

DOSSIER

UNDER FIRE:

news coverage of the Russian side of the war in Ukraine as combat. The case of Bruno Amaral de Carvalho



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ABSTRACT – Based on the case of freelance journalist Bruno Amaral de Carvalho, we identify and analyze the two types of battles he was involved in to guarantee coverage of the war in Ukraine for CNN Portugal, from the Russian side, between March and October 2022. As well as being involved in the information war that, since 2014, has shaped two metanarrative fields in relation to Ukraine, the journalist, the only one working on this side of the war for the Portuguese media in the period under analysis, had to combat the strategies of symbolic degradation directed at him by politicians and journalists, in the form of attacks on his character and independence. Our study collects the content produced by Bruno Amaral de Carvalho for CNN Portugal, classifying it according to these metanarrative fields, and breaks down and analyzes the process of symbolic degradation that forced the journalist into this double combat.

Key words: Metanarratives. Journalism. Propaganda. Information war. Symbolic degradation.

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DEBAIXO DE FOGO: a cobertura jornalística do lado russo da guerra na Ucrânia como combate. O caso de Bruno Amaral de Carvalho

RESUMO – Partindo do caso do jornalista freelancer Bruno Amaral de Carvalho, identificamos e analisamos os dois tipos de combates em que se envolveu para garantir a cobertura da guerra da Ucrânia, para a CNN Portugal, a partir do lado russo, entre março e outubro de 2022. Além de se envolver na guerra de informação que, desde 2014, configurou dois campos metanarrativos relativamente à Ucrânia, o jornalista, o único a trabalhar desse lado da guerra para os média portugueses no período em análise, teve de combater as estratégias de degradação simbólica que lhe foram dirigidas por políticos e jornalistas, sob a forma de ataques ao caráter e à independência. O estudo recolhe os conteúdos produzidos por Bruno Amaral de Carvalho para a CNN Portugal, classificando-os de acordo com esses campos metanarrativos, e faz a decomposição e análise ao processo de degradação simbólica que obrigou o jornalista a esse duplo combate.

Palavras-chave: Metanarrativas. Jornalismo. Propaganda. Guerra de informação. Degradação simbólica.

BAJO EL FUEGO: la cobertura periodística del lado ruso en la guerra de Ucrania como combate. El caso de Bruno Amaral de Carvalho

RESUMEN – A partir del caso del periodista freelance Bruno Amaral de Carvalho, identificamos y analizamos los dos tipos de batallas en las que estuvo involucrado para garantizar la cobertura de la guerra en Ucrania para CNN Portugal, desde el lado ruso, entre marzo y octubre de 2022. Además de estar implicado en la guerra informativa que, desde 2014, ha configurado dos campos metanarrativos en relación con Ucrania, el periodista, el único que trabajaba en este lado de la guerra para los medios portugueses en el período analizado, tuvo que combatir las estrategias de degradación simbólica dirigidas contra él por políticos y periodistas, en forma de ataques a su carácter e independencia. El estudio recoge los contenidos producidos por Bruno Amaral de Carvalho para CNN Portugal, clasificándolos según estos campos metanarrativos, y desmenuza y analiza el proceso de degradación simbólica que obligó al periodista a este doble combate.

Palabras clave: Metanarrativas. Periodismo. Propaganda. Guerra informativa. Degradación simbólica.

1 Introduction

For more than half a year, between March and October 2022, freelance reporter Bruno Amaral de Carvalho was the only Portuguese journalist to regularly send journalistic reports from the separatist and Russian side of the Ukrainian war, and was, as he himself said at one point¹, the only journalist working for Western media in these territories. He worked from various cities in the Donbas, in particular, Donetsk, where he maintained his logistical base, Mariupol and Lugansk.

Over the course of these months, the journalist found himself called into combat on two major fronts, the analysis of which is at the heart of this article, constituting its problematizing core and directly influencing the structure we have adopted. The work of a reporter in a war scenario would be enough to constitute it as combat, given its specific characteristics and conditions. In the case of Bruno Amaral de Carvalho, in addition to the combat that is intrinsic to journalistic production, he had to face the numerous public manifestations on his personal, professional, and political figure, some of which were supportive, by his followers on digital social networks, but also many attempts at detraction and symbolic degradation, initiated at the highest level of the state apparatus, by government officials and other members of the political class, and by media organizations in Portugal, as well as comments from readers and viewers².

These attacks took place even though the journalist's work was limited, for the most part, to reporting notes and direct observations on the ground, prudently pointing out the conditions in which each story was carried out – namely whether he was traveling alone or accompanied by Russian or separatist troops (Carvalho, 2022a) – which happened on rare occasions. The reports he published were essentially testimonial in nature, mostly calling on civilian witnesses to the events, or unedited live reports (the so-called live on tape³). In his work, the journalist always quotes the sources of the information he did not witness. In addition to his personal computer, his working tool was a smartphone. These findings therefore suggest, as a hypothesis, that Bruno Amaral de Carvalho's struggle was less at the level of journalistic production *per se*, with the difficulties and constraints of this being assumed as *a priori* conditions that always limit the work of war reporters but do not annul the conditions of objectivity of journalistic reporting, and more at the level of an individual struggle against the hegemonization of a narrative, without contradiction or counterpoint, around the war.

Methodologically, this research falls within the field of discourse and narrative analysis, which immediately takes us back to a qualitative research paradigm, rather than what would be assumed in content analysis, where quantitative elements would predominate. In this way, the analyzed *corpus* is not required to be extensively representative. It does, however, imply a clear selection criterion. The choice was to centre the first part of the analysis on a set of discursive and factual actions directed against Bruno Amaral de Carvalho and his

work, by public personalities and not around criticism coming from the anonymous public, via social networks or others. As in Carvalho's case, much of the work of corporate reporters operating from the Kyiv side has been the subject of insults, affronts, or criticism from anonymous people. But this is not our analytical domain, nor was this the methodological principle of selection chosen here.

In the second part of the analysis, corresponding to the intrinsically journalistic combat, Bruno Amaral de Carvalho's television work is subjected to narrative analysis, dissecting all the 22 reports broadcast by the reporter on CNN Portugal, according to the categorical oppositions proposed, since 2014, by a group of authors from the fields of social psychology, political science, and communication sciences (Katchanovski, 2016; Korostelina, 2014; Koval et al., 2022; Lazarenko, 2018; Smoor, 2017), who identify the existence in Ukraine of two poles difficult to reconcile and systematized in this work as the Ukrainian metanarrative field and the Russian metanarrative field.

It is from this analytical-methodological crossroads that we propose to question and explore the hypothesis formulated above, seeking to answer two of the questions posed by Bruno Amaral de Carvalho's solitary work on the Russian side of the war in Ukraine: i) To what extent can the work of reporter Bruno Amaral de Carvalho be thought of as combat journalism? ii) What specific conditions define combat journalism in the context of war reporting and information wars in the journalistic field?

