

# Russia's Radical Othering in the Global Academic Discourse

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## **Abstract**

Many critical scholars hold that the new Cold War is already more dangerous than its predecessor, partly due to the synergy of Western intelligence services and various hegemonic-ideological institutions—the Censorship-Industrial Complex—in demonizing Russia. Although many critical scholars agree that Western academia plays a crucial role in reproducing the hegemonic anti-Russian discourse, this paper is one of the first efforts to empirically measure

how pervasive that discourse is within the academic literature. The analysis of 100 articles on the Ukraine conflict published in the Taylor and Francis academic journals shows that 62 articles explain the Ukraine conflict in terms of Russia's aggressiveness, imperialism, autocracy and propaganda, with another 31 articles reproducing the same anti-Russian discourse implicitly.

**Keywords:** anti-Russian discourse, Western hegemony, hegemonic-ideological institutions, Russia-Ukraine conflict, Censorship-Industrial Complex, propaganda, counter-disinformation industry, Cold War.

In his forthcoming book *The Culture of the Second Cold War*, Richard Sakwa (2025) discusses the antagonistic forms of communication characterizing international relations today. In his view, traditional diplomatic tools of conflict resolution have become meaningless as the rational consideration of arguments has been replaced by the ritual exchange of accusations. Thus, the UN Security Council, for instance, has become an arena for conducting hostilities, rather than a forum for their resolution. Conflicting camps, confident in the rightness and righteousness of their causes, blame their opponents without reflecting on their own responsibility. This antagonistic model of communication is reminiscent of the Cold War between the socialist and capitalist camps, only now, Sakwa argues, the ideological rift is replaced by a cultural/civilizational one.

This is especially evident in the West's efforts to convert the global 'Rest' to its civilizational faith, whose symbols—democracy, freedom, and human rights, as understood by the West—are promoted not as contextual and challengeable means of improving specific societal conditions, but as a universal recipe for the happiness of humankind regardless of cultural differences. Western powers now typically present international conflicts not as the struggles of self-interested states for power, but as battles of good versus evil. Such Manicheism condemns diplomacy, and the pursuit of compromise, as supping with the devil (Sakwa 2025).

The Battle of Armageddon, prescribed by this eschatological vision of global affairs, is first waged discursively, over the meanings of

things. Various hegemonic-ideological institutions—the “Censorship-Industrial Complex,” as Sakwa, following Michael Shellenberger (2023), calls it—fix narratives that exclude opposing interpretations. Sakwa (2025) provides numerous examples of transnational agencies, within the “counter-disinformation industry,” whose ostensible mission is to counter Russian disinformation—which turns out not to be deliberately false content, but rather to be any adversarial narrative that is harmful to the West’s global hegemony.

Sakwa here aligns with numerous other critical thinkers who problematize the Censorship-Industrial Complex’s demonization of Russia (e.g., Boyd-Barrett, 2023; Diesen, 2023; Jutel, 2023; Marmura, 2023; Robinson, 2023; Sussman, 2023). These scholars view anti-Russian propaganda as having been useful for imposing conformity and limiting dissent in the past (Diesen, 2023), but things have deteriorated significantly compared to the First Cold War. “The new Cold War is already more dangerous than was its predecessor” not least because “there are virtually no anti-Cold War media, politicians, or politics in mainstream America today” (Cohen, 2017).

The situation has been worsened by the synergy of intelligence services and hegemonic-ideological institutions, such as the media, think tanks, anti-disinformation agencies, and universities, which collectively form the Censorship-Industrial Complex. As Glenn Diesen (2023) argues, during the Cold War, the intelligence agencies were embarrassed by the revelations of Operation Mockingbird, in which the CIA infiltrated and manipulated the media for propaganda purposes. During *Russiagate* (accusations that Moscow sought to swing the 2016 U.S. election in favor of Donald Trump), the intelligence agencies and the media were cooperating in the open (p. 190).

This is what critical scholars call “the weaponization of communication,” in which universities play a significant role, their research embracing “psychological warfare, whether for corporate, military, or state purposes” (Jutel, 2023, p. 274). Communication studies have thus become an instrument of brainwashing and the imposition of hegemonic meanings.

The West's domination is supported by its firm association—within Western modernity's hegemonic discourse—with democracy, freedom, and human rights (Baysha, 2023), ideas that are presented as being universal but subjected to specifically Western definitions. This demonizes any challengers to the Western-centric global order—such as Russia—as enemies of humankind (Güven, 2015), empowering the West to undemocratically protect itself by banning, excluding, censoring, sanctioning, and 'othering' such challengers.

