

Abstract

This volume inspects Russian propaganda in Serbia by examining the online content on the Russia-funded channel of Sputnik Srbija in the first year of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The case of Serbia is specific since Serbia has so far refused to impose sanctions on Russia, effectively remaining one of the few states in the world whose political elites still highlight the importance of their relations with Moscow despite Belgrade having stayed committed, perhaps only declaratively, to joining the EU. The volume opens by providing background information on the research issue and the Serbian media space, deliberating on the specifics of this case within the protracted democratization paradigm, making contextualization of the propaganda found at said online channel possible. To meet its goals, the volume communicates with theoretical insights of discursive research by, among others, Zienkowski, who highlighted the lack of discursive treatment of propaganda.

The volume pays tribute to and communicates with the existing knowledge of propaganda to achieve several goals. On the one hand, it creates a link between propaganda and discourse studies, aiming to fill the gap in scholarship. The volume approaches propaganda in a value-neutral sense, applying in an abridged and somewhat altered form, the analytical method introduced by Jowett and O'Donnell, relying on both Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Narrative Analysis when examining the primary sources. The body of primary sources consists of articles posted online on the Sputnik Srbija webpage in the first year of the Russian attack. On the other hand, besides establishing the link between propaganda and discourse studies, the volume discursively treats ideological frameworks behind said propaganda. In doing so, the volume exemplifies, as claimed by Zienkowski, that propaganda is both informed by and may be (ab)used to strengthen any ideological position, introducing values, norms, and beliefs that may be the foundation of future political, economic, and overall societal changes.

More than that, the volume discursively approaches the narratives found in the primary sources, examining their relationship with the discourses on Russia, Serbia, and Russia in Ukraine. Lastly, the volume contextualizes Russian propaganda in one more manner, as it sheds light on its link to the agenda of Serbian nationalism that hosts values and beliefs shared by one particular segment of the Serbian population, the so-called "First Serbia". It is at this point that the volume creates a bridge towards the scholarship developed by Russell-Omaljev, highlighting that this segment of the population, whose views are chiefly nationalist, anti-European, uncivic, illiberal, anti-Western, and pro-Russian, is in all likelihood the prime

recipient of said propaganda. The volume is concluded by a discussion on the propaganda interacting with and establishing links towards the given nationalist ideological rationale that has remained formidable to this very day.