Su-24 was not merely a military incident but a significant geopolitical event that had far-reaching implications. It highlighted the risks inherent in the complex and crowded airspace over Syria, where multiple countries were conducting military operations with often conflicting objectives. The incident also underscored the fragile nature of Türkiye-Russia relations, which, despite strong economic ties, were vulnerable to geopolitical conflicts.

4.1.2.2 Immediate Reactions and Consequences

Russia's immediate reaction to the shootdown was one of outrage. President Vladimir Putin described the incident as a "stab in the back" by those supporting terrorism, a clear reference to Türkiye's support for certain Syrian rebel groups. In response, Russia imposed a series of economic sanctions on Türkiye, targeting key sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and construction.

The sanctions had a significant impact on Türkiye's economy, which had become increasingly dependent on Russian trade and investment. The ban on charter flights from Russia to Türkiye, in particular, dealt a heavy blow to Türkiye's tourism industry, as Russian tourists had become a major source of revenue.

Diplomatically, the incident led to a freezing of high-level contacts between the two countries. Military cooperation, which had been limited but functional, was also suspended. The crisis

placed Türkiye in a difficult position, as it sought to balance its need for economic cooperation with Russia against its geopolitical interests in Syria.

4.1.2.3 International Reactions and Implications

The international community reacted with concern to the downing of the Russian jet. NATO expressed support for Türkiye's right to defend its airspace but also called for calm and a measured response to avoid further escalation. The United States, while backing Türkiye as a NATO ally, was also wary of the potential for the incident to lead to a broader conflict involving Russia.

The European Union, which had been dealing with its own challenges with Russia, particularly in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea, was also concerned about the implications of the incident. The shootdown had the potential to disrupt the fragile balance of power in the region, particularly in the context of the Syrian conflict.

The incident also highlighted the challenges of managing international alliances in a complex geopolitical environment. Türkiye's actions strained its relationships not only with Russia but also with its NATO allies, who were concerned about being drawn into a larger conflict. The crisis thus underscored the importance of diplomacy and communication in preventing such incidents from escalating into full-scale conflicts.

4.1.2.4 Analysis of Military and Diplomatic Responses

From a military perspective, the Su-24 incident highlighted the risks associated with conducting air operations in a congested and contested airspace like that over Syria. The lack of effective communication and coordination between the Turkish and Russian militaries was a significant factor that contributed to the incident. In the aftermath, both countries took steps to improve military communication to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Diplomatically, the incident led to a rapid deterioration in Türkiye-Russia relations. However, both countries eventually recognized the need to de-escalate the situation. In June 2016, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan sent a letter to President Putin expressing regret for the incident, which paved the way for the normalization of relations. This diplomatic gesture was driven in part by the economic costs of the sanctions and the recognition that both countries had much to gain from restoring their relationship.

The resolution of the crisis demonstrated the importance of diplomacy in managing international conflicts. Despite the initial outrage and the imposition of sanctions, both Türkiye and Russia were able to find a way to move past the incident and restore their relationship. This outcome was a testament to the pragmatic interests that ultimately drove the bilateral relationship, particularly in the areas of trade, energy, and regional security.

4.1.3 The Assassination of Andrei Karlov

4.1.3.1 Context and Impact on Diplomatic Relations

On December 19, 2016, Andrei Karlov, the Russian Ambassador to Türkiye, was assassinated in Ankara by an off-duty Turkish police officer. The assassination took place during the opening of an art exhibition, and the assailant was heard shouting slogans related to the situation in Aleppo, Syria. The attack was a significant blow to Türkiye-Russia relations, occurring at a time when the two countries were attempting to mend ties after the Su-24 incident.

The assassination shocked both nations and the international community. It raised serious concerns about the safety of diplomats and the potential for further violence. However, rather than leading to a renewed crisis, the assassination served as a catalyst for closer cooperation between Türkiye and Russia. Both governments quickly moved to contain the fallout, emphasizing the need for unity in the fight against terrorism and reaffirming their commitment to improving bilateral relations.

The assassination had significant diplomatic implications as it underscored the fragility of the Türkiye-Russia relationship. However, it also demonstrated the resilience of this relationship, as both countries were able to work together to manage the crisis and prevent it from derailing their efforts to normalize ties.

4.1.3.2 Media Coverage of the Assassination

The media coverage of the assassination was intense, with both Turkish and Russian media providing extensive reporting on the event. In Russia, the state-controlled media framed the assassination as an act of terrorism, emphasizing the need for a strong response. In Türkiye, the media also highlighted the terrorist nature of the attack, but there was also a focus on the implications for Türkiye's domestic security and its foreign policy.

The assassination was covered extensively in the international media as well, with many outlets focusing on the potential implications for Türkiye-Russia relations. The coverage highlighted

the broader geopolitical context, particularly the conflict in Syria, which had been a major source of tension between the two countries.

The media played a crucial role in shaping public perception of the assassination and its aftermath. In both Russia and Türkiye, the media narratives helped to frame the event in a way that supported the respective governments' responses. This was particularly important in managing public opinion and preventing the incident from escalating into a larger diplomatic crisis.

4.1.3.3 Public Reactions and Political Ramifications

Public reaction to the assassination in both Türkiye and Russia was one of shock and outrage. In Russia, there was widespread anger at the killing of a senior diplomat, with many calling for a strong response. However, the Russian government's measured approach helped to prevent a public outcry from turning into a demand for retaliatory action against Türkiye.

In Türkiye, the assassination raised concerns about domestic security and the potential for further attacks. It also had political ramifications, as it highlighted the challenges facing the Turkish government in maintaining order and ensuring the safety of foreign diplomats. The government's response, which included a swift investigation and cooperation with Russian authorities, was aimed at reassuring both the public and the international community that Türkiye was committed to maintaining strong diplomatic relations with Russia.

The political ramifications of the assassination were significant, as it occurred at a time when Türkiye was already facing numerous challenges, both domestically and internationally. The incident underscored the importance of Türkiye's relationship with Russia, particularly in the context of the Syrian conflict and broader regional dynamics.

4.1.3.4 The Role of Social Media in Shaping Reactions

Social media played a critical role in shaping public reactions to the assassination of Andrei Karlov. In both Türkiye and Russia, social media platforms were used to share news of the event, express outrage, and speculate about the motives behind the attack. The rapid dissemination of information through social media helped to amplify the impact of the assassination, both domestically and internationally.

In Russia, social media was used to rally public support for the government's response, with many users expressing their anger and calling for a strong stance against terrorism. In Türkiye,

social media was also a platform for expressing outrage, but it was also used to discuss the broader implications of the assassination for Türkiye's foreign policy and domestic security.

The use of social media by both governments also played a role in managing the public's reaction. Official statements and updates were disseminated through social media channels, helping to shape the narrative and prevent the situation from escalating further. The ability of social media to influence public opinion and diplomatic outcomes was evident in the way the incident was handled by both countries.

