









“How Russia uses science to justify the annexation of Ukrainian territories”

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HOW RUSSIA USES SCIENCE TO JUSTIFY THE ANNEXATION OF UKRAINIAN TERRITORIES

Abstract

This paper explores how Russia uses the international academic sphere, including scientific papers, scientometric databases, international publishers, and international organizations, as a propaganda tool to legitimize its appropriation of Ukrainian territories and Ukrainian academic institutions there. To do this, a bibliometric analysis was used. The results showed that thousands of academic papers published in 2014–2024 in peer-reviewed journals by Russian academicians marked Ukrainian territories as those referring and affiliated with the Russian Federation. The same is true for the case of editorial boards of international journals, where Ukrainian cities were incorrectly marked as part of the Russian Federation. Quite often, those organizations that provide affiliations in the occupied territories of Ukraine are not even legitimate: they were created by Russia using the captured Ukrainian scientific infrastructure and often named similarly or the same as the existing Ukrainian institutions-in-exile. It is important that the international scientific community put an end to this misuse of its resources. The study findings highlighted the importance and urgency of coordinated actions from academic journals, publishing platforms, and scientometric databases towards vigilant oversight of the content they host and accountability of the authors to prevent the dissemination, indexing, or promotion of Russian narratives and propaganda related to the appropriation of the Ukrainian territories.

Keywords

sanctions, Russian science, propaganda, annexation,
Scopus, academic integrity, Russian Federation

JEL Classification

H56, I20, N30, N40

INTRODUCTION

Following the unprovoked and unjustified aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, numerous sanctions targeting the Russian Federation, Russian companies, and Russian individuals across various sectors, including the military, economy, culture, sports, and science, have been implemented. Currently, over 22,000 different sanctions are active against Russia, indicating the highest level of sanctioning in history (Castellum, 2025).

Aggressor countries focus their efforts on spreading propaganda to legitimize their aggression and occupation policies worldwide. One of such focuses is science. In times of war, science can be weaponized, used as a means to influence minds and shape public consciousness. For any aggressor, it is crucial to establish dominance in this arena, seeking recognition from the international scientific community and striving to become an integral part of it.

Despite this, the application of sanctions in the field of science is particularly controversial due to a myth that science is outside of politics. There is still the ongoing debate and opposition (both silent and vocal) concerning sanctions against Russian science. Still, many measures have been adopted. These include funding restrictions, halting collab-

orations with Russian institutions and closing joint projects, imposing restrictions and limitations on equipment and reagents, and scientists have refused to participate in scientific conferences and international cooperation.

Despite existing measures, there are some facts of Russian propaganda detected in academic journals and papers. One of the most commonly observed cases concerns the appropriation of Ukrainian territories. This involves providing affiliation with the Russian Federation to various Ukrainian regions in editorial boards or academic papers and books, as well as the dissemination of Russian propaganda and narratives that supported the annexation of Ukrainian territories.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Russian-Ukrainian war is increasingly understood in academic discourse as a multidimensional phenomenon that goes beyond the traditional understanding of an armed conflict. It entails not only military aggression, but also deeply rooted ideological, political, social, and intellectual processes that form a holistic strategy of influence on Ukrainian society.

In this context, the neo-imperial ideology that underlies the Kremlin's foreign policy and seeks the logic of invasion as an attempt to restore control over the post-Soviet space attracts special attention from researchers (Melvin, 2022). After that, Vladimir Putin's imperial ambitions, based on the revealed prehistoric Russia as a great single state, are considered one of the key missions, but certainly not the reason for the invasion of Ukraine (Götz & Ekman, 2024). This ideology generates a logic of civilizational confrontation, in which Ukraine is viewed not as an independent entity, but as part of the "Russian world" that must be brought back under Moscow's control (Mishalova et al., 2024; Oksamytna, 2023). In addition, Russia tries to legitimize its imperial ambitions through historical revision and denial of the sovereignty of neighboring states (Mälksoo, 2022).

However, these ambitions are not unfounded; they are deeply rooted in Russia's specific strategic culture, which evokes a sense of vulnerability to the West with confidence in the right to dominate the regions (Götz & Staun, 2022). Such a culture was formed under the influence of the imperial past, the legacy of the Cold War, and the perception of NATO eastward expansion as a potential threat to national security (Mearsheimer, 2022). At the same time, aggression against Ukraine serves to

preserve authoritarian rule in the face of growing internal instability, manifested in socio-economic difficulties, declining trust in state institutions, growing protest sentiments, and a difficult balancing tool between other elite groups in the middle regime (Gomza, 2022; Orttung, 2022).