2 Killing the messenger: symbolic degradation and the information wars

The invasion of Iraq in 1991 went down in the history of the relationship between journalism, war, and propaganda as the moment of the first "live war". With enthusiastic frivolity, the Western media converged on Kuwait and Baghdad while filling their screens with the green streak of ammunition fired during the night, as if it were a video game. Euphemisms such as "collateral damage", "smart weapons" or "surgical bombing" entered the military propaganda lexicon of the time. The newsrooms of big corporate media organizations adopted a new language to designate the wars promoted by the power systems to which they were affiliated. In addition to the journalists

“embedded” in the military forces, who accept the prior censorship of their stories by the military authority and report under the control of the military commands without duly pointing it out, the one-sided bias of pseudo-journalistic reports has taken hold, as a given fact to the point of naturalization (Allan & Zelizer, 2004; Hedges, 2022; Kellner, 2008; McLaughlin, 2016; Miller, 2004; C. S. Pereira, 2005).

It could be suggested that this has to do with a complex set of causal factors that are interconnected in order to explain it. Firstly, the global dimension of telecommunications through the new information and communication technologies: with the concentration of the major sources producing information content on a global scale, mostly based in the major Western powers, as is the case with the physical structures that support the Internet; the concentration of national media companies, which are heavily cartelized and have very close links to political, economic, cultural, and military decision-making centers. Another factor could be the tendency for power to be concentrated in the leadership centers of the big corporate media, while the precarious condition of grassroots journalists intensifies, establishing power and authoritarianism within very restricted newsrooms with strict political and labour control, dictated by this stratification. Also, we see the formation, in the specific case of the international war press, of what appears to be a “circus” of correspondents traveling and reporting from war to war, generating a professional and political group culture (Fino, 2003).

At the level of military-political power, new concepts such as the so-called right of “humanitarian intervention”⁴ – which has no grounds in international law but was applied to cases such as Yugoslavia in 1991 – have opened precedents for attitudes that were previously implausible in terms of the democratic nature of the political behaviour of nations and institutions. The mobilization of journalists under the figure of the embedded, in Iraq in 2003, but also the construction of indeterminate and exceptional political figures such as the one of the “enemy combatant”, which allowed the capture of people considered to be enemies without applying the status of prisoner of war and the respective conventions, during the so-called “Endless War on Terrorism”. These aspects of “lawfare”, a legal variant of “warfare”, or the so-called “criminal law of the enemy”, are both causes and expressions of a vast rearrangement of war’s doctrine and its extension to all areas of human life, processed in terms of the mobilization of all available military and civilian resources, including

digital platforms or “cyberwar”. This globalization of war and its concepts is conceptually understood by the term “hybrid war” (Bilal, 2021; Korybko, (2018); Monaghan et al., 2019; Puyvelde, 2015).

Figure 1

The concept of hybrid warfare



Source: Sazonov et al. (2017)

In terms of attacks on journalism, the alignments of the major media corporations with the economic and military-political powers of which they are a part have severely exposed any professional who tries to escape the manufacture of hegemonic propaganda. The paradigmatic case is that of Peter Arnett, Pulitzer Prize winner for his coverage of the Vietnam war, who, during the first invasion of Iraq in 1991, was stationed in Baghdad at the service of CNN, from where he was the first to report the beginning of the attacks, in the “first live war”. During the second attack on Iraq in 2003, Arnett was a dissenting voice. On March 31st, he gave an interview to the Iraqi state television in which he questioned the planning of the US military campaign and gave his opinion on the determination of Saddam Hussein’s troops to fight. Less than 24 hours later, he was sacked from NBC television. The fact that he had given the interview and expressed his point of view was considered a “form of reverence” to the enemy, and he was called “crazy” by a Republican congresswoman and “absurd” by a Democratic congressman, among many other insults aimed at denouncing the behaviour of “aiding and comforting the enemy” (“US network sacks top journalist” 2003).

His hiring on the following day by the “popular” British newspaper Daily Mirror would be used to denigrate the journalist’s image, having moved from an international television network to a tabloid newspaper. Illustrative of this operation to symbolically degrade the figure of the outlawed journalist, the Sydney Morning Herald story on the subject was titled: “Sacked Arnett gets job on anti-war tabloid” (2003). Symbolic degradation has not replaced physical attacks on journalists who don’t follow propaganda directives, on all sides of the conflicts, but it has been added to in an equally grievous way, as Tom Heenan (2010) has shown, concerning the long process to which Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett was subjected, even after his death. The reporter who, in September 1945, for the first time denounced the effects of radioactivity, based on his reports from Hiroshima in the month following the atomic bombing, would later be accused of being a “communist”, a “perverse Stalinist” and a “traitor” for his work “on the other side” of the Korean War (Heenan, 2010, pp. 215-216).

The concept of symbolic degradation emerges from the Labelling Theory (Becker, 1997), as well as the notions of macro-structures of meaning and ideological square model in critical discourse analysis (CDA), proposed by Teun van Dijk (2005). Thus, discursive formulations and strategies are understood to be symbolically degrading when, starting from a superior force of enunciation, they aim to delegitimize the interventions, ideas, or people they target. In the case under analysis here, we are talking about discursive and factual actions developed by public figures with a long media presence, government officials, and other enunciators who, sharing the hegemonic narrative about the post-February 2022 part of the war events in Ukraine, resorted to labelling strategy, adding to the adversarial discourse towards the journalist practical and concrete actions of their “denunciation”, both publicly and directed at media business entities for which the reporter Bruno Amaral de Carvalho worked (see below).

It is no coincidence that the action of symbolic degradation comes from the predominant circles of opinion on the conflict. As Howard Becker (1997, p. 169) points out, “the fact that moral crusades are typically dominated by the highest levels of the social structure means that the power that derives from the legitimacy of their moral position is complemented by the power that derives from their superior social position”. In this case, a double position of

superior status deriving from the positions and the established and recognized visibility of the promoters of the symbolic degradation operation, which configure them in their own eyes, and in the eyes of others, as legitimate, in the face of the illegitimate.

According to Watson & Hill's (2012, p. 153) reading, Becker's work sheds light on the role that "socially powerful groups and individuals play in defining acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour through labelling processes". Interpreting Becker's notion of "moral entrepreneurs", these authors emphasize how they "are especially capable of shaping, through the mass media, new images of deviance and new definitions of social problems". The predicate that gives such individuals or groups this special ability to define what is acceptable is none other than legitimacy⁵.

An unstable matter, an element of permanent dispute, the notion of legitimacy is linked to that of authority which, in turn, is based on procedures for building "unequal trust between two bodies of different status", as emphasized by Boudon and Bourricault, cited in Amossy (2022, p. 7), an author who picks up on the precision introduced by Marc Angenot, to whom, when faced with the inability to find an answer to a situation, the individual "turns to someone who has the knowledge, skills, and experience to justify this referral". According to Angenot, trust consists of an audience, in the broad sense, that "believes that the subject of the enunciation is reliable and can be trusted" (Amossy, 2022, p. 8). For Ruth Amossy (2022, p. 7), what is at stake when talking about the legitimacy (or authority) of a person, institution, or message, rather than a status, is the very process of its discursive construction. For this researcher in Argumentation Theory, the "preponderance of the institutional status that gives an individual their legitimacy and ensures that it is recognized by the public" can and should be emphasized.