Universities have enormous power to promote conformity. While working to reduce the chances of oppositional thinking, academia reserves some space for critical commentary, but this hardly undermines the hegemony of the ruling order, Sakwa argues (2025). Critical social research, which still exists, can hardly challenge the West's hegemony if it does not question the ideological foundations of that hegemony: the West's conflation with freedom, democracy, and human rights, and the presentation of those challenging its hegemony as the enemies of those values. Despite postmodernism's challenge to all "grand narratives," including Western-centrism (Mignolo, 2013), the idea of global 'democratization' per the Western model is still taken for granted by millions, including many critical thinkers (Baysha, 2020).

Although most of them would probably agree that the routine and uncritical reproduction of the West's 'common-sense' definition as a progressive historical force undergirds Western hegemony, this paper is one of the first efforts to empirically measure how pervasive that discourse—specifically regarding Russia—is within the academic literature. It analyzes 100 articles on the Russia–Ukraine conflict in the academic journals of the leading publisher Taylor and Francis.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND SAMPLING**

At the preliminary stage of our investigation, we employed a two-step procedure.

First, we searched the Scopus database (<https://www.scimagojr.com>) for journals publishing about the "political." Of the 100 highest-ranked results, 24 were published by Taylor and Francis (T&F) and its imprints (such as Routledge). Its closest rivals—Sage and Cambridge

University Press—published only 10 each. We therefore selected T&F as a cross-section of the literature, narrower than it but still featuring significant topical diversity, and thus generally representative.

We then used T&F’s search engine to find the 100 papers, published within the six-month period of 7 November 2023 – 7 May 2024, that were algorithmically considered most relevant to the query “Russia [AND] Ukraine [AND] propaganda”. (We see no reason for the first hundred papers to meaningfully or systematically differ from those falling below the cutoff.)

To analyze these papers and identify the main narratives regarding the Russia–Ukraine conflict, we conducted a framing analysis of abstracts, drawing on William Gamson’s and Andre Modigliani’s conception of the frame as “a central organizing idea or storyline” (1987, p. 143) that provides meaning to phenomena or events. First, we analyzed every tenth abstract out of the 100 papers to identify their central organizing ideas. This yielded seven distinct frames:

	%
Russian aggression	18
Russian autocracy	19
Russian imperialism	11
Russian disinformation	14
Ukrainian information policy	3
other aspects	28
‘Not just Russia’	7

The remaining abstracts were then analyzed to determine which frame is dominant in each one; at this stage, quantitative analysis was used to count the frequency of particular frames. Papers with more complex abstracts, featuring multiple frames, were analyzed in full.

We also conducted a discourse analysis of texts, drawing on the discourse theory (DT) of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985). DT conceptualizes discourse as a “structured totality” resulting from “articulatory practice”—that is, the practice of establishing relations among signs/signifiers. Discourses are stabilized by nodal points or

“master signifiers,” which assume “a ‘universal’ structuring function” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p. 98). A specific discourse forms when specific nodal points are linked to one another in “equivalential chains” (p. 129), and it is always subject to change via the formation of new associations. Permanent discursive closure (fixation of meanings) is therefore impossible—but it may be stabilized by propaganda, public relations, or other administrative means.

## FINDINGS

### Active Reproduction of Anti-Russian Discourse

*Russian Aggression* (dominant in 18/100 articles):<sup>1</sup> Articles highlight the “unprovoked” character of Russia’s Special Military Operation (SMO), which stemmed from Russia’s inherent aggressiveness. Russia’s actions are presented as “atrocious,” “disastrous,” “genocidal,” “horrific,” etc.; Russia is compared to Nazi Germany etc. Discussing Russia’s cyberattacks and missile attacks on Ukraine’s critical infrastructure (e.g., Brantly and Brantly, 2024; Dunayev et al., 2024; Kolodii, 2024), some papers compare Ukraine’s losses “to the loss and damage inflicted by Germany during World War II” (Jeong et al., 2024, p. 1). Others discuss “a food crisis in Russia-occupied territories” and compare it with “the Holodomor of 1933–1934 and the Dutch Hongerwinter of 1944–1945” (Khodakivska, 2024, p. 1). The whole situation is defined as a “throwback to the European experience of war in the 1940s” (Phythian and Strachan-Morris, 2024, p. 377).