No less important is Russia's rejection of the supposedly established liberal vision of an international order based on cooperation, well-established respect for sovereignty, and open borders. Instead, as Moisio (2022) emphasizes, the Russian state continues to pursue a logic of rigid territorial governance, in which physical control over land, borders, and infrastructure is seen as the basis of political power. At the same time, control over territories is no longer seen as physical occupation, but has transformed into infrastructural warfare or "infracide" as a means of undermining the viability of the territory (Dodds et al., 2023).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has had profound humanitarian and institutional consequences, particularly for the scientific community (Fiialka, 2022; Greshta et al., 2023; Orzhel et al., 2024). According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (2025), since the start of the full-scale invasion, more than 100 universities have been damaged or destroyed, mostly in the eastern and southern regions of the country, where the fighting has been most intense. These losses have had a significant impact on the human resources potential of science and academic mobility. According to a study by de Rassenfosse et al. (2023), about 18.5% of Ukrainian scientists emigrated abroad, and among those who remained in Ukraine, about 15% ceased their scientific activities. The productivity of scientists has also suffered (Suchikova et al., 2023); according to a study by Ganguli and Waldinger (2023), the volume of

scientific publications by Ukrainian researchers has decreased by about 10%, and about 5% of the most productive scientists have started publishing with foreign affiliations. Such dynamics indicate a profound destabilization of the scientific environment and a loss of human capital, which will have long-term consequences for the restoration and development of the national scientific system.

A separate challenge for the Ukrainian academic community was the waves of relocation of universities from occupied and dangerous territories that took place in 2014 and 2022 (Bezzubko & Ponomarova, 2023). As a study on the example of Donetsk National Technical University, which was relocated twice, shows, the relocation was accompanied by significant losses of human capital, a decrease in the number of teachers, and a transformation of the organizational structure (Zakharova & Prodanova, 2023).

At the same time, the war has caused large-scale transformations in the educational and scientific environment, in particular in the temporarily occupied territories (Suchikova, 2023). According to UN estimates, up to 11 million people may live in these territories of Ukraine – these are the regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhia regions, as well as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (EBU Investigative Journalism Network, 2023). Some of them are pupils, students, their parents, teachers, and scientists who become direct objects of influence of Russian propaganda. In particular, according to the study by Friedrich (2024), the educational process in the temporarily occupied territories is undergoing a systemic transformation: teachers are forced to undergo special “training” in Russia, where they are taught to teach according to adapted programs that include the Russian version of Ukrainian history, Russian literature and language, while simultaneously displacing Ukrainian identity from the educational space. This is confirmed by the research of Malyarenko and Kormych (2022), which shows that in the recently occupied territories of Kherson and Zaporizhia regions, there is also an active implementation of a centralized propaganda model: teachers are either imported from the Russian Federation or sent for retraining in Russia. According to a report by the EBU Investigative Journalism Network (2023), significant attention

is paid to military-patriotic education among children and youth, creating conditions under which it is almost impossible to avoid. This is direct evidence that the Russian Federation is consciously implementing an imperial policy of cultural and linguistic assimilation (linguicide) in the temporarily occupied territories (Kotliuk, 2022).

In such conditions, scientific activity loses its autonomy and freedom, turning into an instrument of ideological control. Scientists are forced to either adapt to Russian narratives or leave the region. Tsybuliak et al. (2023) note that scientists under occupation face not only a lack of resources and security threats, but also moral pressure, uncertainty, and attempts to impose new ideological frameworks on the educational process. At the same time, despite the growing attention to the humanitarian and institutional consequences of the war, the scientific discourse still lacks a systematic analysis of how Russia uses the international academic infrastructure, in particular scientometric databases, academic journals, and international organizations, to legitimize the occupation of Ukrainian territories. It is this aspect of the use of science as an instrument of soft power and a means of international legitimization of aggression that remains critically unexplored and requires deeper academic reflection, which justifies the aim of the paper.

2. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

One of the most commonly used methods of propaganda by Russia in the academic sphere is providing affiliation with the Russian Federation to Ukrainian regions, both in journals and descriptions of editorial boards. This practice has been observed even on the websites of international publishers like Springer Nature and Elsevier. The Scopus database (Elsevier) is used in this study for the research purposes because it is not only allows us to identify individual propaganda cases, but also provides the means to extract statistics related to the frequency of such situations, proving that this is a systematic issue and not an isolated incident. The most typical illustrations of these cases can be found in the screenshots provided in S Appendix A (Scopus) and Appendix B (Springer Nature).

For the investigation, bibliometric analysis methodology as well as data from the Scopus database over the period 2014–2024 were used.

The search algorithm was as follows: a Ukrainian city of interest is queried. For example, “Donetsk”. This allows us to see the total number of publications affiliated with Donetsk. Next, we filter it with the limitation of the territory “Russian Federation”. This allows us to find the number of publications where Donetsk is affiliated with Russia. In the resulting list, an additional search is performed for a mention of “Ukraine” in the affiliation to make sure that the resulting combination is not spurious due to the presence of another institute based in Russia in the author list. Such cases are manually removed from the count.

