

## **Colored Revolutions in Colored Lenses: A Comparative Analysis of U.S. and Russian Press Coverage of Political Movements in Ukraine, Belarus, and Uzbekistan**

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This study compared *The New York Times'* and *The Moscow Times'* coverage of the political movements in three former Soviet republics. Data analysis revealed a clear pro-movement pattern in *The New York Times'* reporting. The U.S. newspaper used more pro-movement sources than pro-incumbent sources. Overall, *The New York Times* depicted the protesters favorably and identified with the U.S. foreign policy by using more U.S. government sources. *The Moscow Times*, on the other hand, treated protesters in an unfavorable manner, and in some cases appeared to identify with the Russian government and the incumbents in these three countries. Finally, the two newspapers stressed more on the internal causes than the external causes of these political movements, but *The Moscow Times* stressed more on external attributions than *The New York Times*, an indication of its concern over Russian interests.

Empirical research on how events and issues are framed in the news has grown in recent years (See Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Entman, 1993; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; De Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001). Scholars have identified various news frames, ranging from conflict frames to economic consequence frames (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Iyengar, 1987; Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992). De Vreese and colleagues (2001) rightly noted that studies focusing on news frames have often examined specific events and issues, and that some have attempted to compare framing across different media. They also observed, however, that research on framing in a cross-nationally comparative fashion is very limited.

How different media portray events remains a neglected area of scientific inquiry, and the proposed research represents a substantive effort to remedy this deficiency. The political movements that occurred in post-communist nations in Central Asia and Eastern Europe constitute some of the most

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important international events at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These movements are believed to have had significant geopolitical implications for both the United States and the Russian Federation, and they have, as a result, drawn a great deal of attention from the news media worldwide. This research examines the coverage of these political movements by the U.S.-based newspaper, *The New York Times* and the Russian-based newspaper, *The Moscow Times*. Using the frames identified in past studies, the researchers compare the press coverage in U.S. and Russian press to examine how two newspapers framed these political movements that involved the national interests of their respective countries.

### ***Political Movements in Former Soviet Republics***

Color revolutions generally feature non-violent protests against the governments by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and specific colors, which function as symbols of these movements and the peaceful changes of the regimes. They first took place in Serbia in 2000, when the Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic was successfully ousted. In 2003, Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze was overthrown by a "*Rose Revolution*" after a disputed legislative election. The "*Orange Revolution*" in Ukraine started with its presidential election. On November 23, 2004, the incumbent Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich won the election. However, former Prime Minister and opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko and his supporters, as well as international observers, claimed that the election was rigged, leading to a serious crisis and the subsequent "*Orange Revolution*." The Ukrainian Supreme Court annulled the results and ordered a repeat of the second round. On January 10, 2005, Yushchenko was declared the winner. In the 2005 "*Tulip Revolution*" in Kyrgyzstan, President Askar Akayev was forced to flee the country when its parliamentary election was accused of being rigged.

Revolution attempts were prevented or cracked down upon in some nations, however. For example, the revolution in Uzbekistan was simply cracked down upon by its president Islam Karimov, leading to 169 deaths. In Belarus, President Alexander Lukashenko said that there would be no Western-inspired revolution in his country.

Over the years, the United States has played a significant role in these color revolutions by providing financial, diplomatic, and ideological aid to protesters. The Bush administration, for example, spent more than \$65 million in two years to aid political organizations and the opposition leadership in Ukraine (Kelley, 2004). And conversely, the United States cut \$18 million in financial assistance to Uzbekistan in reaction to the insufficient progress in implementing democratic reforms after the country cracked down on the revolution. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, the United States maintains the largest bilateral pro-democracy program in the country. The U.S. funneled about \$12 million in 2004 to finance civil society centers where activists and citizens received training. For example, the opposition newspaper in Kyrgyzstan was printed using a U.S. government-financed printing press that was operated by a U.S. organization (Smith, 2005).

Observers have suggested that the color revolutions are related to the geopolitical competition in which the United States and Europe are trying to encroach on Russia's traditional sphere of influence. In the Ukrainian case, the opposition leaders were supported by the United States, while the incumbent president was supported by Russia (Quinn-Judge & Zarakhovich, 2004). A Paris-based magazine observed

that "A huge geopolitical battle is being fought in Ukraine" (World Press, 2004). In the Belarusian case, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that Russia would oppose any efforts by the United States to undermine Lukashenko's government in Belarus. The Kremlin deemed the new democracies along the Russian border to be "American satellites" (Kuhner, 2005). Indeed, the geopolitical contest between the United States and Russia in the context of the color revolutions was perhaps best manifested when the Russian Foreign Ministry issued a warning against "forcibly democratizing" former Soviet states. Grigory Karasin, a Russian deputy foreign minister, explained: "We cannot agree with the methods of forcibly democratizing the whole former Soviet region, whether this is using colored revolutions or using political pressure through the media on existing authorities" (Russia Warns of Foreign Meddling, 2005).