*Russian Autocracy* (dominant in 19/100): Articles focus on the lack of democracy in Russia, which is referred to as “an authoritarian state,” “an authoritarian regime,” “Putin’s regime,” “Putin’s Russia,” “a non-democratic major power,” etc.; describe the SMO as motivated by Russia’s intolerance of democracy and freedom; describe Russia as aligned with other autocracies such as China, Iran, and North Korea (Katagiri, 2024) against Western civilization—of which Ukraine, in contrast, is a part. While Ukraine “has made the most progress in the

<sup>1</sup> Information on the articles that actively reproduce the anti-Russian discourse is not placed in the reference list but is available at: <https://cloud.mail.ru/public/vqZx/NrSnu3mVf>.

transition to democracy than any other post-Soviet country” (Wise et al., 2024, p. 1), Russia has demonstrated “extreme violence” towards any kind of political opposition (Omand, 2024, p. 386). It is envisaged that Ukraine will “emerge from this war as a democracy with a bright European future” (Chivvis, 2024, p. 25), while Russia will remain in its authoritarian past, excluded from the international community of the civilized world.

*Russian Imperialism* (dominant in 11/100): Articles explain Russian policy as motivated by “imperial ambitions,” an aversion to Ukrainian independence, and a desire to keep Ukraine within a sphere of neocolonial interests; speak of Russia’s efforts to impose its “imperial authority over the Ukrainian state” (Tullius, 2024, p. 1); hold that the conflict started because Russia’s “imperial nationalists have not recognized Ukrainians as a separate people” (Kuzio, 2024, p. 1); trace Russia’s imperialist vision of Ukraine back to “Tsarist Russia’s imperial expansion” (Krusch, 2024, p. 1); claim that the tradition of “Russian colonial and imperial violence” (Hendl et al., 2024, p. 171) drives Russians to equate love of their country with love of its imperial expansion (Skulskiy, 2024, p. 1).

*Russian Disinformation* (dominant in 14/100): Articles focus on “disinformation campaigns used by the Russian Federation” (Juhász, 2024, p. 1) within Russia and against Ukraine and the West. “Russian disinformation attacks on countries in Europe” (Stewart et al., 2024, p. 1), carried out “to aggravate tension and confrontation between” Western allies (LaFortune and Landriault, 2024, p. 333), are of especial interest; claim that, “utilizing the newest advantages of technological development” (Pačková et al., 2024, p. 1) to disseminate false videos and narratives, Russia “nurture[s] a worldview that makes the war both legitimate and necessary” (Horsfjord, 2024, p. 1); seek to counter Russia’s disinformation and “to balance values of freedom and security”—that is, to somehow reconcile the West’s banning of Russian media with its vaunted freedom of speech (Wagnsson et al., 2024, p. 1). Some authors propose the concept of “militant and defensive democracy” to theoretically support the curtailment of freedom of expression (JU, 2024, p. 1).

Taken together, these four frames, which present Russia as an outcast from civilization, were dominant in 62 of the 100 articles analyzed. These papers actively reproduced the hegemonic anti-Russian discourse, which is dominant not only in mass media (Bergman and Hearn-Branaman, 2024), but also in academia. The anti-Russian discourse is, in the terminology of Laclau and Mouffe (1985), characterized by four nodal points: aggression, autocracy, empire, and disinformation. Linked with other signifiers in an equivalential chain, they present Russia as a radical deviant from all that is good: its actions are always “aggressive,” “irrational,” “atrocious,” “disastrous,” “horrific,” “genocidal,” “violent,” “totalitarian,” “imperial,” “dehumanizing,” “misinforming,” “falsifying,” “propagandistic,” etc. Associated with Tsarism, Nazism, and Stalinism, Russia is juxtaposed to the West (of which Ukraine is as a part), the democratic and peaceful forces of a bright civilizational future.