Here is an example of a search query link for the case of Donetsk: Scopus Search Query for Donetsk:

<https://www.scopus.com/results/results.uri?sort=plf-f&src=s&st1=Donetsk&sid=9f3aa224b52d0904fc105b3f9ec2f63e&sot=b&sdt=b&sl=18&s=AFFILCITY%28Donetsk%29&origin=searchbasic&editSaveSearch=&yearFrom=Before+1960&yearTo=Present&sessionSearchId=9f3aa224b52d0904fc105b3f9ec2f63e&limit=10>

The following Ukrainian territories were used as objects of analysis:

- Donetsk;
- Lugansk;
- Sevastopol;
- Simferopol;
- Yalta;
- Kerch;
- Crimea;
- Mariupol.

This is not an exhaustive list of Ukrainian territories marked as Russian (other examples include Feodosia, Yevpatoria, Makeevka, Alchevsk, and many others), but for illustrative purposes, this selection is more than sufficient.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the results of the bibliometric analysis, highlighting a troubling pattern: numer-

ous academic publications indexed by Scopus inaccurately affiliated Ukrainian territories as being part of the Russian Federation. There is a strong correlation of this pattern with the duration of Russian occupation and the year in which annexation was officially claimed.

For example, Crimea has been occupied and claimed by Russia since 2014. Here we can observe the highest misrepresentation rates – over 90% across all three years.

Donetsk and Lugansk, also occupied in 2014 but only claimed by Russia in 2022, show a sharp increase in misattributed affiliations – from 10% and 3% in 2022 to 86% and 62%, respectively, by 2024.

Mariupol (occupied in 2022) demonstrate a growing concern – from zero misrepresented affiliations in the year of invasion to 11% by 2024.

Kherson, which was briefly occupied and liberated in 2022, had no affiliations with Russia during 2022 or 2023. Yet surprisingly, four publications in 2024 affiliated with Russian Federation, questioning retrospective misrepresentation.

Upon our inquiry to Scopus regarding this situation, their response was as follows:

“When displaying third party data in the product, Scopus does not make changes to the data and remains true to the original source and the information and data is shown as such.” In other words, Scopus does not take responsibility for the information provided in its database. This stance implies that Scopus will continue to provide its platform for Russian propaganda.

Data bases, like Scopus, do not correct materials provided to them by journals (although they can decide if to host the illegitimate information on their websites or not).

Discussion of the issue highlights that journals knowingly accept submissions with problematic institutional affiliations. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the 2023 Scopus publications (referenced in Table 1) by publisher, providing evidence on propaganda disseminated. Remarkably, over 30% of the cases where Ukrainian territo-

Table 1. Ukrainian territories marked as Russian in Scopus in 2022–2024

Source: Elaborated by authors (in-built Scopus instruments).

Ukrainian territory/city	2022	2023	2024	% in 2022	% in 2023	% in 2024
Donetsk	154	177	145	–	–	–
Donetsk is affiliated with the Russian Federation	16	115	124	10 %	65 %	86 %
Lugansk	38	46	29	–	–	–
Lugansk is affiliated with the Russian Federation	1	23	18	3 %	50 %	62 %
Sevastopol (Crimea)	575	633	448	–	–	–
Sevastopol is affiliated with the Russian Federation	556	625	435	97 %	99 %	97 %
Simferopol (Crimea)	379	444	417	–	–	–
Simferopol is affiliated with the Russian Federation	348	413	381	92 %	93 %	91 %
Yalta (Crimea)	69	81	60	–	–	–
Yalta is affiliated with the Russian Federation	60	75	54	87 %	93 %	90 %
Kerch (Crimea)	27	29	12	–	–	–
Kerch is affiliated with the Russian Federation	19	29	12	70 %	100 %	100 %
Crimea	11	15	5	–	–	–
Crimea is affiliated with the Russian Federation	10	11	2	91 %	73 %	40 %
Mariupol	100	46	19	–	–	–
Mariupol is affiliated with the Russian Federation	0	2	2	0 %	4 %	11 %

ries are erroneously affiliated with Russia come from international publishing houses. Springer Nature/Pleiades (Germany/USA) account for the largest share, followed by MDPI (Switzerland), EDP Sciences (France), IEEE (USA), and Elsevier (Netherlands). Additionally, smaller numbers of such publications appeared under ASV Publishing, CSIRO, MM Publishing, Science Press, Wolters Kluwer Medknow Publications, and World Scientific.

The issue is that journals choose to accept publications with problematic affiliations. Table 2 breaks down the publications in Scopus for the year 2023 shown in Table 1 by publisher. Notably over 30% of the affiliations to Russia per city are propagated through the international publishers, heavily dominated by Springer Nature/Pleiades (Germany/USA), followed by MDPI (Switzerland), EDP Science (France), IEEE (USA) and Elsevier (Netherlands). Individual publications appeared in

Table 2. Number of publications by publisher in Scopus in 2023, affiliating Ukrainian cities to the Russian Federation

Source: Springer Nature (2020).