### ***Media Role in the Promotion of Democracy***

The U.S. and Russian media extensively reported the Color Revolutions. For example, The U.S. media ran stories that portrayed U.S. democracy-promotion programs as having been the crucial factor in the former Soviet republics' transitions to democracy (Carothers, 2006). Some observed that Western media contributed to the Ukraine Orange Revolution by disseminating information about voters' rights and violations of those rights (McFaul, 2007). Although international reports in the U.S. media have dropped sharply in the past decade, they used prime time to report the Ukraine election in 2004 (Washington, 2004). When Color Revolution failed to occur in some of the former Soviet republics, some U.S. media outlets expressed disappointment (Pashayev, 2006). Cohen (2005) even argued that the U.S. news media seemed eager to turn Ukraine's presidential election into a new cold war with Russia. He noted that the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times*' editorials used such rhetoric as "disturbingly reminiscent of . . . 1947-48"; "Looking back, we may . . . see 2004 as the year when a new iron curtain descended across Europe"; and even mentioned "massive and malign Russian intervention in Ukraine" to help Moscow's favored candidate. On the part of the Russian media, it is noted that, for years before the 2004 election, the Russian state authorities had tried to weaken and divide the Ukrainian opposition, and Russian media outlets in Ukraine described Yushchenko as a U.S. puppet that is controlled by his wife, an American who is a former Department of Defense official (McFaul, 2007). Some Russian media portrayed the Ukrainian elections as another clash between the West and Russia over zones of influence in the post-Soviet space (Khineyko, 2005). Such observations, however, are anecdotal, and quantitative research is needed to examine the pattern of the media coverage.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

As a potential theory, framing attempts to explain how realities and meanings are constructed through communications (Entman, 1993; Reese, 2004; Myers, Klak, & Koehl, 1996). It suggests that news texts contain frames that are manifested by the presence or absence of sources of information, causality attribution, certain keywords, stock phrases, images, and sentences that provide thematic, reinforced clusters of facts or judgments (Entman, 1993; Vujakovic, 1998). These frames form persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection, emphasis, and exclusion (Gitlin, 1980; Hanson, 1995).

Entman (1993) proposed one of the most influential conceptualizations of framing in communication research. He suggested that the framing process essentially involves selection and

saliency, in which some aspects of a perceived reality are selected and made more salient, so as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation from the daily occurrences.

Past studies have identified a number of frames that commonly occur in news discourses: the conflict frame, the economic consequence frame, the human impact frame, the powerlessness frame, the morality frame, and the responsibility frame (Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; De Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001). For the purpose of this research, we predefined three news frames as variables to analyze in the coverage of news events, for good reasons. First, such a deductive approach could be easily replicated and could cope with large samples. Second, it could easily detect differences in framing between media (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). These frames are the sourcing frame; the responsibility frame; and the morality frame. They represent the major constructs of Entman's conceptualization of framing: problem definition; causal interpretation; and moral evaluation.

In regard to the sourcing frame, scholars agree that the presence or absence of certain news sources may lead to different definition of the nature of a news event. Journalists often rely on certain sources, such as a government's premises, to define the nature of an event or an issue. For example, Kim (2000) found that elite U.S. newspapers used news sources in a diametrical manner to report the Korean Kwangju and Chinese Tiananmen pro-democracy movements, concluding that the two similar movements were framed into events of different natures. More recently, Bennett and colleagues (2006) found that despite available sources to support a counter-framing of the Abu Ghraib prison story in terms of a policy of torture, the leading national news organizations did not produce a frame that strongly challenged the administration's claim that Abu Ghraib was an isolated case of abuse perpetrated by low-level soldiers.

The causality frame presents an issue in a way that attributes responsibility for its cause or its solution to a particular party (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The U.S. news media play an important role in shaping public understanding of who is responsible for causing or resolving a social problem (Iyengar, 1987). For example, Entman found that, in reporting the U.S. downing of the Iranian airliner, the U.S. media made attributions to the technological failure to reduce cognitive dissonance (1991). In reporting a U.S. citizen who was captured in Afghanistan together with the Taliban soldiers, *The New York Times* made various causal attributions trying to explain why the American young man had turned into a Taliban fighter (Zhang & Winfield, 2002). In sum, past research suggests that attribution of the roots of a problem is often present in news coverage (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

In terms of the morality frame, past literature indicates that the news discourse makes moral judgment through selection and repetition of certain keywords and stock phrases, as well as through sourcing. Journalists may also use quotations and inference to raise moral frames indirectly (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). For example, the U.S. media portrayed the downing of the Korean airplane by the Soviet Union as more important than the downing of the Iranian airplane by the United States. The former was called a technical problem, while the latter was portrayed as a moral outrage (Entman, 1991). Similarly, major U.S. media framed the transition of Hong Kong from British to Chinese sovereignty in terms of series of dominant ideological packages, such as "the United States is a new guardian of Hong Kong," and "Hong Kong will suffer from erosion of freedom and democracy" (Lee, Pan, Chan, & So, 2001).