It is therefore understandable that what we refer to here as symbolic degradation is precisely a process of this nature, directed through its labelling against a journalist's credibility, against the possibility of him being recognized by the audience as credible, directed, in short, at creating suspicion around his voice. Particularly, as is the case, with a freelance journalist who doesn't have the conventional weight of credibility inherent to the affiliation with a media institution.

In the field of strategic communication, symbolic degradation has been articulated as character assassination (Icks,

2020; Samoilenko, 2019; Shiraev et al., 2021). Authors in the field emphasize precisely its strategic nature, which, given the analytical association between war journalism and propaganda that this article explores, cannot help but call for a reflection on the propaganda model proposed by economist Edward Herman and linguist Noam Chomsky. In 1988, and subsequent editions of their book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Herman and Chomsky established a model of five filters that information must pass through in order to become news.

Bearing in mind the analytical object of this work, we are particularly interested in the fourth and fifth filters, that is, the filter of pressure group criticism, or *flak* (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, pp. 26-28) and the ideological filter of anti-communism (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, pp. 29-31). Herman and Chomsky had already proposed pressure as a disciplinary and punitive mechanism. Authors who have been working on updating the model (MacLeod, 2019a; Zollmann, 2019) argue that it can be exercised precisely through character attack campaigns. The same authors also agree that the fifth filter, the ideological filter of anti-communism, should be scientifically recovered, even if it is used to generate fear of international terrorism from Russia.

In an article in which he studies the relationship between the fourth and fifth filters, about the effects of the Russiagate affair on US politics, Alan MacLeod (2019b, p. 74) states that the “anti-Russian filter would not have the power and potency that it has without the deep levels of resentment, fear and hostility towards the USSR built up throughout the Cold War”. In the same article, McLeod mentions the epithets of “Russian agent”, “Kremlin agent”, “Putin’s puppet”, or “Putinist” that were already being applied in the public sphere to anyone who expressed doubts about the veracity of the news that, at the time, alleged direct intervention by the Kremlin in the 2016 US presidential elections, which resulted in the election of Donald Trump.

3 Under fire: the attacks on Bruno Amaral de Carvalho

It is already from Moscow, from where he will head to the Donbas controlled by Russian and separatist forces on 28/03/2022, that Bruno Amaral de Carvalho testifies on his Telegram channel: “(...)

it's hard not to be aware of what's going on in Ukraine, as you've read in some Western media. I opened CNN, The Guardian, El País, and Público with no problem. However, the BBC website is blocked by the authorities"⁶. The journalist attaches images of various Western media outlets' pages available in Russia⁷. This early testimony is related to one of the battles in which the journalist will be actively involved, which he reports on his personal social media channels Telegram, Twitter, and Facebook: the fight for information on the side of the war whose media, exactly one month earlier, had been banned in Europe by express order of the European Union.

Just three days after the start of the Russian military intervention, on 27/02/2022, the president of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen, declared, as quoted by the Politico website, that "we will ban the Kremlin's media machine in the EU. The state-owned Russia Today, Sputnik and their subsidiaries will no longer be able to spread their lies to justify Putin's war", adding that "we are developing instruments to ban their toxic and harmful disinformation in Europe" (Kayali, 2022). In the months that followed, the European Union added a series of economic sanctions to the ban, aimed at making it harder for Russian media and their journalists to operate in Europe.

When Bruno Amaral de Carvalho arrived in Lugansk on the evening of 28/03/2022, after "a 15-hour journey"⁸ from Russia, the war had already fully taken hold in the European information space, defining antagonistic camps there too. If, on the one hand, Russian media broadcasters were banned, on the other, European organizations such as International Media Support (IMS), whose main sources of funding are governments and state agencies from countries not directly involved in the war, such as Sweden (38%), Denmark (28%) and Norway (12%), and the European Union (10%) ("Financial overview 2022", 2022), or supported by large US PR agencies, such as the Ukrainian PR Army, had drawn up a set of guidelines in association with Ukrainian journalists ("Open letter to media professionals who cover Russia's invasion of Ukraine", 2022; Petryk & Kulchevych, 2022). Released on 24/03/2022, in the form of war coverage manuals, they stated that "Russia has been attacking our core values of truthful, fact-driven and honest reporting through continuous disinformation campaigns", actions that end up "exacerbating existing divisions in society", by "capitalizing on misrepresentations or misunderstandings over language, history

and politics” (“Open letter to media professionals who cover Russia’s invasion of Ukraine”, 2022, pp. 2-3).

These guidelines include aspects such as the need to correct “common mistakes” in language such as labelling the war as a “crisis”, “conflict” or “military operation”, replacing them with notions such as “Russia’s war in Ukraine”, “Russia’s invasion of Ukraine”, or “Russian aggression”. The open letter to Western journalists drawn up by IMS warns, for example, of a “common mistake” made by the media, that of presenting the Russian and Ukrainian perspectives as “identical perspectives” when, the authors warn, “the positions of the Russians are based on lies, propaganda and denial of the existence of Ukraine as a state and as a nation” (“Open letter to media professionals who cover Russia’s invasion of Ukraine”, 2022). Finally, as well as calling for the preferential use of “Ukrainian experts” and not “international experts on Russia and Ukraine” as sources of information, the authors draw attention to “the narrative that characterizes the war as a proxy war between the Western world and Russia”, based on the assumption of a “NATO expansion to the east”, thus ignoring the “democratic voice” of the Ukrainians. This set of guidelines is in line with the guidelines for journalists issued by the Ukrainian government (“For media”, 2022), which are also reflected in the Ukrainian PR Army’s war coverage manual, which many Western journalists began working with when they arrived on the Ukrainian side of the theatre of operations⁹. It is also aligned, as we will see in this research, with the Ukrainian metanarrative field, formed and consolidated from 2014 onwards in Ukraine (Katchanovski, 2016; Korostelina, 2014; Koval et al., 2022; Lazarenko, 2018; Smoor, 2017).

It was against this backdrop of information warfare that Bruno Amaral de Carvalho arrived in Donbas at the end of March 2022. The reporter’s presence on the separatist and Russian side of the war immediately attracted the attention of Portuguese journalists, commentators, and politicians. His first piece, in the newspaper *Público* (Carvalho, 2022c), led journalist and opinion-maker Fernanda Cândia to say the very next day, in a post on Twitter, that she was “astonished that *Público* is publishing reports by someone whose pro-Russian position is absolutely clear” (figure 2), demanding an explanation from the newspaper.