2023	Sevastopol	Simferopol	Donetsk	Yalta	Kerch	Lugansk	Crimea	Mariupol
Total	625	413	115	75	29	23	11	2
Springer Nature/Pleiades, Germany/USA	194	64	40	15	7	10	9	0
MDPI, Switzerland	65	25	5	12	2	1		2
EDP Science, France	43	32	4	11	8	1	0	0
IEEE, USA	37	8	3	6	7	1	0	0
Elsevier, Netherlands	24	7	3	0	1	0	0	0
SPIE, France	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AIP Publishing, USA	11	14	0	4	1	1	0	0
J Wiley and sons	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Taylor & Francis	3		0	0	0	0	0	0
EcoVector, Russia	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Frontiers	3		0	0	0	0	0	0
IOP, UK	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0
Cambridge, UK	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bentham	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0
WB Saunders	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Science and Innovation Publishing House	0	5	1	3	0	0	0	0

ASV Publishing, CSIRO, MM Publishing, Science Press, Wolters Kluwer Medknow Publications and World Scientific.

It is not surprising that Springer Nature/Pleiades Publishing partnership leads the list: together with Pleiades subsidiary Allerton Press, they are the leading global provider of English language journals from the former USSR, publishing over 200 English-language journals (emanating from over 270 local language journals) on the Springer website.

In Appendix C, you can find a list of journals published by Springer Nature where we have detected cases of Ukrainian territories being marked as Russian. This is not the whole list but a selection of examples. We stopped at the letter “P” and explored only journals with international members on the editorial board. Even with these limitations, we identified 50 journals. As can be seen, this is not a coin-

cidence but a system. The number of cases is much higher because there are journals with dozens of instances of Ukrainian territories marked as Russian.

It is not only about Scopus/Elsevier or Springer. The same practices can be found among other participants in the academic publication industry, including:

- WoS/Clarivate;
- International publishers (Taylor & Francis, IOPscience, AIP Publishing, etc.);
- International organizations (e.g., ISSN);
- Repositories and archives of preprints and academic papers (e.g. Arxiv, SSRN, etc);
- Academic Social Nets (e.g. ResearchGate).

Table 3. Selected comments from publishers regarding the designations of territories

Publisher	Source	Comment
Springer, Germany	https://doi.org/10.3103/S1068373923100060	“Allerton Press remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations”
IOP Publishing, UK	https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.3847/1538-4357/ab765d	“While the AAS journals adhere to and respect UN resolutions regarding the designations of territories (available at http://www.un.org/press/en), it is our policy to use the affiliations provided by our authors on published articles.”

Table 4. Main organizations that are used to affiliate Ukrainian territories to Russia, together with a number of affected publications listed by Scopus for 2023 and 2024

From Scopus	Number of Publications in		Locations
	2023	2024	
Vernadsky Crimean Federal University (different spellings)	376 (355/21)	309 (304/5)	Simferopol/ Yalta
Sevastopol State University	223	163	Sevastopol
Marine Hydrophysical Institute of RAS	222	117	Sevastopol
A. O. Kovalevsky Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas of the Russian Academy of Sciences (different spellings possible)	185	152	Sevastopol
Donetsk National Medical University/Donetsk State Medical University	32 (19/13)	31	Donetsk
Nikitsky Botanical Gardens – National Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (different names)	29	32	Yalta
Donetsk State University/Donetsk National University	28 (17/11)	28	Donetsk
Kerch State Maritime Technological University (different spellings)	25	11	Kerch
All-Russian National Research Institute of Winegrowing and Winemaking “Magarach,” Russian Academy of Sciences	25	13	Yalta
A. A. Galkin Donetsk Institute for Physics and Engineering (different spellings)	24	17	Donetsk
Institute of Archaeology of Crimea (different spellings)	24	23	Simferopol
Research Institute of Agriculture of Crimea	22	18	Simferopol
Institute of Natural and Technical Systems	21	29	Sevastopol
Donetsk National Technical University	15	15	Donetsk
Lugansk State Pedagogical University	8	6	Lugansk
Crimean Astrophysical Observatory	9	0	Nauchny, Crimea

Table 5. Examples of selected Ukrainian institutes that are impersonated by illegal Russian entities