4.2 Geopolitical Context

4.2.1 Regional Implications

4.2.1.1 The Role of NATO and Western Influence

The Türkiye-Russia crisis had significant regional implications, particularly in the context of Türkiye's relationship with NATO and its Western allies. As a NATO member, Türkiye's actions during the crisis were closely scrutinized by the alliance, which was concerned about the potential for escalation into a broader conflict with Russia.

The crisis highlighted the challenges facing Türkiye in balancing its NATO commitments with its national interests, particularly in the volatile Middle East region. The incident also underscored the complexities of Türkiye's relationship with the West, as it sought to maintain strong ties with its NATO allies while also pursuing an independent foreign policy.

4.2.1.2 The Impact on Middle Eastern Politics

The Türkiye-Russia crisis also had significant implications for Middle Eastern politics, particularly in the context of the Syrian conflict. Both countries were key players in the region, with conflicting interests in Syria. The crisis highlighted the broader geopolitical struggle for influence in the Middle East, with Türkiye and Russia representing different sides of the conflict.

The resolution of the crisis and the subsequent rapprochement between Türkiye and Russia also had important implications for the region. It demonstrated the ability of both countries to set aside their differences and work together on shared interests, particularly in managing the complex dynamics of the Syrian conflict.

4.2.1.3 Energy Politics and Economic Sanctions

Energy politics played a significant role in the Türkiye-Russia relationship, both before and after the crisis. Russia is a major supplier of natural gas to Türkiye, and energy cooperation has been a key component of their bilateral ties. The crisis had the potential to disrupt this cooperation, particularly with the imposition of economic sanctions by Russia.

However, the resolution of the crisis demonstrated the importance of energy ties in maintaining the overall relationship between the two countries. Despite the political tensions, both Türkiye and Russia recognized the mutual benefits of continued cooperation in the energy sector, which helped to facilitate the normalization of relations.

4.2.2 Historical Relations between Türkiye and Russia

4.2.2.1 Historical Conflicts and Alliances

The historical relationship between Türkiye and Russia has been marked by a series of conflicts and alliances, dating back to the Ottoman and Russian Empires. These historical dynamics have played a significant role in shaping the modern relationship between the two countries.

Throughout history, Türkiye and Russia have been both rivals and partners, depending on the geopolitical context. This complex history has influenced their interactions in the 21st century, as both countries navigate a rapidly changing regional and global environment.

4.2.2.2 Economic Ties and Energy Dependencies

Economic ties, particularly in the energy sector, have been a cornerstone of the Türkiye-Russia relationship. Russia is one of Türkiye's largest suppliers of natural gas, and energy cooperation has been mutually beneficial for both countries.

The crisis in 2015-16 tested these economic ties, but the subsequent normalization of relations demonstrated the resilience of their economic partnership. The energy dependency of Türkiye on Russia, coupled with Russia's need for stable markets, has ensured that economic considerations remain a key factor in their bilateral relationship.

4.2.2.3 Cultural and Social Exchanges

Cultural and social exchanges have also played a role in shaping the Türkiye-Russia relationship. Millions of Russian tourists visit Türkiye each year, and there are significant

cultural connections between the two countries. These exchanges have helped to build a level of mutual understanding and goodwill, which has been important in managing periods of tension.

The crisis in 2015-16 temporarily disrupted these exchanges, particularly with the imposition of sanctions by Russia. However, the subsequent restoration of relations allowed for the resumption of cultural and social interactions, which continue to play a positive role in the bilateral relationship.

4.2.3 The Role of Media in Shaping Public Perception

4.2.3.1 Historical Context of Media in Russia

The media landscape in Russia has a long history of state control and influence, dating back to the Soviet era. This historical context has shaped the way in which the media operates in modern Russia, particularly in the context of national security and foreign policy.

During the Türkiye-Russia crisis, the Russian media played a key role in shaping public perception and supporting the government's response. The state-controlled media framed the events in a way that justified Russia's actions and criticized Türkiye, which helped to rally public support for the government's position.

4.2.3.2 The Influence of State-Controlled Media

The influence of state-controlled media in Russia was particularly evident during the Türkiye-Russia crisis. The media was used as a tool to manage public opinion, shape the narrative, and support the government's diplomatic and military strategies.

In Türkiye, the media landscape is more diverse, with a mix of state-controlled and independent outlets. However, the government also exerted significant influence over the media during the crisis, particularly in framing the incident in a way that aligned with its foreign policy objectives.

4.2.3.3 Comparative Analysis of Media Narratives

A comparative analysis of media narratives in Russia and Türkiye during the crisis reveals the different ways in which the two governments used the media to support their respective positions. In Russia, the narrative focused on portraying Türkiye as an aggressor and justifying

the imposition of sanctions. In Türkiye, the media emphasized the need to defend national sovereignty and the importance of de-escalating the situation.

These contrasting narratives reflect the broader geopolitical dynamics at play during the crisis and the ways in which both governments sought to use the media to achieve their diplomatic objectives.

4.2.4 Impact of Propaganda and Misinformation

4.2.4.1 Techniques Used in Russian Media

The use of propaganda and misinformation is a well-established technique in Russian media, particularly in the context of foreign policy. During the Türkiye-Russia crisis, the Russian media employed various techniques to shape public perception and support the government's response.

These techniques included the selective reporting of events, the use of emotive language, and the amplification of certain narratives that aligned with the government's position. The goal was to create a unified and cohesive narrative that would rally public support and justify Russia's actions.

4.2.4.2 Case Studies of Misinformation during the Crisis

There were several instances of misinformation during the Türkiye-Russia crisis, particularly in the Russian media. For example, there were reports that exaggerated Türkiye's role in supporting terrorist groups in Syria, which were used to justify Russia's military actions and the imposition of sanctions.

In Türkiye, there were also instances of misinformation, particularly in the initial reporting of the Su-24 incident. The government's control over the media allowed it to shape the narrative in a way that supported its position, but there were also challenges in managing the spread of misinformation on social media.

These case studies highlight the role of propaganda and misinformation in shaping public perception and influencing diplomatic outcomes during the crisis.

4.2.5 The Role of Public Opinion

4.2.5.1 Surveys and Polls on Russian Public Sentiment

Public opinion in Russia during the Türkiye-Russia crisis was shaped significantly by the media and government narratives. Surveys and polls conducted during this period showed strong public support for the government's response, particularly the imposition of sanctions and the diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis.

The Russian public's sentiment was influenced by a combination of historical factors, including the legacy of Cold War-era animosities, and the contemporary media environment, which was heavily controlled by the state. The high level of public support for the government's actions was a key factor in shaping the course of the crisis.

4.2.5.2 The Influence of Media on Public Opinion Formation

The media played a crucial role in shaping public opinion during the Türkiye-Russia crisis, particularly in Russia, where state-controlled media outlets dominated the narrative. The government's ability to control the flow of information and frame events in a way that aligned with its foreign policy objectives was a significant factor in maintaining public support.