### ***Media Framing and State Foreign Policy***

Gans (1979) suggests that availability and suitability are two criteria for journalists' source selection, which elite sources, such as government officials, meet better than the general public. In fact, many government officials are paid to handle media relations. They are in the center of the power system and are credited as authoritative and credible (Brown, Bybee, Weardon, & Straughan, 1987). In reporting national and international affairs, U.S. journalists heavily rely on governmental sources, because such sources are readily accessible to journalists, and their statements are deemed as authoritative and newsworthy (Hallin, Manoff, & Weddle, 1993). Journalists rely on Washington officials for analysis and interpretation of foreign news; they usually share and accept the official foreign policy premises and assumptions; and they rarely endorse the conduct of nations that are less than friendly toward the United States (Paletz & Entman, 1981). As a result, the U.S. government's framing of international issues is represented in the media.

News media in different countries may frame the same international issue in accordance to the geopolitical considerations of their countries. For example, Shoar (1985) compared *The New York Times'* and *The Times'* (UK) coverage of Iran from 1968 to 1978. The study showed that the coverage of each newspaper focused on topics and issues of significance to its own country's interests and concerns. Boaz (2006) examined news coverage of the Iraq war in news magazines of five nations and found that non-U.S. media framed the issues of war and foreign policy objectives by advocating a less aggressive, more internationalist, and more diplomatic foreign policy approach than the U.S. media. The author suggests that these distinctions reflect the widening gap between the United States and Europe on issues of geopolitics and global cooperation. Chung, Lessman and Fan (2008) examined coverage of North Korea's 2006 nuclear test by newspapers from the other five involved countries: the United States, China, South Korea, Japan, and Russia. They found that the U.S. newspaper demonstrated the strongest war journalism framing, the Chinese newspaper demonstrated a unanimous peace journalism framing, the Japanese and Russian newspapers demonstrated strong peace journalism framings, and the South Korean newspaper demonstrated the strongest neutral framing. Such frames respectively reflected the positions of the countries toward North Korea's nuclear test.

On the part of the U.S. media, numerous studies documented that U.S. foreign policy is a major factor affecting the U.S. news media's framing in their international reporting (Entman & Rojecki, 1993; Iyengar & Simon, 1993). In their propaganda model, Herman and Chomsky (1984) argued that the U.S. news media used an anti-communism filter to report international news during the Cold War. Iyengar and Simon (1993) found that the U.S. media, corresponding to the U.S. foreign policy, framed Saddam Hussein as "Hitler in the Middle East" during the Gulf war. Similarly, Kim Jong-II's North Korea is portrayed as a threat to the U.S. interests in East Asia (Heo, 2002). Keever (2004) found *The New York Times* framed the U.S. nuclear testing in the Pacific in a manner that stressed U.S. technological prowess, yet marginalized its impact on the Marshallese and their homelands. Berry (1990) observed that *The New York Times'* framing of the Bay of Pigs crisis was consistent with the U.S. administration's definition of those events. Graf and Willnat (2003) found that media framing of a foreign country may shape how audience members judge that nation. Berinsky and Kinder (2006) also found that the way media frame a

crisis affects what people remember, how they structure what they have remembered, and the opinions they express on the actions government should take.

As to the Russian media, a few studies showed that they frame international issues in a manner consistent with Russian foreign policy as well. For example, using framing analysis and content analysis, Khineyko (2005) examined six Russian print media outlets' coverage of the 2004 Ukraine presidential elections. The results showed that all selected media but the official Rossiiskaia gazeta were initially reluctant to express their support for Viktor Yanukovych until he came to support the official status of the Russian language. Throughout the same time period, Viktor Yushchenko was portrayed as the candidate backed by the West, and he was thereby considered automatically unacceptable to Russian interests. Furthermore, the Ukrainian elections were often presented not as an internal Ukrainian affair, but as another clash between the West and Russia over zones of influence in the post-Soviet space. Nikolaev (2005) examined the Russian television coverage of the Iraq War. He found four dominant frames: a frame of hypocrisy, a frame of low value of any partnership with the United States, a frame of geopolitical and global security, and a frame of the Russian security interests. The author argued that such framing relates to the media's concern regarding the U.S. foreign policy in relation to Russian interests.