Original Ukrainian Institutes	Impostor Institutes created by Russia
V.I. Vernadsky Taurida National University, currently in Kyiv (https://tnu.edu.ua/)	V.I. Vernadsky Crimean Federal University
Sevastopol National Technical University, Sevastopol City Humanitarian University and Sevastopol National University of Nuclear Energy and Industry, Sevastopol Faculty of Maritime Transport and Sevastopol Maritime College of the Kyiv State Academy of Water Transport, Sevastopol branches of Odesa National Pedagogical University, and Donetsk National University of Economics and Trade	Sevastopol State University
Marine Hydrophysical Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine	Marine Hydrophysical Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences
A. O. Kovalevsky Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, renamed in 2014 into Institute of Marine Biology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine located and located in Odesa (http://imb.odessa.ua/)	A. O. Kovalevsky Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas of the Russian Academy of Sciences
Donetsk National Medical University, currently in Kropyvnytskyi (https://dnmu.com.ua)	Donetsk National Medical University/Donetsk State Medical University
Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University, which was moved to Vinnytsia (http://www.donnu.edu.ua/)	Donetsk State University/Donetsk National University
A. A. Galkin Donetsk Institute for Physics and Engineering of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, currently in Kyiv (http://www.donphti.kiev.ua/)	A. A. Galkin Donetsk Institute for Physics and Engineering of the Russian Academy of Sciences
Donetsk National Technical University, currently in Luts'k (https://donntu.edu.ua/en)	Donetsk National Technical University

Details are provided in Appendix D.

The issue spans various disciplines, including Chemistry, Physics, Astronomy, Biology, Engineering, Mathematics, Entomology, Physiology, Medicine, and Ichthyology. Traces of Russian propaganda can be found everywhere in the academic sphere.

Notably, some publishers are aware of potential issues as summarized in Table 3. But this approach is not uniform across the publications.

Table 4 details the main organizations that propagate those misaffiliations in the Scopus database.

At the heart of the problem is that the organizations that provide affiliations in the occupied territories of Ukraine are not even legitimate: they were created by Russia using the captured Ukrainian scientific infrastructure and often named similarly or the same as the existing Ukrainian institutions-in-exile, as shown in Table 5. This aims to mislead the international scientific community.

Russia works to integrate those impostor organizations into the international scientific community through their scientific research (international partnerships¹, projects, and publications), to the detriment of the legal Ukrainian scientific institutions. Many of the institutes on the list have been

expropriated and absorbed illegally by the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS).

An additional form of annexation propaganda by Russia is affiliations in the editorial boards of those journals, which are present in the international academic sphere (being published by an international publisher or indexed in databases).

During the investigation, several instances were identified where Ukrainian cities were incorrectly marked as part of the Russian Federation in editorial boards. Below are a few examples:

- **Journal “Russian Journal of Coordination Chemistry”** (published by Springer). Editorial member Victor F. Shul’gin is affiliated with the Ukrainian city of Simferopol, but the journal lists it as part of the Russian Federation (<https://link.springer.com/journal/11173/editors>);
- **Journal “Water Resources”** (published by Springer). Editorial member Sergey K. Kononov is affiliated with the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol, but the journal lists it as part of the Russian Federation (<https://link.springer.com/journal/11173/editors>);
- **Journal “Construction Materials and Products”** (indexed by Scopus): Editorial

¹ University of Lucknow signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas, the oldest “Russian” institute of science (stolen from Ukraine!) (Hindustan Times, 2025).

Table 6. Russian propaganda of annexation in academic papers: Selected cases indexed in Scopus or published by international publishers

Journal Title	Example of propaganda
Russian Social Science Review	A justification of the legality of the Crimea annexation (https://doi.org/10.1080/10611428.2021.2002064)
Eurasian Geography and Economics	A justification of the Crimea annexation (https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/85063221161)
Public Health and Life Environment	Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (former Donetsk and Lugansk regions), Zaporozhye and Kherson regions are mentioned and discussed as parts of the Russian Federation (https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/85184611873)
Almanac of Clinical Medicine	The Ukrainian city of Donetsk is mentioned as a part of the Russian Federation (https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/85179987230)
Kutafin Law Review	Justifies so so-called DNR and LNR (https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/85191990443)
Psychology and Law	The so-called Donetsk People's Republic is mentioned instead of the Donetsk Region of Ukraine (https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/85181824857)
RUSI Journal	A propaganda of the Crimea annexation (https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/84903462174)

board member Oleg Nikolaevich Zaytsev is affiliated with the Ukrainian city of Simferopol, but the journal lists it as part of the Russian Federation. (<https://bstu-journals.ru/en/editorial-team>);

- **Journal “Ecosystem Transformation”** (indexed by Scopus): Associate Editor Irina I. Rudneva is affiliated with the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol, but the journal lists it as part of the Russian Federation. (<http://en.ecosysttrans.com/o-zhurnale/redkollegiya.php>);
- **Journal “Arkheologiya Evraziiskikh Stepei”** (indexed by Scopus): Executive Editor Sergei G. Bocharov is affiliated with the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol, but the journal lists it as part of the Russian Federation. The same misrepresentation applies to the Editorial Board member, V. P. Kyrylko (<https://www.evraz-step.ru/index.php/aes/editorial-board>);
- **Journal “Vestnik Vosstanovitel'noj Mediciny”** (indexed by Scopus): Editorial board member Vladimir Vladimirovich Ezhov is affiliated with the Ukrainian city of Yalta, but the journal lists it as part of the Russian Federation. (<https://www.vvmr.ru/about/redaktsiya/>).