In Türkiye, the media also played a role in shaping public opinion, but the presence of independent outlets and the influence of social media created a more diverse and complex media environment. This diversity allowed for a broader range of perspectives to be presented, but it also made it more challenging for the government to control the narrative.

The influence of media on public opinion during the crisis underscores the importance of information in shaping diplomatic and military outcomes. The ability of governments to manage public perception through the media is a key factor in navigating complex international crises.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF THE SU-24 SHOOTDOWN

The downing of the Russian Su-24 aircraft by Turkish forces on November 24, 2015, marked a significant turning point in Türkiye-Russia relations, with far-reaching geopolitical implications. This chapter delves into the thematic findings and framing techniques used in the media coverage of the incident. The analysis is organized into two main sections: "Thematic Findings" and "Framing Techniques." Each section examines how different aspects of the crisis were reported, with particular attention to nationalism, security concerns, economic impacts, and the use of language and visuals to frame the narrative.

5.1 Thematic Findings

The media's portrayal of the Su-24 shootdown can be dissected into several key themes, each reflecting a different aspect of the crisis. These themes were not only central to how the incident was reported but also influenced public perception and the diplomatic response.

5.1.1 Nationalism and Patriotism

Nationalism and patriotism played a crucial role in the media coverage of the Su-24 incident. Russian media outlets, in particular, emphasized these themes to rally domestic support and reinforce a narrative of national pride in the face of perceived aggression. The shootdown was framed as an attack on Russian sovereignty, with coverage often highlighting historical grievances and the need to defend the nation's honor.

For instance, news outlets like Russia Today (RT) and Kommersant frequently invoked themes of national identity and historical struggles, comparing the incident to past conflicts where Russia had to defend itself against foreign adversaries. This framing was intended to unify the Russian public, fostering a sense of collective identity and resilience.

In contrast, Turkish media focused on the narrative of defending national airspace and sovereignty. Turkish outlets presented the shootdown as a necessary response to a violation of Turkish territory, framing it as an act of patriotism and national defense. This theme was crucial in shaping public opinion in Türkiye, where the government sought to justify its actions to both domestic and international audiences.

5.1.2 Security Concerns

Security concerns were another prominent theme in the coverage of the Su-24 shootdown. The incident heightened tensions in an already volatile region, with both Russia and Türkiye emphasizing the security implications of the event.

Russian media portrayed the shootdown as a deliberate and provocative act by Türkiye, threatening regional stability and escalating the risk of broader conflict. This framing was used to justify Russia's subsequent military buildup in Syria and its aggressive diplomatic stance. By focusing on security, Russian outlets aimed to present the incident as not only a bilateral issue but a broader threat to international peace and security.

Turkish media, on the other hand, emphasized the security challenges posed by the Russian military presence near its borders. The narrative often highlighted concerns about Russian violations of Turkish airspace, portraying the shootdown as a necessary measure to protect national security. This theme was also used to garner support from NATO allies, positioning Türkiye as a responsible member of the alliance taking action to defend its territorial integrity.

5.1.3 Economic Impacts

The economic impacts of the Su-24 shootdown were significant, particularly in terms of the sanctions and trade restrictions that followed. Both Russian and Turkish media covered these economic repercussions extensively, but with differing emphases.

In Russia, the focus was on the negative effects of the sanctions imposed by Moscow on Ankara, including restrictions on tourism, agriculture, and construction. Russian outlets highlighted the economic losses incurred by Türkiye, framing them as a necessary consequence of its actions. This narrative was intended to show the strength and resolve of the Russian government in defending its interests.

Turkish media, in contrast, often downplayed the economic impact of the sanctions, instead emphasizing efforts to diversify trade partners and reduce dependency on Russian markets. The narrative in Türkiye was one of resilience and adaptability, with the government portrayed as taking proactive steps to mitigate the economic fallout.

5.2 Framing Techniques

The framing of the Su-24 shootdown in the media involved a variety of techniques designed to shape public perception and influence political outcomes. These techniques included the use of specific language, visual representation, and narrative structures.

5.2.1 Language Use

Language played a pivotal role in how the Su-24 incident was framed in both Russian and Turkish media. The choice of words and phrases was carefully calibrated to evoke specific emotions and reinforce the desired narrative.

In Russian media, the language used to describe the shootdown was often charged with emotion and historical references. Terms like "betrayal," "aggression," and "provocation" were frequently employed to depict Türkiye's actions in a negative light. This language was intended to stir patriotic sentiments and justify Russia's retaliatory measures.

Turkish media, meanwhile, used language that emphasized legality and self-defense. Words like “violation, “sovereignty”, and “protection” were commonly used to describe the shootdown, framing it as a justified and necessary response to a threat. This choice of language was aimed at legitimizing Türkiye’s actions in the eyes of both the domestic audience and the international community.

5.2.2 Visual Representation

Visual representation also played a significant role in framing the Su-24 incident. Although not always explicitly mentioned in the text, the choice of images, videos, and graphics used in media coverage had a powerful impact on how the event was perceived.

Russian media outlets often used dramatic visuals of the downed aircraft, with close-up shots of the wreckage and images of military operations in Syria. These visuals were intended to evoke a sense of urgency and danger, reinforcing the narrative of a serious security threat. The use of such imagery was designed to rally public support for Russia's military and diplomatic response.

In Türkiye, media outlets frequently used maps and diagrams to illustrate the airspace violation by the Russian aircraft. These visuals were intended to provide a clear and objective representation of the incident, supporting the narrative of self-defense. Additionally, Turkish

media often featured images of government officials and military personnel, emphasizing the state's role in protecting national interests.

5.2.3 Narrative Structures

The narrative structures used in media coverage of the Su-24 shootdown were crucial in shaping how the incident was understood by the public. These structures involved the sequencing of events, the selection of details, and the overall storyline presented.

Russian media tended to structure the narrative around a storyline of betrayal and retribution. The sequence of events was often presented in a way that highlighted Türkiye's actions as a deliberate provocation, followed by Russia's justified response. This narrative structure was intended to create a clear moral dichotomy, with Russia portrayed as the wronged party defending its honor and interests.

In Turkish media, the narrative structure was more focused on the legality and necessity of the shootdown. The storyline typically began with the airspace violation, followed by the decision to engage the aircraft and the subsequent diplomatic efforts to manage the fallout. This structure was designed to present Türkiye as acting within its rights and taking responsible actions in a complex and dangerous situation.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS OF THE ASSASSINATION OF ANDREI KARLOV

The assassination of Andrei Karlov, the Russian ambassador to Türkiye, on December 19, 2016, stands as a pivotal event in international relations, particularly between Russia and Türkiye. This incident not only heightened the already existing tensions between the two nations but also drew global attention due to its potential implications for diplomacy, security, and regional stability. This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of how the assassination was covered in the media, focusing on thematic findings and the framing techniques employed. The analysis is organized into two major sections: "Thematic Findings" and "Framing Techniques", each addressing different aspects of the media portrayal of the assassination, including the themes of terrorism, diplomatic tensions, mourning, and the use of language, visuals, and narrative structures.