Figure 2

Post by Fernanda Cândia



Source: Twitter, 01/04/2022

In a text that he would publish a few months later on his Facebook page¹⁰, and taking advantage of the fact that Público's Ombudsman, Barata-Feyo, had criticized, in his column of 20/08/2022, the newspaper's informative silence about an Amnesty International report accusing Ukraine of committing war crimes, Bruno Amaral de Carvalho would explain that "this one-sided coverage is an editorial choice that Público's management decided to make in April when it gave up being the only newspaper to have a reporter on the other side of the war. Before I arrived in Donbas in March, there was a verbal agreement to sell three features to Público. Only one ever saw the light of day". In the same Facebook post, he explains that as soon as he published the first feature, "there was internal and external pressure not to publish any more of my stories. Inside and outside Público's management, including journalists from other media and influential political figures, they did everything they could to prevent plural coverage of the conflict".

In fact, as soon as he began publishing work on CNN Portugal a few days after Público's feature, Bruno Amaral de Carvalho once again saw his work and his status as an independent journalist questioned, by journalists but also by politicians, despite the television station's support, in an editorial signed by the editor-in-chief, Nuno Santos (2022). On 20/04/2022, in posts in Portuguese and English (figures 3 and 4), former presidential candidate Ana Gomes decided to question

CNN International directly, asking how the CNN Portuguese affiliate had managed to get “Putin’s authorization to get a Portuguese journalist embedded with Russian aggressor forces”.

Figures 3 and 4

Ana Gomes’ posts



Source: Twitter, 20/04/2022

Ana Gomes, who, as well as running in the 2021 presidential elections, was also an MEP for the Socialist party that, at the time, backed the Portuguese government with a parliamentary majority, repeated several times remarks on the lack of independence of Bruno Amaral de Carvalho’s journalistic work, linking it to the fact that he was following the war on the side of the “aggressor”, that he was “in bed” with the Russians, in an implicit reference to the English word “embedded”, that he needed “Putin’s authorization” to be able to work and that he was serving as an amplifier for “Russian propaganda”.

A few days later, a government official intervened in the digital public sphere. The then deputy minister, later appointed minister of Infrastructure, João Galamba, decided to ironize, based on information posted on Twitter by Bruno Amaral de Carvalho, in which he witnessed the Ukrainian shelling of a civilian area of Donetsk, by putting inverted commas on the word “journalist” to disqualify the reporter (figure 5).

Figure 5

João Galamba's post

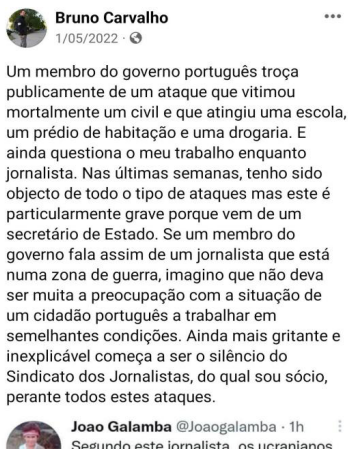


Source: Twitter, 01/05/2022

This led Bruno Amaral de Carvalho to write the following text on his social media accounts the same day¹¹, in which he criticized the silence of the Journalists' Union (figure 6):

Figure 6

Post by Bruno Amaral de Carvalho



Source: Facebook, 01/05/2022

It was after yet another series of attacks on digital networks that the union's Deontological Council spoke out. The body issued a statement on 20/05/2022 ("Conselho Deontológico repudia tentativas de censura na cobertura da Guerra da Ucrânia", 2022), more than two weeks after the publication, on 4/05/2022, of an article that *Visão* magazine had dedicated to Bruno Amaral de Carvalho (Santos, 2022), in which the reporter is denounced as a militant of the Portuguese Communist Party¹² – an article that would be accompanied by another series of critical posts on digital networks by journalists from the magazine and other media outlets¹³. In the statement, the Journalists' Union's Deontological Council begins by repudiating "all attitudes that could constitute attempts at censorship, conditioning and limiting access to information by journalists and public opinion" and recalls that "one of the traditional forms of manipulating public opinion is the attempt to silence or discredit information and people who show divergent points of view" ("Conselho Deontológico repudia tentativas de censura na cobertura da Guerra da Ucrânia", 2022, p. 3). In the same document, the organization also describes the ethical duty of journalists to "ensure that events are covered in such a way as to allow the public to have a general, plural and diverse view of the different sides of events".

On several occasions, Bruno Amaral de Carvalho noted on digital social networks that he was the only Portuguese reporter following the conflict on the separatist or Russian side. He also pointed out the information desert in the Portuguese (and, in general, Western) media about the events on "the other side". This was the case with the bombing of a hotel in Donetsk where journalists covering the separatist and Russian side of the war were staying, which led Bruno Amaral de Carvalho to note on Facebook, on 16/08/2022¹⁴, that "the absolute silence about an attack on this hotel full of journalists is something that shows a sinister part of this war". A month later¹⁵, he pointed out that he was "the only journalist working for European media in all the territories controlled by the pro-Russian forces", considering that the public was facing "the death of plurality and balance in the coverage of a war whose weapons are also paid for with our taxes. More scrutiny of both sides was called for, but that's not what's happening". Finally, in the text informing of his return to Portugal on 12/10/2022¹⁶, Carvalho writes that "there were those in Portugal who dedicated themselves to waiting for the slightest flaw to try to discredit my work", denouncing that "they wanted that there be no journalists on the other side because the only thing they care about is propaganda and not journalism".

4 Ukraine as a battleground for metanarratives

This research is based on a semiotically-grounded conceptualization of narrative, which consists of “material signs, discourse, that carry meaning (or content), the story, fulfilling a certain social function” (Ryan, 2007, p. 24). Although this is a broad definition, it is not innocuous from an analytical point of view when applied to the study of journalism: it allows for an approach to journalistic production that is no longer intrinsically fragmentary, occasional, or haphazard, but as a discursive production of meaning.

Journalism can now be analyzed based on how it develops and organizes a narrative view of the world about the events it reports, building a coherent network of meanings that then become a socially shared comprehension and are transformed into a system for interpreting events, thus incorporated into the individual and societal experience. Less important to this analysis are the isolated accounts of each fact or event, but rather the metanarrative construction that overlies them. By interpreting the journalistic narrative we propose to discuss as a “tool in the creation of social meanings” (Korostelina, 2014, p. 271), we can now analyze it as “the institutionalisation of social memory in a coherent history that both legitimises power structures and proclaims the foundations of resistance” (p. 272).

Luiz Gonzaga Motta dedicates one chapter of his work on the critical analysis of narrative precisely to the narrativity of journalism and its analytics. Motta (2013) examines the conditions under which journalistic reporting that savagely reorders time, to use the author’s expression, is amenable to narrative-based analysis, as long as we constitute it as a final meaning, based on the fragments through which the respective “structuring conflicts, the roles of the agents, heroes, villains, adjuvants” are introduced throughout the coverage (p. 97). It is from this (re) weaving that, for Gonzaga Motta (2013), “a representation (mimesis) will emerge that will also give rise to the moral of the story (the underlying metanarratives)”¹⁷. It is also in this sense, of the implicit construction of a moral of history or, even more precisely, of the gradual and apparently dispersed constitution of moral history, that the propagandistic operation is carried out and materialized in news coverage, particularly when we are dealing with strategic discursive moves around, for example, a war conflict, such as the one we are analyzing here.