Russia promotes annexation not only through-out affiliations of authors, but in the texts of academic papers published by Russian academicians in both Russian and international journals. Hundreds of similar cases were observed during the investigation. Some examples are provided in Table 6.

As can be seen, Russia actively uses the academic sphere to justify the annexation of Ukrainian territories. For these purposes, affiliations of authors both in the papers and editorial boards are used, as well as the text of academic papers indexed in international scientometric databases or published by international publishers. As a cover for such propaganda activity, principles of “academic freedom”, “neutrality,” and “science is out of politics” are used.

In the face of today's challenges, the field of academic publishing must be flexible. Academic journals, scientometric databases, and professional associations need to adapt to emerging crises and implement effective solutions to address and prevent them. An effective response to the current wartime context is to reconsider the interpretation of the principle of neutrality, which has traditionally allowed for collaboration with representatives from Russia on the global scientific stage.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper highlights how Russia uses the international academic sphere (scientometric databases, international publishers, and international organizations) as a vehicle for legitimization of its appropriation of Ukrainian territories. It is important that the international scientific community put an end to this misuse

of its resources. In particular, there is an urgent need for monitoring and sanctions launched from the side of academic journals, publishers, and scientometric databases to prevent misrepresentation of the Ukrainian territories as Russian. Responsibility and accountability of authors and the abovementioned institutions in this regard have to become the cornerstone of integrity and truth in research in wartime conditions.

This paper explores how Russia uses the international academic sphere, including scientometric databases, international publishers, and international organizations, as a propaganda tool to legitimize its appropriation of Ukrainian territories and Ukrainian academic institutions there. To do this, data from the Scopus database and Springer journals over the period 2014–2024 are analyzed. Results showed that thousands of academic papers published in peer-reviewed journals by Russian academicians marked Ukrainian territories as the Russian Federation. The same is true for the case of editorial boards of international journals, where Ukrainian cities were incorrectly marked as part of the Russian Federation. Quite often, those organizations that provide affiliations in the occupied territories of Ukraine are not even legitimate: they were created by Russia using the captured Ukrainian scientific infrastructure and often named similarly or the same as the existing Ukrainian institutions-in-exile. It is important that the international scientific community put an end to this misuse of its resources. The findings of the study relate to academic journals, publishing platforms, and scientometric databases, as well as restrictions on authors in terms of disseminating Russian narratives about the appropriation of the Ukrainian territories.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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Data curation: Tetiana Hryn'ova, Viacheslav Plastun, Liudmyla Sliusareva, Oksana Kazak.

Formal analysis: Tetiana Hryn'ova, Liudmyla Sliusareva, Oksana Kazak.

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APPENDIX A

The Ukrainian city of Simferopol is mentioned as part of the Russian Federation by the Russian journal “Reviews on Clinical Pharmacology and Drug Therapy” on the Scopus (Elsevier) website <https://www.scopus.com/record/display.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85184896742&origin=resultslist&sort=plf-f&src=s&sid=4410ad20f3619bc208c3fbc300355ebd&sot=b&sdt=b&s=DOI%2810.17816%2FRCF609553%29&sl=23&sessionSearchId=4410ad20f3619bc208c3fbc300355ebd&relpos=0>

Reviews on Clinical Pharmacology and Drug Therapy • Открытый доступ • Том 21, Выпуск 4, Страницы 357 - 366 • 2023

Tissue oxidative metabolism and microhemodynamics of the skin in rats exposed to stress factors of different durations and combinations

Ravaeva, Marina Yu.  ; Cheretaev, Igor V.  ;
 Chuyan, Elena N.  ; Galenko-Yaroshevskii, Pavel A.  ;
 Dzheldubaeva, Elviza R.  ; Mironyuk, Irina S. 

 Сохранить всех в список авторов

^a V.I. Vernadsky Crimean Federal University, Simferopol, Russian Federation
^b Kuban State Medical University, Krasnodar, Russian Federation

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Figure A1. Example of mentioning the Ukrainian city of Simferopol as part of the Russian Federation

APPENDIX B

The Ukrainian city of Sevastopol is mentioned as part of the Russian Federation by the Russian journal “Bulletin of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Physics” published by Springer Nature <https://link.springer.com/article/10.3103/S1062873821010135>

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Automated Way of Calculating Gas Emissions in Shallow-Water Methane Seeps Using a Passive Method

Published: 21 March 2021
Volume 85, pages 206–209, (2021)

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I. N. Ivanova A. A. Budnikov **T. V. Malakhova** Yu. A. Iakimychyev

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Abstract

An algorithm is developed that allows automatic calculation of the number of gas bubbles seeping from a point source. The algorithm is based on an analysis of recorded acoustic signals generated by the bubbles. The algorithm is tested under field and laboratory conditions. It can be used to calculate gas flows during long-term sessions of monitoring natural methane seeps.