6.1 Thematic Findings

The assassination of Andrei Karlov was a significant event that generated extensive media coverage, with various themes emerging from the reports. These themes are crucial for understanding how the assassination was interpreted and presented to the public, as well as its broader impact on international relations.

6.1.1 Terrorism and Security Threats

The assassination of Andrei Karlov was immediately framed as an act of terrorism, with both Russian and international media emphasizing the security threats associated with the incident. The assailant, a Turkish police officer, reportedly shouted references to Aleppo and Syria, linking the assassination directly to the ongoing conflict in Syria and the broader issue of terrorism in the region.

Russian media outlets, such as **Russia Today (RT)** and **TASS**, portrayed the assassination as a terrorist attack aimed at destabilizing Russia's diplomatic efforts and undermining its role in the Syrian conflict. This framing was significant as it not only highlighted the immediate security threat but also positioned Russia as a victim of international terrorism. The narrative emphasized the need for a strong response to terrorism and reinforced the justification for Russia's military involvement in Syria.

In Türkiye, the media also highlighted the terrorist nature of the attack but with a focus on its implications for domestic security. The fact that the assassin was a member of the Turkish police force raised serious concerns about the infiltration of extremist elements within the security apparatus. This theme was used to justify subsequent security measures and crackdowns on suspected extremists within Türkiye. The narrative in the Turkish media emphasized the need to address internal security threats and prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

The theme of terrorism and security threats was thus central to the media coverage of Karlov's assassination, with both Russian and Turkish media using it to address different aspects of the incident. While Russian media focused on the broader implications for international terrorism and Russia's role in Syria, Turkish media emphasized the domestic security challenges posed by the attack.

6.1.2 Diplomatic Tensions

The assassination of Andrei Karlov occurred at a time when diplomatic relations between Russia and Türkiye were already tense, following the downing of a Russian Su-24 fighter jet by Turkish forces in November 2015. The assassination further strained these relations, with the media on both sides emphasizing the potential consequences for bilateral ties.

Russian media portrayed the assassination as a deliberate provocation aimed at disrupting the improving relations between Russia and Türkiye. The incident was framed as an attack on Russian diplomacy, with significant implications for international relations. Russian outlets stressed the need for a thorough investigation and swift justice, while also emphasizing the importance of maintaining diplomatic ties despite the attack. The narrative in the Russian media suggested that the assassination was an attempt by external forces to drive a wedge between Russia and Türkiye and undermine their cooperation in Syria.

Turkish media, on the other hand, focused on the implications of the assassination for Türkiye's international standing and its relationship with Russia. The Turkish government was quick to condemn the attack and express solidarity with Russia, stressing that the act was intended to derail the positive developments in bilateral relations. The narrative in the Turkish media emphasized Türkiye's commitment to upholding diplomatic norms and ensuring that the assassination did not lead to a breakdown in relations with Russia.

The theme of diplomatic tensions was thus a key aspect of the media coverage of Karlov's assassination, with both Russian and Turkish media using it to address the broader implications of the incident for international relations. While Russian media focused on the potential impact on Russia's diplomatic efforts, Turkish media emphasized the need to preserve and strengthen bilateral ties despite the attack.

6.1.3 Mourning and Condemnation

The assassination of Andrei Karlov elicited widespread mourning and condemnation, both in Russia and internationally. This theme was prominently featured in the media coverage, with both Russian and Turkish outlets emphasizing the tragic nature of the incident and the need for justice

In Russia, the media coverage was marked by an outpouring of grief and national mourning. Andrei Karlov was portrayed as a dedicated diplomat who had served his country with distinction, and his assassination was framed as a tragic loss for Russia. Russian outlets provided extensive coverage of the mourning process, including tributes from government officials, public figures, and ordinary citizens. The narrative of national loss was used to reinforce the seriousness of the attack and the need for a strong response.

Turkish media also emphasized mourning and condemnation, with a focus on the broader implications for Türkiye. The assassination was portrayed as a tragic event that had tarnished Türkiye's image on the world stage. The Turkish government and media were quick to express condolences and solidarity with Russia, framing the incident as an attack not just on Russia but on international diplomacy as a whole. This narrative was used to emphasize Türkiye's commitment to justice and its determination to prevent similar incidents in the future.

The theme of mourning and condemnation was thus central to the media coverage of Karlov's assassination, with both Russian and Turkish media using it to address the emotional and symbolic aspects of the incident. While Russian media focused on the national loss and the need for a strong response, Turkish media emphasized the broader implications for Türkiye's international standing and its commitment to justice.

6.2 Framing Techniques

The framing of Andrei Karlov's assassination in the media involved various techniques aimed at shaping public perception and influencing the political discourse. These techniques included the use of specific language, visual representation, and narrative structures.

6.2.1 Language Use

Language played a crucial role in how the assassination of Andrei Karlov was framed in the media. The choice of words and phrases was carefully crafted to evoke specific emotions and reinforce particular narratives.

Russian media employed strong and emotive language to describe the assassination, often referring to it as a "heinous crime", "terrorist attack", and "barbaric act". These terms were intended to convey the gravity of the incident and to galvanize public support for a robust response. The language used also served to underscore the narrative of victimhood, with Russia portrayed as a target of terrorism and aggression. The frequent use of terms such as "heroic diplomat" and "martyr" in the Russian media further reinforced this narrative, highlighting Karlov's service to his country and the tragic nature of his death.

In contrast, Turkish media, while also using strong language to condemn the assassination, adopted a slightly different tone. The focus was on the legal and diplomatic aspects of the incident, with frequent references to the "investigation", "justice", and "international cooperation". This language was intended to assure both domestic and international audiences that Türkiye was taking the necessary steps to address the situation and that it remained committed to maintaining good relations with Russia. The use of terms such as "tragic event" and "diplomatic crisis" in the Turkish media reflected this focus on the broader implications of the assassination for international relations and Türkiye's role in global diplomacy.

6.2.2 Visual Representation

Visual representation was a powerful tool in the media's framing of Karlov's assassination. The use of images and videos played a significant role in shaping how the event was perceived by the public.

Russian media outlets often used solemn and somber visuals, such as images of Karlov's body being transported, the Russian flag at half-mast, and candlelit vigils. These visuals were intended to evoke a sense of mourning and national unity. The use of such imagery reinforced

the narrative of a nation in grief, while also highlighting the seriousness of the attack and the need for a strong response. The visual representation of Karlov as a martyr for his country was a key aspect of the Russian media's coverage, with images of his funeral and memorial services prominently featured.

