

# Exploring Anti-Western Sentiment Among Arabs and Its Influence on Support for Russia in the Ukraine Conflict

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**Abstract**—The phenomenon of significant Arab support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, despite widespread condemnation from Arab leaders, poses a puzzling scenario. This paper delves into the paradox by employing multiple regression analysis on the online reactions of Arab audiences to the conflict as reported by seven major news networks: CNN Arabic, BBC Arabic, Sky News Arabic, France24 Arabic, DW, Aljazeera, and Al-Arabiya. It hypothesizes that this support stems from prevalent anti-Western sentiment within the Arab world. The empirical findings corroborate the hypothesis, providing insight into the underlying motivations for Arab backing of Russia against Ukraine, despite their historical familiarity with the harsh realities of war.

**Keywords**—Anti-Western Sentiment, Arab World, Russia-Ukraine Conflict, social media analysis, political sentiment, international relations, regional influence.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE Russian incursion into Ukraine in late February 2022 has drawn global condemnation, leading to significant civilian distress and widespread economic repercussions. Contrary to expectations, the Kremlin's military efforts did not culminate in a prompt victory, transforming the conflict into a prolonged international crisis with enduring implications. Beyond its immediate vicinity, the ramifications of the Russia-Ukraine conflict have permeated the global stage, prompting swift denunciation and economic sanctions against Putin's regime by Western nations [1]. Despite international censure, notably by the United Nations [2], Putin's aggressive stance garnered notable support across various social media platforms, particularly among individuals from African, Indian, and Arab communities [3]-[5]. This article delves into the complex dynamics underpinning Arab support for Russia's military actions.

While the majority of Arab states aligned with the global consensus in denouncing the aggression [6], this official stance diverges markedly from sentiments observed among the Arab populace online. A significant segment of Arab social media users, particularly on platforms like Facebook, continues to manifest staunch support for Putin and the Russian offensive. This steadfast backing is particularly intriguing against the backdrop of the Arab world's extensive wartime experiences, from the protracted Palestine-Israel conflict to recent upheavals in Yemen, Sudan, Syria, Libya, and the historical Gulf Wars.

Arabs are no strangers to the havoc wrought by military conflicts, making their apparent endorsement of Russia's invasion a subject of considerable academic interest.

This research seeks to unravel the conundrum of Arab support for the Russian invasion by scrutinizing comments from Arab Facebook users on news coverage related to the conflict. By analyzing these digital reactions, the study aims to unearth the underlying motives for Arab support, offering a nuanced understanding of Arab perspectives towards the Ukraine crisis. Given the pervasive usage of Facebook within the Arab demographic and the platform's relative freedom from governmental oversight—allowing for more open expression compared to other regions with stringent censorship [7]—this analysis promises an authentic insight into the collective Arab viewpoint. Furthermore, leveraging the Arab Opinion Index 2019-2020, which indicates a higher propensity for Facebook usage among Arabs compared to other social networks, this investigation underscores the methodological relevance of this approach in capturing a representation reflective of broader Arab sentiment. It seeks to offer an authentic insight into Arab perspectives on the Ukraine conflict, set against a backdrop of constrained speech freedoms in many Arab countries.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The current body of literature on Arab perspectives regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict is primarily limited to journalistic commentaries rather than academic analyses. This notable absence of scholarly research into the motivations behind Arab support for Russia's actions in Ukraine might be attributed to several factors: the recentness of the conflict, which has not yet allowed for substantial academic inquiry; a lack of geographical proximity to the Arab world, reducing direct scholarly interest; and the overwhelming preoccupation within the Arab world with its own series of tumultuous events, including but not limited to the Syrian, Yemeni, and Sudanese civil wars, alongside the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict. As a result, journalistic accounts remain the most accessible source of insights for those interested in Arab perspectives on this issue, though they lack the depth and rigor of academic scrutiny [8].