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Figure B1. Example of mentioning the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol as part of the Russian Federation

APPENDIX C

Table C1. The list of 50 Springer Journals spreading the Russian propaganda

No.	Title	Link with example
1	Chemical and Petroleum Engineering	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10556-018-0385-3
2	Applied Magnetic Resonance	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00723-015-0723-y
3	Astronomy Reports	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1063772914120117
4	Astrophysical Bulletin	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1990341319040114
5	Atmospheric and Oceanic Optics	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1024856023060052
6	Automation and Remote Control	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0005117919120099
7	Biochemistry (Moscow)	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S000629792008012X
8	Bulletin of Experimental Biology and Medicine	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10517-022-05381-x
9	Bulletin of the Russian Academy of Sciences: Physics	https://link.springer.com/article/10.3103/S1062873818030346
10	Colloid Journal	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1061933X22040111
11	Contemporary Problems of Ecology	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1995425524700161
12	Differential Equations	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0012266123040067
13	Doklady Biochemistry and Biophysics	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1607672922010045
14	Doklady Biological Sciences	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0012496621060053
15	Doklady Mathematics	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1064562424701965
16	Entomological Review	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0013873819080189
17	Eurasian Soil Science	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1064229322700053
18	Geochemistry International	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0016702922020082
19	Geotectonics	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0016852118040027
20	Glass Physics and Chemistry	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1087659622600223
21	High Energy Chemistry	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0018143923010137
22	Human Physiology	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0362119717030057
23	Inland Water Biology	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1995082923050085
24	Inorganic Materials: Applied Research	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S2075113316020076
25	Journal of Analytical Chemistry	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S106193482305012X
26	Journal of Applied and Industrial Mathematics	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1990478919030165
27	Journal of Applied Mechanics and Technical Physics	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0021894418040041
28	Journal of Evolutionary Biochemistry and Physiology	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0022093019060103
29	Journal of Ichthyology	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S003294522401003X
30	Journal of Mathematical Sciences	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10958-024-06902-x
31	Journal of Mining Science	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1062739116010137
32	Journal of Russian Laser Research	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10946-019-09797-1
33	Journal of Structural Chemistry	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0022476619030193
34	Journal of Surface Investigation X-Ray, Synchrotron and Neutron Techniques	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1027451024020204
35	Journal of Volcanology and Seismology	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0742046320030033
36	Kinetics and Catalysis	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S002315842401004X
37	Lobachevskii Journal of Mathematics	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S199508022105022X
38	Mathematical Notes	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0001434623110378
39	Measurement Techniques	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11018-016-0893-5
40	Mechanics of Solids	https://link.springer.com/article/10.3103/S0025654423070105
41	Metallurgist	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11015-023-01483-7
42	Molecular Biology	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0026893324010114
43	Moscow University Biological Sciences Bulletin	https://link.springer.com/article/10.3103/S0096392522040058
44	Moscow University Chemistry Bulletin	https://link.springer.com/article/10.3103/S0027131421030044
45	Moscow University Geology Bulletin	https://link.springer.com/article/10.3103/S0145875223030122
46	Moscow University Soil Science Bulletin	https://link.springer.com/article/10.3103/S014768742303002X
47	Neuroscience and Behavioral Physiology	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11055-023-01353-4
48	Paleontological Journal	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S0031030120080079
49	Pharmaceutical Chemistry Journal	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11094-020-02166-2
50	Physical Mesomechanics	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1029959914030047

APPENDIX D

RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA INSIDE THE ACADEMIC INDUSTRY

Scientometric databases

WoS/Clarivate

All the key issues detailed for Scopus above are also true for the academic papers indexed by WoS.

International publishers

Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis publishes a yearly ebook entitled “The Territories of the Russian Federation,” which “includes surveys covering the annexed (and disputed) territories of Crimea and Sevastopol” (<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9781003466864/territories-russian-federation-2024-europa-publications>).

It also reprints in its Journal “Welding International” (<https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=twld20>) papers from the Russian Journal Svarochnoe Proizvodstvo [Welding Production]: (http://www.ic-tm.ru/info/o_gurnale_1), which is promoted on its Russian website to “the defense industries in terms of dynamic rearmament.” (http://www.ic-tm.ru/info/glavnij_redaktor_1).

Below is Taylor & Francis’ official position: “We cannot comment on T&F’s contractual relationships publicly.”