#### **“NEUTRAL” FRAMING**

*Ukrainian Information Policy* (dominant in 3/100): Articles discuss Ukraine’s wartime information policy, which is not conceptualized as propaganda, but instead described as “diplomacy efforts,” “the rhetoric of Ukrainian authorities,” their “media outreach,” etc. One of these papers discusses “wartime diplomacy efforts of Ukrainian think tank experts” (Axyonova and Lozka, 2024, p. 1); the second is interested in the “Security Service of Ukraine’s (SBU) use of its Telegram channel for social media outreach during the Russo–Ukrainian war” (Schrijver, 2024, p. 1), and the third analyzes “the rhetoric of the Ukrainian authorities as well as the moral position of the Ukrainian people in this war,” arguing that, “not least thanks to the power of moral argumentation,” Ukraine was able to “obtain Western support” (Deresh, 2024, p. 25). Although not fixated on Russia’s aggressiveness, imperialism, autocracy, or disinformation, these three papers took the symbolic matrix of sedimented anti-Russian meanings as a given upon which to build new discursive constructions.

*Other Aspects* (dominant in 28/100): Papers discuss secondary aspects of the conflict, such as Ukraine’s electricity generation, Russia’s



ability to withstand economic sanctions, the relations between China, Russia, and the West, etc. While not actively articulating any of the nodes of anti-Russian discourse, these papers do not challenge it, either, and discuss their topics within its taken-for-granted matrix—thus wittingly or unwittingly reproducing it. This is especially evident when these papers discuss, for example:

- “The reconstruction of the imagined Ukrainian community and its radical separation from the Russian one” (Amiot, 2024, p. 367), without delving into the problematic representation of the Ukrainian community as a coherent whole devoid of internal splits, and without considering the roots of the Ukrainian crisis—the Maidan—which half of Ukrainian society opposed (e.g., Ishchenko, 2024; Matveeva, 2022; Myshlovska, 2023).
- The negative restructuring of EU members’ relations “with Russia, which remains their ‘significant Other’” (Kascian, et al., 2024, p. 1), or the “unprecedented wave of non-governmental, external resistance directed against Russia” (Alvinus and Holmberg, 2024, p. 196), without considering the role of Western politics and propaganda in the construction of Russia’s Otherness, or the inability of many publics to recognize the complexity of the crisis because of its one-sided representation by their media (e.g., Baysha, 2023; Boyd-Barrett, 2023; Marmura, 2023).
- The shift in NATO’s self-identification that “risks undermining NATO efforts to rally global support for Ukraine” (Beaumont, 2024, p. 1).<sup>2</sup>

In other words, these papers took the radical Othering of Russia for granted, without contemplating its rationality or its implications for global peace. It has been normalized by Western media, politicians, and intellectuals, and accepted by much of the global population, including scholars. Once such discursive sedimentation happens, it takes a lot of intellectual effort to destabilize it, effort that is absent from the papers discussed so far.

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<sup>2</sup> Whether this “global support for Ukraine” is global indeed and if this “support” in the form of arms supply is actually helping the Ukrainian people or the U.S. military-industrial complex see Chomsky, 2023; Mearsheimer, 2022; Sachs, 2024.

*Not Just Russia* (dominant in 7/100): Articles suggest that not only Russia is to blame for the conflict, discuss Western discourse's simplistic representations of the conflict, claim that both Russian and Ukrainian media convey propaganda, consider structural similarities between the two, discuss the scarcity of pro-Russian information in Western-controlled media, argue that the U.S. media have long reinforced a negative image of Russia, and question why the (dis)information strategies used by Russia are a popular topic of academic inquiry while those employed by Ukraine are not. We analyzed the entirety of these seven articles, to check whether they actually deliver on their abstracts' promises of more nuanced analysis of the conflict without uncritically reproducing the anti-Russian hegemonic discourse described above. In fact, only three of the seven accomplished this:

- “Enemies by Kinship: Securitized Language and the Russian Diaspora in Escalated Gray Zone Conflict” (Belo, 2024) argues that the linguistic policy of the post-Maidan Ukrainian government contributed significantly to the escalation of the Russia–Ukraine crisis, referring to critical social studies that question the cultural policies of the post-Maidan government. It also considers other crucial aspects of the situation, such as Russia's security concerns related to NATO's expansion and military buildup on Russia's borders.
- “Doing Journalism in Times of Conflict: A Cross-National Examination of News Source Attribution and Framing in Allied Countries' Media” (Ofori, 2024) finds “a scarcity of pro-Russian sources across the media, a trend particularly pronounced in the *New York Times* and the *Guardian*, where pro-Ukrainian sources held greater prominence, potentially skewing the overall perspective presented” (p. 1). The authors cite distinguished scholars of Western propaganda, who inform their work's perspective.
- “Spreading the ‘Smog of War’: the impact of propaganda, social media, and OSINT on U.S. civil intelligence relations” (Oakley and Rogg, 2024) argues that “in the case of the Russo-Ukrainian war, Russian propaganda and disinformation has received

overwhelming attention in the United States” (p. 540), while “the Ukrainian government has purposefully spread myths and misinformation, arguably more deftly than the Russians” (p. 542). Providing several examples of Ukraine’s information warfare, the paper claims that “part of the problem is that propaganda has been masquerading as intelligence” (p. 542).