Emerging from these journalistic sources, several themes have been identified as underlying reasons for Arab support for Russia's military intervention in Ukraine. One primary factor is the ideological schism within Arab societies, particularly

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following the Arab Spring of 2011, which exacerbated divisions between secular and religious factions. This schism is primarily about the future governance of Arab states, with secular groups advocating for democracy as a solution to a range of issues including but not limited to economic instability, unemployment, and terrorism. In contrast, religious factions have shown a preference for authoritarian regimes as a means to restore order following the perceived failures of democratization efforts, as seen in countries like Egypt, Syria, and Yemen. This internal discord extends to international relations, with each faction adopting divergent stances on global matters. Secular Arabs are often criticized for being too Western-oriented and neglecting traditional values, while conservative groups find common ground with Putin's anti-Western rhetoric and his opposition to liberal values like LGBT and women's rights. This ideological alignment makes Putin an attractive figure to conservative Arabs, who view him as a champion of traditional norms and a bulwark against Western liberalism [8].

Furthermore, the literature points to a pervasive anti-Western sentiment among Arabs as a significant driver of their support for Russia. This sentiment has been fueled by historical interventions and perceived injustices by Western powers in the region, notably the 2003 Iraq invasion and the events of the Arab Spring. The concept "The enemy of my enemy is my friend" reflects the resulting inclination towards entities opposed to Western interests, cementing Russia's appeal among those disenchanted with Western policies [5], [9].

Additionally, the literature discusses the perceived double standards of the West in its international engagements, particularly evident in the contrast between its responses to the Ukrainian crisis and Middle Eastern conflicts such as the Syrian war and the Israel-Palestine issue. This discrepancy has led to accusations of hypocrisy against Western nations, further alienating Arabs and swaying their opinions in favor of Russia, which is seen as less hypocritical or more aligned with Arab interests in global politics [8], [10].

Finally, the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict remains a pivotal factor influencing Arab views on global disputes. The disparity in media coverage and international response to Palestinian and Ukrainian sufferings reinforces perceptions of Western bias and double standards, contributing significantly to Arab support for Russia. This stance is exacerbated by perceived Ukrainian support for Israeli policies, further alienating Arab sympathies from Ukraine and tilting them towards Russia [11]-[13].

In essence, the literature review reveals that Arab support for Russia in the context of the Ukraine conflict is informed by a complex interplay of internal divisions, anti-Western sentiments, perceived Western hypocrisy, and the Israel-Palestine conflict. These insights, primarily derived from journalistic sources, highlight a gap in academic research and underscore the need for comprehensive scholarly investigations to better understand these dynamics.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative content analysis approach

to examine Arab perspectives on Russia's invasion of Ukraine as represented on Facebook. The unit of analysis is the Arab public's responses to 44 selected videos ( $n = 44$ ) from major news networks such as CNN Arabic, BBC Arabic, Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, Sky News Arabic, France 24, and DW Arabic, hosted on their respective Facebook pages. These videos were specifically chosen to cover various aspects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This study focuses exclusively on Facebook due to its prevalence among Arab users; according to the Arab Survey Index [14], over 86% of Arabs have a Facebook account, suggesting that Facebook is a suitable proxy for the online Arab population.

Comments left by Arab users on these videos, totaling 15,398, were systematically categorized into nine distinct themes identified as common responses to the content. This categorization aimed to understand the prevalent attitudes and viewpoints among the Arab Facebook populace concerning the conflict. The analysis was conducted on comments from the Arabic versions of these news outlets to ensure the sample reflected exclusively Arab perspectives, avoiding dilution with views from non-Arab audiences.

The videos selected for analysis were required to meet specific criteria to ensure a representative sample of the Arab audience's views. Each video was required to have garnered more than 100,000 views and to have attracted at least 70 comments, exceptions being made for content related to drone attacks on the Kremlin, which were included despite not meeting these criteria. This approach aimed to capture a broad range of perspectives by including videos that had achieved significant engagement and visibility within the Arab community on Facebook.