#### ***Media and Journalism Practice in Russian-language Outlets***

Scholarship on Russian media since the 1990s has focused on how government and business power have eroded the editorial independence the media enjoyed in the early 1990s (Khineyko, 2005; Simons & Strovsky, 2006). Some have argued that Russian media exist in a unique environment, and that the Western concept of journalism may not apply to Russian media (Morrison, 1997), but some have challenged that argument by noting that Russian media are, in fact, very similar to the ones under the authoritarian regimes in Latin American countries, in which television is tightly controlled, but print media can be independently owned, relatively autonomous and highly critical of the regime (Krasnoboka & Brants, 2006). This observation is corroborated by Khineyko's (2005) research showing one of the Russian newspapers, *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, being very critical of the ruling elite. *The Moscow Times*, one of the newspapers in this study, was also observed to be critical of the government on the issues of censorship and Chechnya. Pasti (2005) found that there are two types of professional roles within contemporary Russian journalism: the old generation, which includes practitioners of the Soviet era, and the new generation, which is orientated toward the contemporary role of providing entertainment and perceives of journalism as a PR practice for the benefit of influential groups and people in politics and business. Although it is commonly observed that the line between fact and opinion in Russian journalism is very often blurred, Western journalism education programs have gradually entered Russia and collaborated with Russian universities to reform journalism programs that are rooted in the Soviet past. Professional journalists are also quietly lobbying for change in Russian journalism (Cardais, 2008; Morrison, 1994). Koikkalainen (2007) compared the main trends in Russian business press with international practices in terms of commercialization, differentiation of products, and professionalization. He found that certain trends in the Russian business press make it resemble other media systems in market economies.

### ***The New York Times & The Moscow Times***

In this paper, *The New York Times'* and *The Moscow Times'* coverage of the color revolutions are analyzed and compared to examine how the two newspapers perform in a context in which journalistic independence is valued and nationalism might be involved. While both publications pride themselves on being balanced in their coverage of events and issues, past research and literature have indicated that a newspaper cannot detach itself from the fact that it is also committed to the societal contexts it covers (See Donohue, Tichenor & Olien, 1995). Thus, investigating the coverage of these two newspapers allow us to speculate on coverage trends and news framing in American and Russian contexts.

*The New York Times* is one of the most prestigious newspapers in the United States. *The Moscow Times* is Russia's first and leading English-language daily newspaper. It covers political, business, and cultural news from within the former Soviet Union. Until 2005, the paper was owned by Independent Media, a Moscow-registered publishing house. In the same year, it was acquired by the Dutch-Finnish publishing group Sanoma. Although *The Moscow Times* does not share the same stature as *The New York Times* in Russia and in the world, the newspaper is observed to be a major publication in Russia that takes critical stances toward the government on issues ranging from the war in Chechnya to censorship in the media. Thus, in this sense, *The Moscow Times* shares a major journalistic virtue with *The New York Times*, making a comparative analysis of their journalistic practices valid.

### ***Measures & Research Questions***

#### ***The Sourcing Frame:***

Three types of sources are examined for each of the two newspapers, including respective U.S. and Russian government sources, sources supportive of the color revolution movements, and sources supportive of the government incumbents of the three countries.

In this analysis, U.S. government sources include the Department of State, the White House, and the Congress. Russian official sources include the Kremlin, the Russian Parliament, and the Foreign Ministry. The literature indicates that sourcing use is a significant indicator of how events are defined by the news media. For example, in analyzing the coverage of the U.S.-Nicaragua conflict in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, about half of the sources in both newspapers were government officials with a stake in the official view (Dickson, 1992). In the case of Russia, the Russian media have experienced more than a decade of turbulent liberalization. Although they were fraught with contractions and struggles, there has been an emerging trend of increased similarity between U.S. and Russian news media. For example, some leading liberal newspapers and TV stations have been observed to be "as robustly anti-administration as any free press in the world" (Ferguson, 1998). Meanwhile, some research also indicates that Russian journalists are less likely to rate investigative government claims as important as U.S. journalists (Wu, Weaver, & Johnson, 1996). However, many Russian news media remain the tools of powerful politicians (Zassoursky, 2004), and the Russian government has in recent years strengthened its control over the news media (Belin, 2002; Moretti, 2008).

The other two sources analyzed are the pro-movement sources and the pro-incumbents' sources. Pro-movement sources include those highlighting favorable aspects of the movement or those that criticize the governments and the incumbents (Kim, 2000) in Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Belarus. Pro-government sources include those highlighting favorable aspects of governments and their leaders in these three countries. Since three types of source are involved, and each of them has a probability of becoming the leading source, the following research questions are raised:

**RQ1.** In covering each of the three cases of Ukraine, Belarus, and Uzbekistan, are there differences among *The New York Times'* use of U.S. government sources, pro-movement sources, and pro-government sources?

**RQ2.** In covering each of the three cases of Ukraine, Belarus, and Uzbekistan, are there differences among *The Moscow Times'* use of Russian government sources, pro-movement sources, and pro-government sources?

### ***The Causality Frame:***

The news media not only report events, but also explain causes and make attributions. For example, in their analysis of media framing of European politics, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) found that the responsibility frame was predominant in news stories. They concluded that this was an indication of the importance and potential influence of political culture and context on the framing of issues in the news.