In Türkiye, media outlets also used visuals to convey the gravity of the situation, but with a focus on the aftermath and the state's response. Images of Turkish officials meeting with Russian diplomats, police securing the scene of the assassination, and memorial services were prominently featured. These visuals were intended to reassure the public that the government was in control and that the assassination was being dealt with in a manner befitting its seriousness. The visual representation in the Turkish media emphasized the state's commitment to justice and its determination to prevent further incidents.

The use of visuals was thus a key aspect of the media's framing of Karlov's assassination, with both Russian and Turkish outlets using images and videos to reinforce their respective narratives. While Russian media focused on the mourning process and the symbolic aspects of the incident, Turkish media emphasized the state's response and the broader implications for international relations.

6.2.3 Narrative Structures

The narrative structures used in media coverage of Karlov's assassination were crucial in shaping how the event was understood by the public. These structures involved the sequencing of events, the selection of details, and the overall storyline presented.

Russian media tended to structure the narrative around a storyline of tragedy and resilience. The sequence of events often began with a detailed account of the assassination, followed by the immediate reactions of the Russian government and the international community. The narrative then shifted to the broader implications for Russia's foreign policy and the need for continued vigilance against terrorism. This structure was designed to create a sense of continuity, linking the assassination to Russia's ongoing struggles and its role on the global stage.

Turkish media, meanwhile, structured the narrative with a focus on accountability and international cooperation. The storyline typically began with the shocking nature of the assassination, followed by the swift response of the Turkish authorities and their cooperation

with Russian investigators. The narrative then moved to the broader diplomatic implications and Türkiye's efforts to prevent further incidents. This structure was intended to present Türkiye as a responsible and proactive actor in the international arena.

The narrative structures used in the media coverage of Karlov's assassination were thus a key aspect of how the incident was framed and understood by the public. The Russian media's focus on tragedy and resilience, and the Turkish media's emphasis on accountability and cooperation, reflect the different priorities and perspectives of the two countries in the wake of the assassination.

CHAPTER 7: RESULTS

This chapter presents the comprehensive results from the analysis of media coverage related to the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination of Andrei Karlov, with a focus on the dominant themes identified, variations across different newspapers, implications for public perception, and the overall impact on diplomatic relations. The findings shed light on how these significant events were framed in the media, the narratives that dominated public discourse, and the influence these narratives had on international relations, particularly between Russia and Türkiye.

7.1 Summary of Key Findings

The analysis of the media coverage surrounding the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination of Andrei Karlov reveals critical insights into how these events were portrayed and interpreted by different media outlets. These findings provide a detailed understanding of the themes that were most prominently featured in the coverage and how these themes varied across different newspapers.

7.1.1 Dominant Themes Identified

The media coverage of the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination of Andrei Karlov was characterized by several dominant themes that were consistently emphasized across different outlets. These themes played a crucial role in shaping public understanding of the events and the subsequent international response.

7.1.1.1 Nationalism and Patriotism

The theme of nationalism and patriotism was particularly pronounced in the coverage of the Su-24 shootdown, especially within Russian media. The incident was framed as a direct attack on Russian sovereignty and a challenge to national pride, necessitating a strong and unified response. Russian outlets like Kommersant and Russia Today (RT) emphasized this narrative, portraying the shootdown as a deliberate provocation by Türkiye that required a firm response to defend Russia's honor and geopolitical interests.

In the case of the assassination of Andrei Karlov, nationalism and patriotism were also central themes, particularly in the Russian media. Karlov was depicted as a dedicated diplomat who died serving his country, and his death was used to galvanize a sense of national unity and resolve. This theme was reinforced through extensive coverage of the mourning process,

memorials, and tributes to Karlov's contributions to Russian diplomacy. The narrative of national pride was intertwined with the broader theme of Russia's role in the global fight against terrorism.

7.1.1.2 Terrorism and Security Threats

Both the Su-24 shootdown and Karlov's assassination were framed within the broader context of terrorism and security threats. The shootdown was linked to the ongoing conflict in Syria, where Russia was engaged in a military campaign against extremist groups. The media highlighted the security threats posed by these groups and the importance of Russia's military presence in Syria to combat terrorism. This framing helped to justify Russia's continued involvement in the Syrian conflict and bolstered public support for the government's actions.

The assassination of Andrei Karlov was unequivocally framed as an act of terrorism, with both Russian and Turkish media focusing on the security implications of the attack. The incident was portrayed as a direct threat to diplomatic security and international stability, with significant coverage dedicated to the investigation and the search for those responsible. This theme underscored the broader narrative of a global struggle against terrorism and the need for international cooperation to address this threat.

7.1.1.3 Diplomatic Tensions

The theme of diplomatic tensions was a key aspect of the media coverage of both incidents. The Su-24 shootdown led to a dramatic escalation in tensions between Russia and Türkiye, and this was prominently reflected in the media. Russian outlets portrayed the shootdown as a hostile act that demanded a strong diplomatic response, including economic sanctions and a freeze in bilateral relations. The Turkish media, on the other hand, focused on the need for dialogue and diplomacy to resolve the crisis, while also defending Türkiye's actions as a necessary measure to protect its airspace.

The assassination of Andrei Karlov further strained diplomatic relations between Russia and Türkiye, and this was another major theme in the media coverage. Russian outlets framed the assassination as an attack on Russia's diplomatic mission and a serious breach of international norms. Turkish media emphasized the importance of maintaining diplomatic ties and cooperating with Russia to bring the perpetrators to justice. This theme highlighted the fragile nature of diplomatic relations in the wake of such incidents and the challenges of navigating the complex geopolitical landscape.

7.1.1.4 Economic Impacts

The economic consequences of the Su-24 shootdown were a significant theme, particularly in the Russian media. The incident led to the imposition of economic sanctions by Russia on Türkiye, which had a substantial impact on trade, tourism, and economic cooperation between the two countries. Russian outlets extensively covered the economic fallout, emphasizing the costs of the diplomatic rift and the potential long-term damage to bilateral economic ties. The economic impact of the assassination of Karlov was less prominent in the coverage, but it was still mentioned in relation to the potential disruption of Russian-Turkish cooperation in various sectors.

7.1.1.5 Mourning and Condemnation

The theme of mourning and condemnation was especially prominent in the coverage of Andrei Karlov's assassination. Russian media portrayed the assassination as a national tragedy, with extensive coverage of the public mourning, memorial services, and official statements of condemnation. The incident was framed as not only an attack on an individual diplomat but on the entire Russian nation, reinforcing the narrative of Russia as a victim of global terrorism. Turkish media also covered the mourning and condemnation, but with a focus on expressing solidarity with Russia and emphasizing the need for justice and accountability.

7.1.2 Variations across Newspapers

While common themes were identified across the media coverage, there were also notable variations between different newspapers, reflecting differences in editorial perspectives, target audiences, and the broader political context in which each outlet operates.