For Gonzaga Motta (2013, p. 99), bringing together “scattered fragments of isolated news stories into a coherent thematic unit”

becomes an “initial methodological necessity” – a step that, for the author, “already constitutes the analysis itself”. Along the lines of critical discourse analysis (CDA), proposed by Teun van Dijk, Motta will recover the concept of the text’s global macroproposition, which shapes the meaning of the different sequences through “macroprocesses” of knowledge based on “knowledge of the world, beliefs, and personal interests” (Motta, 2013, p. 101). In other words, what van Dijk (2005) called “mental models” from which the interface between personal convictions and general ideological models is established, according to the scheme he called the “ideological square”, emphasizing one’s own good and the evil of the other, deluding one’s own evil and the good of the other, a discursive-narrative strategy that is most typical in war propaganda (p. 18).

Semantic macrostructures and negative macro propositions about the Russian side of the conflict, such as those referring, by way of mere examples, to the “unpreparedness of the Russian army” (bogged down armoured columns), its cruelty in shelling civilian targets (“Relembre os maiores ataques da Rússia contra a Ucrânia em 50 dias de guerra”, 2022) with the organized production of massacres (Bucha, Mariupol theatre) (Correia, 2022), the Russian bombing of schools, playgrounds, orphanages, kindergartens and leisure facilities for children (Pereira & Silva, 2022) or the extensive coverage of Ukrainian First Lady Olena Zelenska’s statement in London that the wives of Russian soldiers on campaign were instigating their husbands to rape Ukrainian women (“Zelenska acusa mulheres russas de encorajar maridos a violar ucranianas”, 2022). In an inverse construction of meaning, other news reports contrasted this version of the Russians’ gratuitous brutality with positive macro propositions about the Ukrainian side, through the narrative of a kind of poetics among ruins, such as a story published by O Globo and replicated in the media of many other countries, about the weddings of young Ukrainian brides and grooms, celebrated amid the destruction of war (“Casamentos desafiam bombardeios na Ucrânia: ‘minha casa estava em ruínas, mas nossas vidas não’”, 2022).

The case of Ukraine is therefore particularly illustrative of how metanarratives operate. The role of the media in producing meaning about the recent historical process has repeatedly been considered crucial, underpinning the development of narratives not only in factual reports but also in political communication and government propaganda (Katchanovski, 2016). Metanarratives thus

take on a strategic character, “formed at a state level and spread throughout media communication” (Lazarenko, 2018, p. 3), resulting in a “war of narratives, propaganda, and disinformation via social and ordinary media” (Koval et al., 2022, p. 175).

Social psychologist Karina Korostelina, who regularly contributes with studies for the US State Department and the government agency USAID, has for over a decade been analyzing the problematic relationship between various visions of national identity and the narratives that have emerged from these visions in Ukrainian society, transforming it into “an arena of struggles between diverse and often competing narratives, representing different concepts of national identity” (Korostelina, 2014, p. 269).

In an article in which she develops this association from the Maidan Square protests in Kyiv between November 2013 and February 2014, which resulted in the ousting of the then President Viktor Yanukovich and his replacement by a pro-Western government, the author proposes a distinction between five main groups of narratives. From these, Korostelina suggests the emergence of two poles that are difficult to reconcile (Korostelina, 2014, pp. 274-281): a pole founded on the narratives of the Struggle for Ukrainian Ethnic Identity and the Recognition of Ukrainian Ethnic Identity, both of which link national identity to an eminently European Ukrainian ethnicity, which constituted a substantial part of the narrative basis of support for the protests and the ousting of President Yanukovich, and provided the representatives who made up the interim government (pp. 282-283); and another pole, founded on Dual Identity and Pro-Soviet narratives, which disconnected national identity from a single ethnicity, including in it, in addition to Ukrainian ethnicity, Russian ethnicity and those of other minorities, as well as Russian-speaking Ukrainian populations, thus establishing a national identity based on a convergence between Slavic ethnicities.

It is in this pole of narratives that the author identifies the social support for Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the recruitment base for the insurrection in the east against the interim government in Kyiv, which would result in the war in the Donbas (Korostelina, 2014, p. 283). The representatives of the Multicultural-Civic narratives, whose participation in the Maidan Square protests was also identified by Korostelina, ended up not being involved in the executive of interim Prime Minister Arsenii Yatsenyuk, despite being opposed to any form of Russian intervention.

Karina Korostelina’s work was later cited, followed up, and developed by other researchers from fields as diverse as international relations, political science, and communication (Katchanovski, 2016; Koval et al., 2022; Lazarenko, 2018; Smoor, 2017). In these studies, there is a gradual geopolitical extrapolation of the two narrative poles outlined by Korostelina. They no longer emerge only as poles associated internally with Ukrainian society, but in the formation of “many conflicting narratives about the conflict in Donbas” (Katchanovski, 2016, p. 2), in Europe and the United States, on the one hand, and in Russia, on the other, causing Ukrainians to “continually finding themselves in a virtual battlefield of media discourses” (Lazarenko, 2018, p. 3). The fact that these are studies that diachronically follow the conflict in Ukraine until the Russian intervention in February 2022 provides us with a fruitful basis for delimiting these narrative macrostructures, distributing them into two large fields: a Ukrainian metanarrative field, and a Russian metanarrative field (see table 1).

Table 1

Battle for the control of metanarratives in Ukraine (2014-2022)

Ukrainian metanarrative field	Russian metanarrative field
- The 2014 Euromaidan was a “legitimate” revolution (Lazarenko, 2018) against the government, which wanted to “deprive” Ukraine of the association agreement with the European Union, and was the result of months of “peaceful” protests that were repressed by the authorities (Smoor, 2017; Lazarenko, 2018).	- What happened in 2014 in Kiev’s Maidan Square was an unconstitutional coup d’état aimed at preventing President Yanukovich from making a deal with Russia (Smoor, 2017), installing a government controlled by the United States (Katchanovski, 2016).
- The West has supported, and continues to support, the Ukrainian struggle for freedom and independence. - The supply of arms and military training by the United States is a victory for the Ukrainian struggle (Lazarenko, 2018).	- The West sponsored and became involved in the regime change in Ukraine in 2014 (Lazarenko, 2018), installing a “NATO puppet” regime in Kiev (Smoor, 2017), with the aim of encircling Russia by expanding its military presence, deceiving and humiliating Russia since 1990 (Smoor, 2017), and creating an “existential threat” to Moscow.
- With the Euromaidan revolution, Ukraine wanted to leave behind a corrupt Soviet heritage and join the European model (Smoor, 2017).	- The post-2014 Ukrainian state apparatus is totally anti-Russian and dominated by fascist and neo-Nazi forces (Katchanovski, 2016; Smoor, 2017). The 2014 coup saw the direct involvement of far-right fascist and neo-Nazi organisations, which attacked the police, turning peaceful protests into violent ones (Lazarenko, 2018).