IOPScience

Many publications in IOPScience (the publishing company of the Institute of Physics from the UK) mark Ukrainian territories as Russia. This is true both for the whole series (IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering, Volume 971, 2020 (<https://iopscience.iop.org/issue/1757-899X/971/1>): Ukrainian city of Sevastopol is affiliated with the Russian Federation) and single papers:

- IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science (<https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1755-1315/990/1/012024>): Ukrainian city of Sevastopol is affiliated with the Russian Federation;
- Journal of Physics: Conference Series (<https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1742-6596/1866/1/012009>): The Ukrainian city of Sevastopol is affiliated with the Russian Federation

We have identified hundreds of similar examples for the case of Ukrainian cities of Sevastopol, Simferopol, the Republic of Crimea, and other cities/regions that are marked by IOPScience as Russia.

AIP Publishing

AIP Publishing (a subsidiary of the American Institute of Physics, USA) actively promotes Russian propaganda concepts.

For example, the results of the INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MODERN TRENDS IN

MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGIES AND EQUIPMENT 2021: ICMTMTE 2021, 6-10 September 2021, where the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol was marked as Russia, were published by AIP Publishing in AIP Conference Proceedings (Volume 2503, Issue 1): <https://pubs.aip.org/aip/acp/issue/2503/1>).

Cases of affiliation of Ukrainian territories with Russia can be observed in hundreds of single academic papers as well. Below are just a few examples, but there are hundreds of them:

- Kholoptsev, V., Podporin, S. A., & Ol'Khovik, E. O. (2024). Impact of surface currents on variations in levels and mean ice thickness of the Arctic seas. In AIP Conference Proceedings (Vol. 3021, No. 1, 070022). <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0193092>, where the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol is marked as Russia;
- Jallal, M., Smirnova, E., Kozhukhova, N., & Namkhanova, M. (2023). Approaches to the innovative cluster identification in the region. In AIP Conference Proceedings (Vol. 2910, No. 1, 020020). <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0175311>, where the Ukrainian city of Simferopol is marked as the Russian Federation;
- Benai, H., Radionov, T., Sabitov, L., Kiyamov, I., Zagidullin, R., & Voinash, S. (2024). Dynamics of architectural and urban planning transformation of buildings and structures, urban territories based on integrated reconstruction algorithms. In AIP Conference Proceedings (Vol. 3102, No. 1, 020035). <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0199905>, where the Ukrainian city of Makeevka is marked as Russia.

International organizations: The case of the ISSN

The ISSN, an international organization responsible for the registration of academic journals, has decided not to adhere to ISO 3166. As a result, it provides registration to Russian journals situated in occupied Ukrainian territories (Crimea, Donetsk, and Lugansk regions). No compliance measures have been taken, and no sanctions have been imposed against these journals for spreading propaganda.

SSRN

The Social Science Research Network (SSRN) is a repository for preprints devoted to the rapid dissemination of scholarly research in the social sciences.

Provides no compliance and affiliates Ukrainian territories with Russia and directly spreads the Russian propaganda. This is true for the case of papers:

- https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4775129, where the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol is marked as the Russian Federation;

For the case of authors:

- https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/cf_dev/AbsByAuth.cfm?per_id=6491829, where the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol is marked as the Russian Federation;

Also, there are cases with direct support of Russian aggression against Ukraine and annexation of Ukrainian territories:

Burke, John J. A. and Panina-Burke, Svetlana, The Reunification of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol with the Russian Federation: Logic Dictating Borders (June 2, 2017). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com>.

[com/abstract=2979268](https://www.ssrn.com/abstract=2979268) or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2979268>, where the following is mentioned (a direct quote): “Crimea and the City of Sevastopol justifiably separated from Ukraine and reunified with the Russian Federation in 2014.”

Overall, hundreds of cases are observed.

arXiv

arXiv is a free distribution service and an open-access archive for nearly 2.4 million scholarly articles. Below are a few examples of cases when Ukrainian territories are marked as Russian in either references or author affiliations:

- <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2108.11166>, where the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol is marked as the Russian Federation,
- <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2311.10570>, <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2311.14287>, where the Ukrainian city of Alushta is marked as the Russian Federation,
- <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2203.09956>, <https://arxiv.org/html/2211.14355v3>, <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2310.20422>, <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2207.09544>, where the Ukrainian city of Simferopol is marked as the Russian Federation

Academic Social Networks (the case of ResearchGate)

ResearchGate provides affiliation with Russia to Ukrainian territories, both for the case of authors (<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Vadim-Kramar-2> or <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Semen-Osipovskiy>, where the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol is marked as Russian Federation) and papers (Kebkal, Konstantin & Kabanov, Aleksey & Kramar, Oleg & Dimin, Maksim & Abkerimov, Timur & Kramar, Vadim & Kebkal-Akbari, Veronika. (2024). Practical Steps towards Establishing an Underwater Acoustic Network in the Context of the Marine Internet of Things. Applied Sciences. 14. 3527. <https://doi.org/10.3390/app14083527>, where the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol is marked as the Russian Federation.

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