7.1.2.1 Russia Today (RT) vs. Kommersant

In the coverage of the Su-24 shootdown, RT adopted a more aggressive and nationalistic tone compared to Kommersant. RT's coverage was characterized by strong language and emotive imagery, emphasizing Russia's victimhood and the need for a decisive response to the perceived aggression by Türkiye. Kommersant, on the other hand, took a more measured approach, focusing on the diplomatic and economic implications of the incident. While both outlets emphasized national pride and security concerns, Kommersant provided a more nuanced analysis, including discussions on the potential long-term impact on Russia-Türkiye relations and the broader geopolitical context.

In the coverage of the Karlov assassination, RT once again adopted a more emotive approach, with extensive coverage of the mourning process and tributes to Karlov. Kommersant, while also covering these aspects, provided more in-depth analysis of the diplomatic fallout and the implications for Russia's foreign policy. This variation highlights the difference in editorial focus, with RT prioritizing nationalistic narratives and Kommersant offering a more comprehensive analysis of the events.

7.1.2.2 TASS vs. Sputnik

TASS and Sputnik also showed some differences in their coverage, although both outlets generally reflected the official Russian stance on the incidents. TASS, as a state news agency, tended to provide more formal and official coverage, with a focus on statements from government officials and the official narrative. Sputnik, while also reflecting the official stance, adopted a more populist tone, with coverage that was more accessible to a broader audience. Sputnik placed greater emphasis on the implications for Russian citizens, particularly in its coverage of the economic impact of the Su-24 shootdown and the threat posed by terrorism in the wake of Karlov's assassination.

In the case of Karlov's assassination, TASS focused heavily on the diplomatic response and the investigation into the incident, providing detailed reports on the steps taken by both Russian and Turkish authorities. Sputnik, on the other hand, highlighted the broader security implications and the need for a coordinated international response to terrorism. This variation reflects the different roles and audiences of the two outlets, with TASS providing more formal coverage and Sputnik appealing to a wider, more general audience.

7.2 Justification of Hypothesis

The findings and analysis validate the hypotheses by demonstrating how Russian newspapers framed the 2015-16 Türkiye-Russia crisis to support state objectives. Each hypothesis is addressed with evidence from thematic and discourse analysis, showcasing the strategic role of media in aligning public perception with government narratives.

7.2.1 Hypothesis 1: Framing Türkiye as an Aggressor

The thematic analysis revealed a consistent emphasis on nationalism, security concerns, and victimization across Russian media. For example, Kommersant published editorials labeling the Su-24 shootdown as a "stab in the back," invoking a sense of betrayal. RT aired broadcasts highlighting violations of Russian sovereignty, accompanied by visuals of airspace maps to

reinforce claims of Türkiye's aggression. Such portrayals were not incidental but part of a broader narrative that framed Türkiye as a destabilizing force in the region.

The assassination of Andrei Karlov further amplified this narrative. Articles in Sputnik frequently described the event as a terrorist attack targeting international diplomacy, emphasizing the violation of global norms. By highlighting Türkiye's internal security challenges, the media sought to position Russia as a victim of both direct aggression and systemic instability. For instance, Sputnik's piece titled "A Diplomatic Martyrdom" used emotionally charged language to frame Karlov's death as symbolic of broader geopolitical struggles, urging unity and resistance against perceived threats.

Historical references were also strategically employed. Russian media compared Türkiye's actions during the crisis to prior NATO confrontations, linking the incident to broader Western antagonism. This framing deepened public perception of Türkiye as a persistent threat to Russia's regional and national security interests.

7.2.2 Hypothesis 2: Preparing the Public for Sanctions

The media's role in normalizing sanctions against Türkiye was evident in both the breadth and tone of coverage. TASS published a series of reports detailing the economic fallout of Türkiye's actions and the corresponding Russian sanctions. Articles emphasized protective measures, such as the suspension of Turkish agricultural imports, with headlines like "Sanctions to Secure Russian Agriculture" framing these policies as necessary for safeguarding national interests.

Sputnik contributed to this narrative by interviewing economic experts, whose analyses depicted sanctions as both rational and justified. For instance, one article featured a financial analyst discussing Türkiye's dependence on Russian energy and tourism, presenting the sanctions as a demonstration of Russia's economic leverage. Statistical data on trade imbalances and energy reliance were frequently cited to underscore the proportionality of Russia's response.

Additionally, comparisons with prior international disputes were employed to contextualize the sanctions. Articles highlighted how similar measures had been used effectively in other conflicts, normalizing their use as a standard diplomatic tool. This framing helped mitigate potential criticism by portraying sanctions as a calculated and necessary step aligned with international norms.

7.2.3 Hypothesis 3: Balancing Criticism and Diplomatic Recovery

Following the assassination of Karlov, the Russian media pivoted to a narrative emphasizing reconciliation and unity against terrorism. Sputnik and RT prominently featured statements

from high-level officials, including President Putin, who described the tragedy as an opportunity for Russia and Türkiye to strengthen cooperation. Sputnik's article, "A Shared Fight Against Terrorism," highlighted joint diplomatic efforts and mutual commitments to restoring stability.

The editorial tone of state-controlled media during this period was measured, reflecting Russia's strategic interest in rebuilding ties with Türkiye. TASS covered joint press conferences extensively, using them to project an image of diplomatic resilience. For example, a December 2016 article titled "Russia and Türkiye: Partners in Crisis Resolution" underscored collaborative efforts in addressing Syrian instability, reframing the assassination as a catalyst for deeper bilateral cooperation.

Visuals and rhetoric played a critical role in this framing. Images of Karlov's memorials, combined with statements from Turkish officials condemning the attack, were used to convey solidarity. By focusing on shared goals and downplaying discord, the media strategically steered public sentiment toward supporting Russia's pragmatic approach to diplomacy.

7.3 Implications for Public Perception

The framing of the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination of Andrei Karlov in the media had significant implications for public perception, both in Russia and Türkiye. The themes and narratives emphasized in the coverage influenced how the public understood these events and shaped their views on the broader issues of nationalism, security, and international relations.

7.3.1 Impact on Russian Public Perception

In Russia, the media's focus on nationalism and patriotism, particularly in the coverage of the Su-24 shootdown, reinforced public support for the government's stance on the incident. The portrayal of the shootdown as an attack on Russian sovereignty and pride resonated with the public, contributing to a surge in patriotic sentiment and support for Russia's actions in Syria. The emphasis on terrorism and security threats further justified the government's military involvement in Syria and bolstered public confidence in the government's handling of national security issues.

The assassination of Andrei Karlov also had a profound impact on public perception in Russia. The media's portrayal of Karlov as a martyr and the emphasis on national mourning reinforced the narrative of Russia as a victim of terrorism and international aggression. This narrative, combined with the emphasis on the need for a strong response, contributed to public support

for the government's actions in the aftermath of the assassination, including calls for greater international cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

7.3.2 Impact on Turkish Public Perception

In Türkiye, the media's coverage of the Su-24 shootdown and the Karlov assassination also had significant implications for public perception. The focus on the diplomatic and economic implications of the shootdown highlighted the potential costs of escalating tensions with Russia, contributing to public support for efforts to de-escalate the situation and restore relations. The emphasis on Türkiye's right to defend its airspace and national sovereignty also resonated with the public, reinforcing support for the government's actions.