- Russia is an imperialist aggressor, led by a dictator (Smoor, 2017), which opposes a sovereign and independent Ukrainian state and interferes in the country's internal affairs (Korostelina, 2014; Smoor, 2017).	- The 2014 coup installed a Russophobic, nationalist and anti-democratic culture in Ukraine (Smoor, 2017), banning the communist political parties and those nostalgic for the Soviet Union, and the use and teaching of the Russian language in public places and schools.
- The Russians deny Ukrainians a specific ethnicity and act against them by ignoring international law (Smoor, 2017).	- Russians and Ukrainians are "brother peoples" (Smoor, 2017).
- The government that emerged from the Euromaidan revolution replaced the highly corrupt government of President Viktor Yanukovich (Smoor, 2017; Lazarenko, 2018).	- Post-Maidan Ukraine is a corrupt and oligarchic state (Smoor, 2017).
- Crimea is an integral part of Ukraine's territory, and the country's territorial integrity has been internationally agreed upon by Russia since the signing of the Budapest Memorandum in 1994 (Smoor, 2017).	- Crimea is historically Russian and has the right to self-determination (Smoor, 2017), and the annexation in 2014 was a consequence and "reparation for historical injustice" (Lazarenko, 2018) of the referendums that took place in the territory from 1991 to 2014.
- There is no civil war in the Donbass, but a legitimate military response to a Russian invasion and aggression (Katchanovsky, 2016).	- The situation in the Donbass since 2014 has been one of "civil war" not involving Russian troops (Katchanovski, 2016; Lazarenko, 2018).
- Russian troops provoked the uprising in the Donbass (Lazarenko, 2018).	- People in the south and east of Ukraine rose up against the anti-constitutional coup that ousted a democratically elected president (Katchanovski, 2016).
- The Ukrainian army has been fighting the Russian army in the Donbass since 2014 (Katchanovski, 2016), and the separatists "are not Ukrainian", but Russian, and there is a "lack of Ukrainianness" in the populations of the Donbass (Lazarenko, 2018).	- Ukraine is being used as a battlefield between the West and Russia, receiving support, training and arms from NATO since 2014 (Lazarenko, 2018).
- The shelling of civilian populations in the Donbass is not the responsibility of the Ukrainian army, but of the Russian separatists, who are terrorists (Katchanovski, 2016).	- Ukraine has declared war on its own people in the Donbass, who have been victims of "genocide" through the indiscriminate shelling of civilians (Katchanovski, 2016), since the Kiev government instituted the "anti-terrorist operation" (ATO) in 2014.
- The situation in the Donbass is the result of Russian imperialist policy (Lazarenko, 2018).	- Ukraine is not part of any Russian expansionist strategy (Lazarenko, 2018).
- Separatism in the Donbass has no popular support (Katchanovski, 2016).	- Separatism in the Donbass has high popular support (Katchanovski, 2016).

Bearing in mind that "each one of the described stories – the metanarratives – becomes itself a specific form of discourse, or a form of reality" (Lazarenko, 2018, p. 9), it is reality and the interpretation of reality that comes into play in the journalistic production about the conflict. Even if, from 24/02/2022, the direct Russian military intervention added new narrative elements, we assume that these can be accommodated within the metanarrative fields created, expanded, and fuelled over the previous years. We will therefore

apply the resulting analytical grid to address the question proposed by our work.

5 Journalism as combat: the work of Bruno Amaral de Carvalho

To analyze the discursive and, specifically, journalistic production of the Portuguese reporter, connecting it to the narrative macrostructures obtained from the literature on the conflict in Ukraine, we used the content of the pieces sent for publication on CNN Portugal during this period. Since we intend to question the debate generated in Portugal by Bruno Amaral de Carvalho's presence on the Russian side of the war, we restricted our analysis to the reporter's journalistic output on CNN Portugal, thus disregarding his regular collaboration with the newspaper *Nós Diário*, aimed at the Galician public, as well as his occasional collaborations with the Portuguese newspapers *Público* and *A Voz do Operário* and the Basque newspaper *Gara*.

During the period in question, CNN Portugal portal provides access to a total of 22 pieces attributed to the journalist¹⁸, nine of which date from April 2022. The first eight pieces were written in Mariupol, a city that was at the time the center of the main fighting in the conflict.

The pieces by Bruno Amaral de Carvalho, broadcast and made available online by CNN Portugal during that period, fall into three distinct analytical zones, from the point of view of the two major metanarrative fields delimited by the literature described above: the Russian metanarrative field, validating narrative elements of this field; a Ukrainian metanarrative counter field, dismantling elements of the Ukrainian metanarrative; and a neutral zone, with no references to either field. Specifically:

1. Neutral: in eight of the 22 pieces, broadcast on 9/04, 17/04, 24/04 (all in Mariupol), 29/04 (Donetsk), 3/05 (Mariupol), 6/05 (Lugansk), 21/06 and 23/09 (a) (Donetsk) there are no references that would allow the discursive content to be placed in either of the two camps, but only the facts directly observed by the reporter and the interviews he carried out, without establishing

any causal relationships or attribution of authorship or responsibility, i.e. bombings are mentioned, for example, but their origin is not mentioned, victims are interviewed, but they do not attribute responsibility for their condition or any political position on the conflict;

2. Russian metanarrative field: in eight of the 22 pieces, broadcast on 3/04, 14/04, 18/04 (Mariupol), 6/06, 12/08, 22/09, 23/09 (b), and 3/10 (Donetsk), there are references to the Russian metanarrative field, in the sense that the journalist's reports are part of, or confirm, some of the Russian narrative elements that pre-existed this phase of the conflict. In these pieces, Bruno Amaral de Carvalho reports on accusations by the population of Mariupol against the "neo-Nazi Azov battalion" (3/04, 14/04, 18/04), for using civilians as human shields (3/04) or for mistreating the local population (14/04, 18/04); reports on Ukrainian shelling of Donetsk and the region (6/06, 12/08), referring to the start of the conflict in 2014, when "the civil war began" and "the population and militias rose up against the new government in Kyiv" (6/06) or reinforcing the Ukrainian authorship of the shelling of a hotel with journalists in Donetsk and interviewed residents of a nearby town saying they want to "drive the fascists out of here" or that "the Americans and you (Westerners) allow us to be hit with these weapons" (12/08); or the popular support for the accession of the Donetsk region to Russia, expressed in interviews conducted before (22/09), during (29/09(b)) and after (3/10) the referendums that preceded the incorporation of the territories of Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson into the Russian Federation;