In this study, we combined the framing and the attribution theories. According to the attribution theory, when people explain why things happened, they tend to make two directions of attributions: internal attributions and external attributions. The former assigns causality to factors from within a person. That is, the person who is directly responsible for the event, while the latter assigns causality to an outside agent, which means an external force that is motivating the event (Heider, 1958). The theory suggests that people tend to make *fundamental attribution errors*. That is, if positive things occur to themselves or to people they like, they tend to make internal attributions; when negative things occur to themselves or people they like, they tend to make external attributions. In the same way, people tend to attribute external factors when positive things occur to people they do not like, and make internal attributions when negative things occur to people they do not like (ibid.).

Although the attribution theory explains individuals' judgments, the theory could be used to explain institutional-level responsibility judgments. For example, Rudolph (2003) observed that institutional context structures the assignment of political responsibility for policy outcomes. In the case of the color revolutions, we defined the causal attributions to the origin of the revolutions into internal and external causes. Internal causes would stress the factors within the regime or the countries, such as "the repressiveness of the regimes," "the lack of liberty and democracy," "the longing for democracy and liberty," and "the corruption of the regime." External attributions would stress such factors as foreign influence, as in "the U.S. pressure on the regimes," "the U.S. sponsorship of revolutions," "the U.S.

financial and diplomatic support of the activists," and "the U.S. strategy to promote democracy around the globe." Based on the above, two further research questions are raised:

**RQ3:** In *The New York Times'* coverage, are there any differences between the internal attributions and the external attributions in regard to the origin of the political movements under study?

**RQ4.** In *The Moscow Times'* coverage, are there any differences between the internal attributions and the external attributions in regard to the origin of the political movements under study?

Since the political movements involve geopolitical competition between the United States and Russia, we examine whether there might be a difference in the extent the two newspapers make external and internal attributions. Although both newspapers are considered practitioners of high-standard journalism, their reporting might be influenced by their political and social context, as Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) suggest. One further research question is raised:

**RQ5.** Are there any differences between the *The Moscow Times* and the *The New York Times* in terms of causal attributions regarding the origin of the political movements?

#### ***Moral Judgment Frame:***

Framing suggests that news discourses make moral judgments through the use of symbols that carry specific attitudes and positions (Gitlin, 1980). Such symbols include metaphors, exemplars, catch phrases, depictions, visual images, and appeals to principle (Lee, Pan, Chan, & So, 2001). Kim's three-valence categorization of the symbolic terms that media employ to describe the nature of political movement is adapted here: 1) favorable terms, such as "pro-democracy movement," "movement against a repressive regime," and "movement against corruption;" 2) neutral terms, such as "campaign," "rally," "incident," "event," "demonstration," or "movement;" and 3) unfavorable terms, such as "turmoil," "upheaval," "revolt," "riot," "unrest," and "violence." Further, symbolic terms regarding two aspects of the movements were also examined: a) media depiction of the movement, and b) media depiction of the government/incumbents' actions toward the movements. The following further two research questions are raised:

**RQ6:** Are there any differences in the use of favorable terms, neutral terms, and unfavorable terms to refer to the political movements in *The New York Times'* coverage of the political movements?

**RQ7.** Are there any differences in the use of favorable terms, neutral terms, and unfavorable terms to refer to the political movements in *The Moscow Times'* coverage of the political movements?

Again, because of the geopolitical competition between the United States and Russia, we explore whether *The Moscow Times* have used more negative terms than *The New York Times* to refer to these political movements. Thus, one further research question is raised.

**RQ8.** Does *The Moscow Times* use a less favorable tone than *The New York Times* to depict the movements?

### ***The Data Sets***

All of the data were collected from the Lexis-Nexis database by using the country ("Ukraine," or "Belarus," or "Uzbekistan") as the key word for searching the archive. The data sets allowed for the examination of news content of connected events produced in a certain period of time.

To examine the coverage of the Ukraine revolution, two sets of data were collected — one from *The New York Times* and another from *The Moscow Times*, between October 1, 2004 (right before the presidential election started), and February 1, 2005 (immediately after the challenger Yushchenko was declared the winner.) The search yielded 41 stories from the U.S. newspaper and 121 stories from the Russian newspaper. In total, 162 stories covering the Ukrainian revolution were analyzed.

To examine the coverage of the Belarusian revolution, two sets of data were collected — one from *The New York Times* and another from *The Moscow Times*, between October 1, 2004 (right before the country's constitutional referendum — On September 7, 2005, President Lukashenka announced that he would hold a national referendum in October that would allow him to run for a third term of office), and January 1, 2006 (about two months before the presidential election). The search yielded 29 stories from the U.S. newspaper and 81 stories from the Russian newspaper. In total, 110 stories covering the Belarusian revolution were analyzed.