David Oakley and Jeff Rogg (2024) also align with the critical scholars cited in the introduction of this paper, arguing that the Censorship-Industrial Complex—including academia—does its best to fix hegemonic discourses and filter out oppositional interpretations. The scarcity of academic research on Ukrainian and Western propaganda regarding the Ukrainian crisis may partially explain why even papers striving to maintain academic neutrality still end up reproducing the hegemonic anti-Russian discourse. For instance, “Modern Armed Conflicts: Disinformation Campaigns Shaping the Digital Information Landscape” (Cherry, 2024) emphasizes that information on “the disinformation strategies used by Ukraine to disrupt Russian forces is not as readily available as information on Russia is” (p. 8). And it raises the crucial question “of why this information on Ukraine is lacking, but that of Russia is plentiful” (p. 8). However, because of this imbalance, the paper’s introduction discusses only Russian’ disinformation operations—“an integral part of Russian warfare doctrine,” (p. 7)—without an overview of Ukrainian disinformation operations. Similar problems were observed with the other three papers in the category of *Not Just Russia*: upon closer inspection, although striving for academic neutrality, they nevertheless reproduced the anti-Russian hegemonic discourse, failing to consider alternative meanings that are crucial for understanding the conflict.

## **DISCUSSION**

Sixty-two of the hundred academic papers, published within the designated six-month period and most related to the keywords “Ukraine [AND] Russia [AND] propaganda,” themselves actually reproduce the West’s hegemonic anti-Russian discourse, explaining the

Ukraine conflict overwhelmingly in terms of Russia's aggressiveness, imperialism, autocracy, and propaganda. Another 31 reproduce this anti-Russian discourse implicitly, by failing to question and/or problematize its basic assumptions. Only seven attempts, with varying success, to avoid the uncritical reproduction of the discourse. Demonstrating unbiasedness and freedom of thinking, these contribute to knowledge of the Russia–Ukraine conflict through consideration of familiar themes from fresh perspectives.

Ninety-three articles are similar in their exclusion of alternative meanings from consideration, their “closure of discourse” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). This is not inherently a problem; any discourse is established by the exclusion of alternative sign-associations.

It becomes a problem when the closure assumes a systemic character, excluding political alternatives. The myth of an “autocratic Russia fighting for its imperial past through aggression and disinformation,” actively or passively reproduced by 93% of the papers analyzed, is only one possible articulation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Alternative interpretations are possible, but were not included in these academic papers. These interpretations include:

- Russia's opposition to “a massive U.S./NATO military build-up ... near Russia's borders” (Marmura, 2023, p. 52).
- The (Euro)Maidan coup d'état, backed by Western powers to transform Ukraine into “a western bulwark on Russia's borders” (Mearsheimer, 2002).
- The politics of post-Maidan Ukraine, which silenced and criminalized all oppositional interpretations of the Maidan coup d'état, as a result of which “oppositional journalists and bloggers have been intimidated, prosecuted, and jailed. Many of them were forced to flee Ukraine” (Baysha, 2023, p. 61).
- Pro-Russian popular sentiment in the Donbass, where “people with a pro-Ukrainian political position existed, but they were few—some left for other parts of Ukraine, some got disappointed with the developments there and others gave up their loyalty under the weight of pragmatic considerations” (Matveeva, 2022, p. 422).

- The unwillingness (or inability given nationalist opposition) of the Ukrainian government to implement the Minsk peace accords of 2015, which “demanded recognition of significantly more political diversity in Ukraine, far beyond the bounds of what was acceptable after the Euromaidan” (Ishchenko, 2024, p. 126).
- The failure of the Istanbul peace negotiations of 2022, seemingly due to the intrusion of the UK, which “continued to oppose a deal with Russia, urging military escalation to secure a Ukrainian victory” and weaken Russia (Dixon, 2023, p. 450).
- The “one-sidedness of corporate mainstream Western media coverage in support to the official perceptions” of the Russia–Ukraine conflict, amounting to “complicity with the propaganda aims of imperial power” (Boyd-Barrett, 2017, p. 2).