3. Ukrainian metanarrative counter field: in six of the 22 pieces, broadcast on 11/04, 27/04 (Mariupol), 19/07 (Lugansk), 4/08, 23/08, and 26/08 (Donetsk), there are references to the Ukrainian metanarrative field, although in these cases the references appear as a dismantling or as a negativization of elements of this field, namely elements related to the characterization of Russia as an "aggressor" and as a state that "violates international law". They also dismantle narrative elements such as those

attributing attacks on civilians in the Donbas controlled by Russian or separatist forces to Russians. In these works, after visiting the ruins of the Mariupol Theatre (11/04), Bruno Amaral de Carvalho does not confirm, on the ground, the Ukrainian version that more than a thousand people died in the attack on the building and conveys the contradictory versions of Ukrainians and Russians regarding the attribution of authorship. It also refutes the Ukrainian and Western versions that the Russians dug mass graves in two cemeteries in Mariupol, showing hundreds of recently opened individual graves (27/04). It exposes statements made by Ukrainian prisoners of war at a press conference in Lugansk, in which they say they are being treated well and that the Russians “want to exchange us for Russian soldiers” (19/07). In reports carried out in Donetsk (4/08, 23/08, and 26/08), Carvalho reports on bombings in civilian areas of the city, such as a hotel that housed journalists covering the Russian side of the war (4/08), an attack that, even though Ukraine denied it, the reporter and a journalist he interviewed had no doubts in attributing to the Ukrainian army, adding that “it’s very hard to believe that the Ukrainian intelligence services didn’t know about the presence of journalists in the hotel”. A few days later, after an attack on the pro-Russian civil administration building in Donetsk, Carvalho said that “no place is safe here in Donetsk” (23/08). A few days later (26/08), the reporter reports on the shelling of the center of Donetsk with small “petal” mines, broadcasting interviews with civilians who say that “Ukraine is doing all this”, “they are monsters” who “wage war on women and children” and that the use of these types of mines is intended to “scare the local population”.

Despite a non-negligible number (36.4%) of pieces that cannot be classified in either of the two metanarrative camps, the result is that the reporter’s journalistic work on the ground, carried out in areas and cities controlled by Russian and separatist troops, tended to convey the metanarratives of the Russian camp (63.6%), either positively, confirming or reinforcing them (36.4%), or as verification and rejection of the metanarratives of the Ukrainian camp (27.2%).

In other words, Bruno Amaral de Carvalho tended to construct journalistic narratives related to the experience of war, lived from the Russian, separatist perspective or simply that of the civilian victims that the conflict caused on that side, subject to the reporter's direct testimony. This finding is in line with the evidence gathered in research on journalistic coverage from a Russian perspective since the outbreak of the conflict in the Donbas.

Comparing the journalistic framing of three television stations, one Ukrainian, one Russian, and one American, the research by Roman et al. (2017) showed that, in Russia, Channel One favoured frames such as the high number of civilian victims at the start of the conflict, that of a “punitive action” by the Ukrainian state on the populations of the Donbas, and that of referring to historical qualifications from the Second World War to characterize the “authorities in Kiev” as “fascists” or “extremists” (Roman et al., 2017, pp. 371-373). Nygren et al. (2018) also identified substantial differences in the comparative perspectives of media coverage in countries such as Ukraine, Russia, Poland, and Sweden. Already in 2014, the Russian perspective, distinct from all the others, emphasized elements such as the “civil war” in the Donbas, the geopolitical significance of a struggle between the West and Russia within Ukrainian territory, the defense of a Russian ethnicity against “ultranationalism” and “fascism” by the Donetsk and Lugansk people's militias, and the condition of Donbas civilians as victims in need of humanitarian support (Nygren et al., 2018, pp. 1063-1067).

All these elements are present, to a greater or lesser degree, in Bruno Amaral de Carvalho's journalistic coverage. However, is this observation enough to legitimize the disqualification, from the point of view of journalistic independence, of the reporter's work, reducing him to a role of mere amplification of one of the metanarrative fields, and consequently exposing him to the association between the journalism he produced and Russian propaganda, which formed the basis of the symbolic degradation directed at him by politicians and journalists in the Portuguese public sphere?

6 Final notes

Describing what he encountered in Bosnia-Herzegovina when, as a reporter, he was assigned to cover the war in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the former and now deceased Portuguese

journalist Carlos Santos Pereira (2005, p. 151) reveals that it was then “clear that the journalists arrived in the Bosnian theatre with their minds made up and a predetermined reporting angle, and with an agenda that was very circumscribed and fundamentally in line with the objectives of the respective governments”. In the same book, *Information Wars – Military and Media in Crisis Scenarios*, the experienced reporter also points out the fact that “in conversations between journalists in Sarajevo, anyone who dared to question the adopted version of events ran the risk of being ostracised by the brotherhood”.

One of the angles of this investigation deals precisely with the symbolic degradation to which Bruno Amaral de Carvalho was subjected by the journalistic “brotherhood”, subjecting him to double combat while he was in a war scenario. It is a process in which several of the elements described in the literature on labelling (Becker, 1997; Watson & Hill, 2012) and *delegitimization* (Amossy, 2022), and in the literature on character assassination (Icks, 2020; Shiraev et al., 2021), or that which places this in the field of propaganda strategies, with attacks by pressure groups (flak) apply to the case of Bruno Amaral de Carvalho, as is the fact that one of the lines of attack was based on the exposure and public exploitation of his militancy in the Communist Party, triggering the ideological filter of anti-communism (Herman & Chomsky, 2002), which has since been theoretically extended to post-Soviet Russia (MacLeod, 2019b; Zollmann, 2019).

Although the reporter only reacted when he was publicly attacked by government politicians, demanding that the Journalists’ Union take a stand, he also had to defend himself against the attacks that several Portuguese journalists levelled at him on digital social networks and in articles dedicated to him in their publications. In these attacks, his independent status was called into question, thereby also calling into question the journalism he produced. The symbolic degradation of the messenger thus results in a symbolic degradation of the message, which leaves the realm of journalism and information and symbolically moves it, disqualified, delegitimized, and unauthorized, to the realm of propaganda and disinformation. While the attacks’ perpetrators associate the information produced from the Ukrainian side of the war to the former, they associate to the latter the information produced by the separatist and Russian side.

This is not, however, a clear dividing line, or much less a consensus, in the international journalistic community. Experienced

Western journalists and former war correspondents, such as the Australian John Pilger, or the Americans Stephen Kinzer, Chris Hedges, Seymour Hersh, and Patrick Lawrence, several of whom have won Pulitzer Prizes, have denounced the unprecedented alignment between Western journalistic production and the war propaganda of the Ukrainian government and the governments of the main European and Western countries. These authors converge on the idea that never, as in the coverage of the war in Ukraine, has there been such a blatant imbalance in the journalistic attention given to both sides of the conflict in Western journalism, pointing out that “for those of us who were war correspondents in an era when conflicts were reported from various perspectives, the one-sidedness of reporting about Ukraine is most striking. (...) in conflict, no one side has a monopoly on virtue” (Kinzer, 2023, p. 14). These journalists’ criticisms of the mass media include the fact that it “openly discredits or censors anything that counters the dominant narrative about Ukraine, however factual” (Hedges, 2022, p. 1), and that the “news of which is mostly not news, but a one-sided litany of jingoism, distortion, and omission. I have reported a number of wars and have never known such blanket propaganda” (Pilger, 2022, p. 22).