To examine the coverage of the Uzbekistani revolution, two sets of data were collected — one from *The New York Times* and another from *The Moscow Times*, between October 1, 2004 (before the country's constitutional referendum in December 2004 [RFE, 2004]), and January 1, 2006 (Uzbekistan held a referendum on January 27, 2006). The search yielded 13 stories from the U.S. newspaper and 36 stories from the Russian newspaper. In total, 49 stories covering the Uzbekistani revolution were analyzed.

### ***Coding***

The unit of analysis was the paragraph of news stories (See Golan & Wanta, 2004; Kang, 2005; Werder & Golan, 2002). The paragraph was chosen, as it is one of the major units of analysis in content analysis (Weber, 1990; Hara, Bonk, & Angeli, 2000). Berg (2004) argues that, when analyzing text, the unit of analysis might be words, themes, characters, and paragraphs. Gray and colleagues (1995) suggest that the paragraph method is more appropriate than word count for drawing inferences from narrative statements, as meaning is commonly established with paragraphs rather than through the reporting of a word or sentence. Harris (2001) suggests that five units have been commonly used (word, word sense or phrase, sentence, paragraph, and document). Stemler (2001) argues that one way to define the recording

units syntactically is to use the separations created by the author, such as words, sentences, or paragraphs.

The literature indicates that the unit of analysis should be chosen so that it is consistent with the nature of the research question (Harris, 2001). A major research question of this study is to examine the frequency of the newspapers' sourcing use. In the United States, one industrial standard of news writing, as represented by the Associated Press Style, is to require journalists not to include quotes from different people within the same paragraph; if the same source is quoted for the second time, it should be in a separate paragraph. In addition, the rule of thumb to break a paragraph is that each paragraph should make only one point (Rich, 2007). The AP style is widely followed by journalists in other parts of the world, including the news media in Russia. Since, in this study, we primarily examine the frequency of sourcing use instead of location of the source, we argue that the use of the paragraph as a unit of analysis is justified. This practice allowed us to analyze the building blocks of the coverage instead of making summary judgments of an entire news story by coding it as positive or negative.

Overall, 321 stories were identified, yielding a total of 5,279 paragraphs that were content analyzed for this study (Ukraine: 2,476 paragraphs; Uzbekistan: 1,193 paragraphs; Belarus: 1,610 paragraphs). All paragraphs were measured using five variables: newspaper, country, source, causal attributions to the origin of the revolutions, and valence of symbolic terms.

The newspaper variable included two categories: *The New York Times* and *The Moscow Times*. The country variable included three categories: Ukraine, Belarus, and Uzbekistan. The source variable included six categories: U.S. government sources (such as Congress/senator/Pentagon/Department of State, the White House, and other governmental officials); Russian government sources (such as Putin, Duma, and Russian officials); pro-movement sources (such as sources that highlighted favorable aspects of the movement in question, or those that criticize the governments and incumbents of Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, or Belarus); pro-government and -incumbents sources (such as those highlighting favorable aspects of a government and its leaders); other (such as neutral sources and sources whose tendency is not clear); and non-applicable.

Each paragraph was also coded for causal attributions to the origin of the revolution in question. Categories included the following: internal attributions (such as the lack of liberty and democracy, corruption, fraud in elections, repressive regimes, and a dislike of Russian influence); external attributions (such as the U.S. sponsorship and support of the revolution, the U.S. strategy to promote democracy around the globe, the U.S. attempt to build oil pipe in the region, and reference to the Russo-American geopolitical competition); and non-applicable.

Regarding the valence of symbolic terms, each paragraph was coded for the following categories: favorable terms (such as a pro-democracy movement, a movement against a repressive regime, or a movement against corruption); neutral terms (such as campaign, rally, incident, event, demonstration, or movement); unfavorable terms (such as turmoil, upheaval, revolt, riot, unrest, or violence); and non-applicable terms.

Guidelines were used to provide a systematic way in which all paragraphs were coded. Using a sub-sample of 231 paragraphs from *The New York Times* (10% of the NYT total) and 300 paragraphs from *The Moscow Times* (10.1% of the MT total), reliability estimates for each category were calculated using Scott's pi (See Scott, 1955) as follows: Newspaper 100%; Country 100%; Source 96%; Causal attributions to origin of revolutions 94%; and Valence of symbolic terms 96%. The overall content was then analyzed, and the percentages were calculated.

## Results

### Sourcing:

RQ1 asks whether there are differences in *The New York Times'* use of U.S. government sources, pro-movement sources, and pro-government sources. As shown in Table 1, in the Ukrainian case, more pro-movement sources (50%) were used than U.S. government sources (28.1%) or pro-incumbent sources (21.0%). The pattern is the same for Uzbekistan, with more pro-movement sources used (44.8%) than U.S. government sources (32.6%) or pro-incumbent sources (22.6%). For the Belarusian case, pro-movement sources and U.S. government sources were used approximately equally (36.0% and 38.1%, respectively), and pro-incumbent sources were used the least (25.9%).

**Table 1.** Percentages of sources used in the coverage of colored revolutions in Ukraine, Belarus, and Uzbekistan by *The New York Times* (N = 559).