Any accurate account of the Russia-Ukraine conflict must consider these factors. Instead, the overwhelming majority of analyzed articles ignored them, and instead actively reproduced the hegemonic anti-Russian discourse of aggression, authoritarianism, imperialism, and propaganda, or at least passively accepted this as a given.

Thus, the Western-dominated system of scholarship homogenizes discourse, impoverishes thinking, weaponizes knowledge, and deepens international contradictions. The Othering of Russia, as a pariah beyond the bounds of monolithic “civilization,” annihilates the common symbolic space necessary for communication and compromise (Baysha, 2022). Scholarship that reproduces this Othering contributes to that annihilation.

As Hayward and Robinson (2024) put it, “Even in academia, the presumption widely prevails that giving either epistemological or ethical credit to the Russian perspective in any matter at all is not appropriate when it differs from the official Western perspective” (p. 6). There are different mechanisms used to silence dissenters giving credit to the Russian perspective: peer review, self-censorship, grant-giving policies, and more (Kaufman, 2021). “Flack”—disciplinary measures that may take the form of humiliating and discrediting

dissidents (Herman and Chomsky, 2021)—seems to be especially important. Those challenging the official Western perspective and arguing that Russia's concerns need to be heard are seen to be “Putin's propagandists,” “Putin's useful idiots,” or “Putin's cronies”; they are censured and canceled.

Even internationally eminent scholars like John Mearsheimer and Jeffrey Sachs are now being censured for sharing their opinion on the matter: for instance, a widely publicized call for Mearsheimer's “cancelation” was issued by University of Chicago students..., while a large international group of academics wrote an open letter detailing how “appalled” they were by Sachs' public position.... (Hayward and Robinson, 2024).

Sakwa (2025) also describes several attempts to “cancel” him through the denunciation of his lectures and problems with publication agreements. The authors of this paper have privately heard similar stories from other critical scholars.

The increasing normalization of such treatment, even of researchers with international repute, will inevitably have a chilling effect on young scholars worried for their academic careers, blurring the line between education and indoctrination to the point of indistinguishability. The anti-Russian discourse is meanwhile reproduced on a daily basis, encountering resistance only from those scholars with sufficient bravery or status to defend their intellectual self-respect and freedom.

The community of Russian scholars is targeted with collective guilt that often differs little from racism (Sakwa, 2025). Russian scholars are either denied the right to attend international conferences, or attacked there with the tacit approval of conference organizers, as happened to an author of this paper last year in Valencia at the annual meeting of the Discourse.Net International Association for Discourse Studies (<https://discourseanalysis.net>)—a case discussed by Tabe Bergman and Jesse Owen Hearn-Branaman in their recent book “Media, Dissidence, and War in Ukraine” (2024, p. 11)

A Russian scholar obviously has little chance of publishing anything on the Ukraine–Russia conflict with a Western publishing house, although this is not impossible (e.g., Baysha, 2022; 2023). But

a great deal of endurance is required in the face of immediate desk-rejections and peer reviews whose ideologically-driven hostility is only thinly masked by pseudo-academic justifications.

## CONCLUSIONS

The mechanisms for silencing and canceling “Others” are constantly improving. One of the *Russian-Aggression*-framed articles writes: “The citation politics in this article [are] in line with our critical emancipatory approach: rather than citing and amplifying the voices we critique[,] and [thus] at times replicating Russian propaganda, we cite those who review and critique them [i.e., those voices] with us..” (Hendl et al., 2024, p. 174). Such a conscious rejection of alternative perspectives, under the pretext of fighting propaganda, has serious implications. The less “dissenters” are cited, the less their voices will be heard, and even fewer people will wonder why the information available is so one-sided.

The results of this study suggest that the time has come for the Russian academic community to initiate a broad discussion on the rationality of its attempts to stay within a ‘global’ academia that is actually under the structural control and ideological hegemony of the West. There is little value in the academic publishing industry that excludes alternative perspectives and imposes homogeneity of thought. It may be more fruitful to create an alternative system of global publishing that has room for diverse, multidimensional outlooks.

For Laclau and Mouffe (1985), the political is not limited to procedural matters within institutions of power; it is much more about contestations over meanings. The political ends when hegemonic meanings are fossilized to the extent of becoming unquestioned. If this happens, those propagating alternative interpretations simply disappear from the political field.

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