The coverage of Karlov's assassination in the Turkish media emphasized the importance of maintaining strong diplomatic ties with Russia and cooperating to address the security threat posed by terrorism. This narrative helped to mitigate the potential for further diplomatic fallout and contributed to public support for the government's efforts to work with Russia in the aftermath of the assassination.

7.4 Impact on Diplomatic Relations

The Su-24 shoot down and the assassination of Ambassador Andrei Karlov had significant economic repercussions for both Russia and Turkey. According to a study by the Turkish Economic Policy Research Foundation (TEPAV,2016), the total economic loss for Turkey in the first year following the Su-24 incident was approximately $1.3 billion, with the tourism sector alone accounting for a loss of $600 million due to reduced Russian tourist arrivals. Russia's total economic loss during the same period was estimated at $1.1 billion, with the tourism sector experiencing a loss of $400 million.

These figures underscore the substantial impact of the incidents on the diplomatic and economic relations between Russia and Turkey.

Table 3: Impact on diplomatic relations between Russia and Türkiye

Sector	Russia's Losses	Turkey's Losses
Tourism	400M USD	600M USD
Trade	300M USD	350M USD
Energy	250M USD	200M USD
Agriculture	150M USD	180M USD

Statistical Insight:

- The tourism sector was significantly impacted, with Türkiye experiencing a loss of approximately $600 million due to reduced Russian tourists.
- The overall economic impact on Russia and Türkiye in the first year following the incident was estimated at $1.1 billion and $1.3 billion, respectively.

7.4.1 Impact of the Su-24 Shootdown

The media's portrayal of the Su-24 shootdown as a direct challenge to Russian sovereignty and national pride contributed to a dramatic escalation in diplomatic tensions between Russia and Türkiye. The coverage in Russian media, particularly the emphasis on the need for a strong response, played a role in the government's decision to impose economic sanctions and freeze diplomatic relations. The media's focus on the economic and security implications of the incident also influenced the broader diplomatic discourse, with both countries engaging in a war of words that further strained relations.

However, the media's coverage also highlighted the potential costs of prolonged tensions, particularly in terms of economic and security cooperation. This narrative contributed to the eventual de-escalation of tensions, with both countries recognizing the need to restore relations and work together on issues of mutual concern, such as the conflict in Syria and the fight against terrorism.

7.4.2 Impact of the Karlov Assassination

The assassination of Andrei Karlov further tested the diplomatic relations between Russia and Türkiye. The media's framing of the assassination as an act of terrorism and a serious breach of diplomatic norms influenced the diplomatic response, with both countries emphasizing the need for cooperation in the investigation and bringing those responsible to justice. The coverage in Russian media, particularly the focus on national mourning and the need for a strong response, contributed to a more cautious and measured diplomatic approach, with Russia refraining from escalating tensions further and instead focusing on cooperation with Türkiye.

The media's emphasis on the broader security implications of the assassination and the need for international cooperation also played a role in shaping the diplomatic discourse. Both countries recognized the importance of working together to address the threat posed by terrorism, and this shared understanding helped to prevent a further deterioration in relations.

7.5 Reasons for Resuming Relations

The diplomatic crisis between Türkiye and Russia, initiated by the Su-24 shootdown and intensified by the assassination of Ambassador Andrei Karlov, significantly impacted both nations economically and politically. Several reasons drove the resumption of relations:

Economic Interdependence: Russia's economic sanctions, including restrictions on Turkish agricultural imports, tourism, and construction contracts, created significant economic pressure on Türkiye. The loss of approximately $600 million in tourism revenue alone highlighted the cost of prolonged tensions. Similarly, Russia's dependence on Türkiye for trade, infrastructure projects, and as a transit route for energy pipelines underscored the mutual economic benefits of restoring ties.

Geopolitical Necessities: Both nations shared a strategic interest in stabilising the region, particularly concerning Syria. Russia's military presence and Türkiye's geopolitical influence necessitated dialogue for mutual benefit. Coordinated efforts were needed to address the threats of terrorism and regional instability, further incentivizing rapprochement.

Diplomatic Pragmatism: Türkiye and Russia realized the value of pragmatic diplomacy over prolonged hostilities. For Russia, maintaining a working relationship with Türkiye was essential for its broader regional ambitions. For Türkiye, avoiding complete isolation on the international stage became a priority.

7.6 Diplomatic Maneuvers

Erdoğan's Apology and Diplomatic Overtures: President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's formal apology in June 2016 for the downing of the Russian jet marked a significant turning point. This act of contrition aligned with diplomatic norms and reflected Türkiye's willingness to prioritize reconciliation over pride.

Cooperation Post-Karlov Assassination: Following Ambassador Karlov's assassination, Türkiye and Russia coordinated investigations and emphasized joint efforts against terrorism. This unity was presented as a way to reinforce bilateral ties and mitigate further diplomatic fallout.

7.6 Mobilization through Symbolic Diplomacy

Erdoğan's Waiting Incident:

When President Erdoğan visited St. Petersburg to meet President Vladimir Putin in August 2016, he was made to wait, a move interpreted as a symbolic assertion of Russia's upper hand in the relationship. This act reflected the power dynamics following the crisis and highlighted the importance of showing contrition to rebuild trust.

Despite the perceived slight, Erdoğan's willingness to endure this demonstrated Türkiye's commitment to restoring relations and underscored the pragmatism behind the diplomatic outreach.

Public Statements and Shared Projects:

Joint announcements on the resumption of key economic projects, such as the TurkStream pipeline and Akkuyu nuclear power plant, symbolized a renewed partnership.

High-profile meetings and cooperative agreements were publicized to signal a fresh chapter in Türkiye-Russia relations.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

8.1 Interpretation of Results

The findings from this study provide critical insights into how media coverage influenced public perception and diplomatic relations between Russia and Türkiye following the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination of Andrei Karlov. By analyzing the themes and framing techniques used by various Russian media outlets, we can interpret the results in the context of existing literature and understand the broader implications of media narratives on international relations.

8.1.1 Comparison with Existing Literature

The study's findings align with previous research that emphasizes the role of media in shaping public opinion and influencing diplomatic outcomes. For instance, Entman's (1993) framing theory highlights how the media's selective emphasis on certain aspects of an event can guide public interpretation and reaction. In this study, themes such as nationalism, security, and diplomatic tensions were recurrent, reflecting the media's role in emphasizing issues that resonate with national interests and security concerns.

The prominence of nationalism and patriotism in the media narratives aligns with studies by Shifrinson (2016) and Zaller (1992), who argue that media often act as an extension of state power, particularly in authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes. In the context of Russia, the media's focus on these themes served to consolidate public support for the government's actions, reinforcing state narratives that framed Russia as a victim of Western aggression.

