Chapter 11
The European Parliament's Activities in European Union Foreign Policy:
Is This the Mediatization of Conflict Management?

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ABSTRACT

Despite the restricted formal role of the European Parliament (EP) in foreign policy decision-making, the aim of this research is to demonstrate that the EP tries and can actively influence conflict management. Though this influence can only be informal, and cannot take the form of decisions with binding legal effects. In connection with the research goal thus defined, the authors hypothesize that the EP creates political discourse in order to mediatize the conflict using goal-framing and agenda-setting in social media. The research material includes, in addition to documents published in the EP's Public Register of Documents, primarily posts on the EP's social media. The European Parliament's aspirations to expand the scope of its powers in EU foreign policy and the EP's participation in managing the analyzed conflict through mediatization is especially evident in social media communication targeted towards citizens, related to the PE's activity in the field of rhetorical diplomacy.

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of 2022 has given the continent of Europe a strong jolt in terms of building international peace and ensuring security. On February 24, 2022, Russia launched its unprovoked and unjustified full-scale aggression against Ukraine. This violates Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence. Russia is conducting a military invasion in violation of the principles of international and humanitarian law, the victims of which are civilians and civilian infrastructure. Already in the first hours of the war, Russian aggression against Ukraine was condemned by the European Parliament (EP). The subject of this chapter is an assessment of the European Parliament's activities in the area of European Union foreign policy actions. Outlined this way, it requires substantial setting of the limitations of the research field. Firstly, the study is based on the assumption of generalization. This means that, based on the conclusions drawn from the collected material regarding a specific period, the function of the studied mechanisms and phenomena in the future will be estimated. Therefore, secondly, empirical material regarding the European Parliament's reaction to information about Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine from February 24, 2022, to the end of May 2022 was selected for the study.

The third limitation of the study results from the analysis tools used. Despite the restricted formal role of the European Parliament in foreign policy decision-making, this research aims to demonstrate that the EP tries and can actively influence conflict management. However, this influence can only be informal and cannot take the form of decisions with binding legal effects. Characterizing the phenomenon and treating it as a case study would only bring new value in terms of complementing the state of research. The authors propose deepening quantitative research through qualitative analysis using the goal-framing and agenda-setting theories. For this reason, it is necessary to limit the study to the material from the period February 24 - May 31, 2022, and use a generalizing approach.

The research material includes, in addition to documents published in the Public Register of Documents European Parliament (European Parliament, 2022a), primarily posts on the European Parliament's social media (European Parliament, 2022b). Social media platform embodies a web of technological and human complexities with different actors, factors, interests, and relations. These actor-networks and the macro social-political context are influential in the mediatization of conflict in the social media era (Zhang, 2021, p. 2618).

The analysis of the European Parliament's involvement in solving the armed conflict near the EU border is a significant research problem. The conclusions drawn from this study may also be helpful for assessing other disputes in which the European Union has been or still is involved and which are taking place on different continents. It was assumed that this conflict, due to, among others, geographical proximity, values, and symbolism reinforced by historical memory and the observed opening of the Union to new countries in the face of this conflict, became a breakthrough moment that should be subjected to scientific assessment.

The chapter is divided into four parts. The first section includes a description of research methodology. The second consists of a literature overview. In the third section, limitations have been indicated for the EP's activity in the field of foreign policy. The last section offers concrete examples of how the EP can use the tools at its disposal to participate in the management of the conflict under study actively. Finally, a discussion and conclusion are presented.

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