This investigation indeed showed that Bruno Amaral de Carvalho’s journalistic work in the Russian and separatist Donbas-controlled region tended to reproduce Russian metanarratives. This finding could, to a certain extent, legitimize the association that the attacks on the journalist sought to promote, that he merely amplified Russian war propaganda and was, at best, a “journalist”, thus degraded by irony in inverted commas, as portrayed in a Twitter post by the then deputy minister João Galamba.

One of the limitations assumed by the scope of this study is that we haven’t tested the work of any other Portuguese journalist, of the dozens sent to the Ukrainian side in the same period. However, it would be relatively safe to assume that the work of these envoys did nothing more than massively reproduce Ukrainian metanarratives, since this corresponds to the media’s proven historical alignment with their countries’ foreign policy choices in war situations (Allan & Zelizer, 2004; Hedges, 2022; Kellner, 2008; McLaughlin, 2016; Miller, 2004; Nohrstedt, 2009; C. S. Pereira, 2005), narratives that have therefore been “dominant” or even “one-sided” in Western journalism about the war in Ukraine (Hedges, 2022; Kinzer, 2023; Pilger, 2022), and, for the most part, in Portuguese journalism, monopolising the

narrative space. In this sense, Bruno Amaral de Carvalho's work was, effectively and symbolically, a solitary endeavour, making him emerge as a dissonant, different, misaligned, disconcerting voice to the exact extent of the messages he produced.

There is plenty of literature to show that, in wartime, if there is a side that the media system takes as "its own", it also manifests itself through the silencing or symbolic degradation of dissenting voices (Bennett, 1990; Hallin, 1989; Heenan, 2010; Murray et al., 2008), strategically trying to involve them in a spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1974), which Bruno Amaral de Carvalho has always fought against. In an interview on 20/07/2022, to Sapo Notícias portal, the reporter stated that "it was important for there to be more widespread coverage of this side of the war, by different media outlets. We would all gain if there were other voices, apart from mine, reporting on what is happening here" (Carvalho, 2022b). Despite his effective and symbolic solitude, and regardless of the greater or lesser miscegenation of his work in the Russian side's metanarratives, Bruno Amaral de Carvalho's dissonance has effectively contributed to the creation of broader, more complex, denser and more complete information about the conflict, conveying other views of the events, providing data for a better historical, political and social framework, and bringing out the voices of victims who are rarely heard, in other words, embodying several of the elements of what Johan Galtung (2003) theorized as peace journalism.

While it seems understandable that reporters on either side of the conflict tend to report (not least because of the nature of the primary sources they have access to) according to the respective side's metanarratives, it seems deontologically wrong and dangerously undemocratic that media organizations don't ensure that reporters are placed in such a way that the report produced by each organization is complete and multilateral. This is the case with the conflict in Ukraine and its "Western" coverage, with the aggravating factor that corporate journalism has generally accepted at censorious imposition that victimizes them and their audiences without any major challenge, and sometimes even without any challenge at all. In this sense, the combat journalism that, due to circumstances or personal belief, has been undertaken by Bruno Amaral de Carvalho takes on an added dimension.

NOTES

- 1 On being the only western reporter left in the Russian-controlled warzone: Carvalho, B. (2022, September 17). Neste momento, depois da partida do repórter italiano e suíço Luca Steinmann. [Text]. Facebook. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/yun49dts>
- 2 As noted by journalist João Pedro Lobato (Sapo Notícias portal), in an interview with Bruno Amaral de Carvalho (20/07/2022). Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/bdhn3y6u>
- 3 Glossary of Broadcast News Terms, University of Wisconsin. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/yh9u3kw6>
- 4 The term “humanitarian intervention” has been used to define the use of force by a state or group of states against another state, without the latter’s permission, with the declared aim of putting an end to serious human rights violations in the territory of the state against which the force is used. The concept is controversial, ambiguous, and not codified in international law.
- 5 Ruth Amossy (2022, pp. 2-3) introduces two fairly conventional definitions of “legitimacy” which are adopted here: quoting Serge Braudo, “‘legitimacy’ is conformity with a higher principle which, in a given society and at a given time, is considered just [...]. The notion of legitimacy is culturally contingent”, and Héléne Hatzfeld, “legitimacy is the right recognised to a person (or several persons) to speak and act in the name of principles, values, rules or laws [...] The principles on which legitimacy is based are of a diverse nature: moral and political principles, habits, rights, norms... The hierarchy of these principles varies according to individuals and societies and is the source of numerous disputes”.
- 6 Carvalho, B. (2022, March 28). Uma das primeiras descobertas ao meter um cartão russo [Text]. Telegram. Retrieved from <https://t.me/brunocarvalhoDonbass/7>
- 7 Carvalho, B. (2022, March 28). [Photos]. Retrieved from <https://t.me/brunocarvalhoDonbass/8>
- 8 Carvalho, B. (2022, March 28). Boa noite a todos. [Text]. Retrieved from <https://t.me/brunocarvalhoDonbass/13>

- 9 In this regard, we suggest you consult the list of leading international media with which the Ukrainian PR Army regularly collaborates, as well as the testimonies of journalists about these interactions, on the website: <https://www.pr.army/journo>
- 10 Text by Bruno Amaral de Carvalho, on Público newspaper's decision to only publish one of three planned reports: Carvalho, B. (2022, August 20). Este sábado, o Provedor do jornal Público tece [Text]. Facebook. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/4fmcej3>
- 11 Carvalho's response to deputy minister João Galamba's attacks: Carvalho, B. (2022, May 1). Um membro do governo português troça publicamente [Text]. Facebook. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/2s4cd2ae>
- 12 The Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) is part of the Unitary Democratic Coalition (CDU) with the Ecologist Party Os Verdes (PEV), and it is under this format that it has been disputing elections in Portugal.
- 13 During this period, there are records, among many, of posts on the then Twitter network by journalists such as Mafalda Anjos and Luís Ribeiro (Visão), as well as Susana André and Iryna Shev (SIC), Ana França (Expresso), and Rita Marrafa de Carvalho (RTP), all journalists who worked from the Ukrainian side of the conflict.
- 14 Carvalho, B. (2022, August 16). No meio de sucessivos bombardeamentos, há ideias [Text]. Facebook. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/6ejfhfev>
- 15 Carvalho, B. (2022, September 17). Neste momento, depois da partida do repórter [Text]. Facebook. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/yun49dts>
- 16 Carvalho, B. (2022, October 12). Março foi há 15 quilos atrás. Uma vida [Text]. Facebook. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/4yhfnj9t>
- 17 In another text, Motta (2007, p. 14) concretely points out his concept of metanarrative by treating it as a narrative that "whether factual or fictional, is built against an ethical and moral background", in other words, the plane of the "deep structure of the narrative". The metanarrative "can be predominantly ethical, moral or philosophical, although it can also contain political, religious, psychological or ideological aspects", thus constituting

“the backdrop against which the sequence of news stories on a given subject develops”. In conclusion, he advocates that the “analyst needs to become aware of and contrast this moral background with the plot of the story he has reconfigured”. This is the sense in which the analytical term “metanarrative” is adopted in this work.

18 The list of works can be accessed at: <http://tinyurl.com/4k7td2zb>

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