Furthermore, the study's results regarding the depiction of security concerns and terrorism echo findings from previous studies on crisis reporting. For example, previous research by Robinson (2001) and Bennett (2016) has shown that in times of international conflict, media often resort to security and threat-based narratives to justify state actions and maintain public order. This was evident in the coverage of both the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination, where security concerns were frequently highlighted to legitimize Russia's military and diplomatic responses.

8.1.2 The Role of Media in Shaping Diplomatic Narratives

The media's role in shaping diplomatic narratives was evident in the way different themes were emphasized across various outlets. Russian State-controlled media, such as RT and TASS, played a significant role in constructing narratives that portrayed Russia as a defender of national sovereignty and a victim of external aggression. This framing not only influenced domestic public opinion but also attempted to sway international perception in favor of Russia's stance.

By emphasizing themes like diplomatic tensions and economic impacts, the media also sought to influence the diplomatic dialogue between Russia and Türkiye. The focus on economic repercussions, particularly in outlets like Kommersant, highlighted the tangible costs of the diplomatic fallout, underscoring the need for a resolution that would mitigate these impacts. This aligns with the findings of Hallin (1989), who argued that media often act as intermediaries in diplomatic conflicts, shaping the discourse and influencing the terms of negotiation.

8.2 Limitations of the Study

While the study provides valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. These limitations may have influenced the findings and interpretations, and they highlight areas for improvement in future research.

8.2.1 Biases in Newspaper Selection

One of the primary limitations of this study is the potential bias in the selection of newspapers. The study focused on Russian media outlets that are either state-controlled or have close ties to the government, such as RT, TASS, and Sputnik. This selection could have introduced a bias, as these outlets are likely to reflect the government's perspective and priorities. Consequently, the findings may not fully represent the diversity of opinions and narratives present in Russian media. Including a broader range of newspapers, including independent or opposition media, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the media landscape and its influence on public perception and diplomatic relations.

8.2.2 Limitations of Qualitative Analysis

Another limitation is the reliance on qualitative analysis, which, while providing in-depth insights, can be subject to researcher bias. The interpretation of themes and framing techniques is inherently subjective, and different researchers may arrive at different conclusions based on

the same data. Although efforts were made to ensure objectivity, the potential for bias in qualitative analysis cannot be entirely eliminated. Future studies could benefit from a mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative analysis to complement the qualitative findings and provide a more robust analysis of media content.

8.2.3 Temporal Limitations

The temporal scope of the study is another limitation that may have affected the results. The study focused on media coverage from November 2015 to December 2016, capturing the immediate aftermath of the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination of Andrei Karlov. However, the long-term effects of these events on public perception and diplomatic relations may not have been fully captured within this timeframe. Media narratives and public opinion can evolve over time, particularly as new information emerges or as diplomatic efforts progress. Future research could extend the temporal scope to include a longitudinal analysis, examining how media coverage and public perception have evolved in the years following these events.

8.3 Future Research Directions

Given the limitations identified, there are several avenues for future research that could build on the findings of this study and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of media in shaping diplomatic narratives.

Firstly, future research could expand the scope to include a broader range of media outlets, both within Russia and internationally. By comparing Russian media coverage with that of Western or Turkish media, researchers could explore how different countries frame the same events and how these frames influence international relations. This comparative approach could also shed light on the role of media in exacerbating or mitigating diplomatic conflicts.

Secondly, future studies could incorporate a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative content analysis with quantitative techniques such as sentiment analysis or discourse analysis. This would allow for a more rigorous examination of the language and narratives used in media coverage, providing a deeper understanding of how specific words and phrases contribute to the overall framing of an event.

Finally, longitudinal studies could be conducted to examine the long-term impact of media coverage on public perception and diplomatic relations. By tracking changes in media narratives and public opinion over several years, researchers could gain insights into the lasting

effects of media framing on international relations and the potential for media to influence the outcome of diplomatic negotiations.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

9.1 Summary of Findings

This study has examined the role of Russian media in framing two critical events—the Su-24 shootdown and the assassination of Andrei Karlov—and their impact on public perception and diplomatic relations between Russia and Türkiye. The analysis revealed that Russian media, particularly state-controlled outlets like RT, TASS, and Sputnik, consistently emphasized themes of nationalism, security concerns, and diplomatic tensions. These themes were strategically framed to align with Russian government narratives, thereby reinforcing domestic support for the Kremlin's foreign policy and shaping international perceptions.

The study also found that the media's portrayal of these events varied across different outlets, with each employing distinct framing techniques. While some outlets focused heavily on the security implications and diplomatic repercussions, others highlighted the economic impacts and public sentiment. This variation suggests that the media played a nuanced role in influencing both public perception and diplomatic discourse, using specific frames to emphasize certain aspects of the events over others.

Overall, the findings underscore the significant influence of media in shaping the narratives surrounding international incidents. By framing events in a way that aligns with national interests, the media can shape public opinion and influence diplomatic relations, often in ways that support government policies.

9.2 Contributions to the Field

This study makes several contributions to the field of media studies and international relations. First, it provides empirical evidence of how media framing can influence public perception and diplomatic relations in the context of international conflicts. By analyzing media coverage of the Su-24 shootdown and the Karlov assassination, the study adds to the growing body of literature on media framing and its impact on international relations.

Second, the study highlights the role of state-controlled media in shaping narratives that align with government policies. This finding is particularly relevant in the context of semi-authoritarian regimes, where the media often serve as an extension of government power. The study's focus on Russian media outlets provides valuable insights into how these outlets

construct narratives that support the Kremlin's foreign policy objectives, thereby contributing to the broader understanding of media-state relations in non-democratic contexts.

Finally, the study's methodological approach, which combines qualitative content analysis with thematic analysis, offers a robust framework for analyzing media coverage of international events. This approach can be applied to future research on media framing, particularly in studies that aim to explore the role of media in shaping public perception and diplomatic relations in other geopolitical contexts.

9.3 Final Thoughts on Media's Role in International Relations

The findings of this study reinforce the critical role that media play in shaping international relations. By framing events in a particular way, the media can influence how these events are perceived by the public and by policymakers, thereby affecting the course of diplomatic relations. In the case of the Su-24 shootdown and the Karlov assassination, Russian media outlets played a pivotal role in constructing narratives that supported the Kremlin's foreign policy objectives, both domestically and internationally.

These findings have broader implications for our understanding of media’s influence in global politics. As media outlets continue to serve as key players in the information landscape, their role in shaping international relations is likely to grow. This underscores the importance of critical media literacy, both among the public and policymakers, to recognize and understand the framing techniques used by the media and their potential impact on international relations.

In conclusion, this study has highlighted the powerful role of media in shaping diplomatic narratives and influencing public perception. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the media's role in international relations will continue to be a critical area of study, with significant implications for global peace and stability.

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