	U.S. Gov.	Pro-movement	Pro-incumbent	N
<b>Ukraine</b>	28.1%	50.0%	21.0%	32
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	32.6%	44.8%	22.6%	288
<b>Belarus</b>	38.1%	36.0%	25.9%	239

RQ2 asks whether there are differences in *The Moscow Time's* use of Russian government sources, pro-movement sources, and pro-government sources. As shown in Table 2, in the Ukrainian case, more pro-movement sources were used (74.3%) than Russian government sources and pro-incumbent sources (11.9% and 13.9%, respectively). In the Uzbekistani case, Russian government and pro-incumbent sources were used the most (31.4% and 51.0%, respectively), while the pro-movement sources were used the least (17.6%). In the Belarusian case, Russian government sources were used the

most (50.0%), followed by pro-movement sources (40.0%). Pro-incumbent sources were used the least (10.0%).

**Table 2.** Percentages of sources used in the coverage of colored revolutions in Ukraine, Belarus, and Uzbekistan by *The Moscow Times* (N = 172).

<b>Russian</b>	<b>Gov.</b>	<b>Pro-movement</b>	<b>Pro-incumbent</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Ukraine</b>	11.9%	74.3%	13.9%	101
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	31.4%	17.6%	51.0%	51
<b>Belarus</b>	50.0%	40.0%	10.0%	20

#### ***Attribution to Origin of the Colored Revolution***

RQ3 asks whether there are differences between the internal attributions and the external attributions in regard to the origin of the political movements in *The New York Times'* coverage. Data analysis indicated *The New York Times* made more internal attributions (77.7%) than external attributions (22.3%).

RQ4 asks whether there are differences between the internal attributions and the external attributions in regard to the origin of the political movements in *The Moscow Times'* coverage. Data analysis indicated that, similar to *The New York Times*, *The Moscow Times* made more internal attributions (66.7%) than external attributions (33.3%).

RQ5 asks whether there any differences between *The Moscow Times* and the *The New York Times* in terms of causal attributions regarding the origin of the political movements. Data analysis indicated that *The New York Times* made more internal attributions than *The Moscow Times*, while *The Moscow Times* made more external attributions than *The New York Times*.

**Table 3.** *The New York Times'* and *The Moscow Times'* causality attribution to the origin of the colored revolutions (N = 343).

	Internal attribution	External attribution	N
NYT	77.7%	22.3%	211
MT	66.7%	33.3%	132

### ***The Media & Moral Judgment***

RQ6 asks whether there are differences in the use of favorable terms, neutral terms, and unfavorable terms to refer to the political movements in *The New York Times'* coverage. Results show that *The New York Times* used more favorable terms (44.6%) than neutral terms (31.9%), and more neutral terms than negative terms (23.5%) to depict the movements.

RQ7 asks whether there are differences in the use of favorable terms, neutral terms, and unfavorable terms to refer to the political movements in *The Moscow Times'* coverage. Results show that the newspaper used more neutral terms (50.0%) than negative terms (36.5%), and more neutral terms than favorable terms (13.5%) to depict the movements.

RQ8 asks whether *The Moscow Times* used a less favorable tone than *The New York Times* to depict the movements. Results showed that *The New York Times* used more favorable symbolic terms to refer to the pro-democracy protestors than *The Moscow Times*, and *The Moscow Times* used more unfavorable symbolic terms than *The New York Times*. In addition, *The Moscow Times* used more neutral terms to refer to the protestors than *The New York Times*.

**Table 4.** Comparing percentages of symbolic terms toward the colored revolutions in *The New York Times* & *The Moscow Times* (N = 407).

	<i>The New York Times</i>	<i>The Moscow Times</i>
<b>Favorable</b>	44.6%	13.5 %
<b>Neutral</b>	31.9%	50.0 %
<b>Unfavorable</b>	23.5%	36.5 %
<b>N</b>	251	156

### **Discussion**

This research compared the coverage of the political movements (or the *color revolutions*) in three former Soviet republics by *The New York Times* and *The Moscow Times*. Analysis was based upon use of sources, causal attribution, and valence of the symbolic terms. By and large, our findings indicate that the two newspapers shared similarities, yet at the same time, differed in some important aspects of reporting the political movements in Ukraine, Belarus, and Uzbekistan.

*The New York Times* used more pro-movement sources than pro-incumbent sources in all three cases, and more U.S. government sources in the case of Belarus. The U.S. newspaper also used more favorable symbolic terms than neutral and unfavorable terms to depict the protesters. These results are a clear indication of the newspaper's pro-movements position and its identification with the U.S. foreign policy toward the color revolutions.

*The Moscow Times*, on the other hand, used more unfavorable symbolic terms than favorable symbolic terms to depict the protesters, indicating that the Russian newspaper did not endorse these political movements. This is corroborated by the case of Uzbekistan, where the political movement was cracked down upon by the government. The newspaper used more Russian government sources and more pro-incumbent sources, while pro-movement sources were used the least. In the case of Belarus, where the revolution was foiled, and the incumbent in the government was fully supported by Russia, the newspaper used more Russian government sources.

Meanwhile, it is important to note that our findings showed mixed results for *The Moscow Times*. In the Belarusian case, for example, the newspaper used more pro-movement sources than the pro-

incumbent sources, showing its dislike of the authoritative regime in Belarus. On April 27, 2005, an article in the Russian newspaper reported: "Lukashenko's Belarus looks like the Soviet Union 40 years ago. It is the land of the almighty KGB, where the president's opponents disappear without a trace . . . Belarus is a huge customs black hole" (Latynina 2005).

In the case of Ukraine, the newspaper used more pro-movement sources than pro-incumbent sources. Such mixed results are probably a reflection of the dilemma that the Russian newspaper faces. On one hand, as an independent newspaper that has been critical of the government's censorship of the press, the newspaper has continued to pursue journalistic values, such as independence, liberalization, and democratization. On the other hand, its reliance on the Russian government sources and pro-incumbent sources might be an indication of its nationalistic concern over the destiny of "Mother Russia," namely the geopolitical pressure that Russia has faced during these color revolutions. The results for causality frames seem to reflect this concern. Indeed, our findings indicated that, while both *The New York Times* and *The Moscow Times* used more internal causes than external causes regarding the origin of the political movements, *The Moscow Times* made more external attributions than *The New York Times*, showing concern with the U.S. role in the former Soviet republics. For example, on May 16, 2005, the Russian newspaper reported: "NGOs were a major channel for Western involvement in the political upheavals that replaced pro-Moscow presidents with Western-friendly leaders in Georgia in 2003 and in Ukraine last year" (Abdullaev, 2005a).

The newspaper further showed its distaste for the protesters by using such terms as "bad boys" and "upheavals." It quoted a Russian official on July 25, 2005, saying, "A revolution does not bring any happiness" (Abdullaev, 2005b). The reporting also indicated geographical concern regarding the Russian national interest. For example, on April 27, 2005, a news story in *The Moscow Times* reported, "Lukashenko rudely accused Russia of trying to absorb Belarus . . . Russia keeps making the same mistakes" by supporting the wrong leaders (Latynina 2005); thus implying that the Russian government should reconsider its policy regarding these countries. Moreover, *The Moscow Times* was critical of Lukashenko, probably because the Russian government did not support him. President Putin criticized Lukashenko for "stifling dissent and suppressing human rights," although such criticism from a close ally is rare (Myers, 2005a). In this sense, *The Moscow Times* identified with the Russian government's position toward the political movements.

For *The New York Times*, however, our findings did not show a similar ambivalence. For example, on May 8, 2005, the U.S. newspaper reported that "the United States was behind revolutionary change in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan" (Bumiller, 2005). The newspaper repeatedly quoted U.S. officials and dubbed Belarus "the last dictatorship in Europe" that is "backed by Mr. Putin." On July 28, 2005, it reported that the regime is a "rigidly centralized post-Soviet state that has been sharply criticized by the West" (Chivers, 2005). And on July 29, 2005, it referred to Lukashenko as an "authoritative president" (Myers, 2005b). It dubbed the protesters a "rights body" and "dissidents," and the organizers as "opposition leaders."

In summary, the findings of this study revealed a clear, pro-movement pattern in *The New York Times'* reporting. The U.S. newspaper used more pro-movement sources than pro-incumbent sources.

Overall, *The New York Times* depicted the protesters favorably and identified with the U.S. foreign policy by using more U.S. government sources. *The Moscow Times*, on the other hand, treated protesters in an unfavorable manner, and in some cases, appeared to identify with the Russian government and the incumbents in these three countries. The two newspapers both stressed more on the internal causes than the external causes of these political movements, but *The Moscow Times* stressed more on external attributions than *The New York Times*, indicating its concern over Russian interests.

Overall, our findings largely support the literature on media reporting and state foreign policy. Methodologically, this research is an attempt to bridge content analysis and framing analysis. However, answering any questions as to why the media performed as they did is beyond the scope of this study. Several explanations based on government public relations, sourcing restraints of the media organizations, and/or media patriotism are plausible. That said, it should be noted that media production is a social process, and that framing exists in the entire communication process, including the communicator, text, audience, and culture. Therefore, one should be careful when interpreting the results of this study, particularly in terms of the findings focusing on causality attributions and moral judgment, which may bear implications of purposeful manipulation. Other approaches, such as rhetorical analysis, might reveal more patterns in media coverage. In addition, as an English language newspaper, *The Moscow Times* may not be typical of Russian journalistic practice. Future studies should include a larger number of national newspapers and should continue to systematically examine the coverage of the color revolutions over time to allow more decisive conclusions about the trends observed here.



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