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The study utilized multiple regression models to explore potential correlations between two primary dependent variables — 'Pro-Russia' and 'Anti-Ukraine' sentiments — and a set of independent variables, including 'Anti-West', 'Double Standard', 'Arab/Muslim Countries', 'Palestine', 'Western Propaganda', 'Pro-Ukraine', and 'Anti-Russia'. These variables were precisely defined to maintain clear distinctions between them. Due to the multifaceted nature of many comments, which often addressed several issues simultaneously, the analysis involved segmenting and coding the content based on the specific themes discussed. For example, a comment expressing support for Putin as a counter to Western dominance, criticizing Zelensky's perceived allegiance to Western interests, and condemning Ukraine's role in undermining Russia would be coded as reflecting 'Pro-Russia', 'Anti-West', and 'Anti-Ukraine' sentiments.

In addition to multiple linear regression analysis, the study

provides a descriptive summary of the variables and a detailed examination of responses related to the Kremlin drone attack case, illustrating the distribution of opinions across the various identified themes. The selection of videos was conducted randomly, with an emphasis on covering a diverse range of topics related to the war to prevent methodological biases and ensure a comprehensive understanding of Arab public opinion on the issue. This methodological framework aims to provide an insightful and nuanced exploration of the factors driving Arab support for or opposition to Russia's actions in Ukraine, as articulated through social media interactions.

The topics for analysis in this study were meticulously chosen to encompass a wide array of issues, thereby providing a comprehensive view of Arab reactions to different facets of the war. This approach is instrumental in capturing nuanced shifts in Arab perspectives as the context of the war evolves. For instance, videos showcasing the humanitarian ramifications of the conflict are likely to elicit distinct reactions compared to those focusing on military developments such as Russian advances or Ukrainian counteroffensives. By covering a diverse range of subjects, this methodology affords a more authentic representation of Arab attitudes toward the conflict.

Additionally, sourcing video content from a variety of news networks ensures a more inclusive reflection of Arab views. Given the diversity of media consumption habits, it is improbable that Arab audiences on Facebook exclusively follow a single news outlet. Therefore, analyzing content from multiple broadcasters allows for a broader and more representative capture of Arab public opinion.

A focal point of this research involved analyzing reactions to a specific event covered across all selected news networks: the drone attack on the Kremlin. This incident serves as a critical case study for dissecting Arab perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine war. The selection of this event is strategic for several reasons: firstly, it tests the extent of Arab support for Putin, especially when he is perceived as under threat; secondly, it evaluates whether the Arab backing of Putin is more a reactionary stance than a genuine endorsement; and finally, by examining reactions to the same event across different platforms, it enables a comparative analysis of Arab responses, enhancing the precision in understanding Arab viewpoints on the conflict. This case study is instrumental in validating or refuting the primary hypothesis of the research and strengthens the overall argument's credibility.

The comments analyzed were categorized into nine predominant themes, which are identified as the main variables of this study: Pro-Russia, Pro-Ukraine, Anti-Russia, Anti-Ukraine, Anti-West, Double Standard, Western Propaganda, Arab/Muslim Countries, Palestine, and Neutral. In the absence of a software tool capable of automating the categorization process, manual coding was employed based on linguistic expertise to ascertain the thematic alignment of each comment. For instance, a comment criticizing Zelensky's military strategy and expressing skepticism about Ukraine's ability to overcome Russia is classified under both Pro-Russia and Anti-Ukraine categories due to its dual sentiment.

In this framework, the primary dependent variables are 'Pro-

Russia' sentiments, indicated by comments explicitly endorsing Russia's invasion, and 'Anti-Ukraine' sentiments, represented by comments explicitly critical of Ukraine. The remaining themes serve as independent variables, used to assess their influence on the primary sentiments of interest. The analysis involves employing simple linear multiple regression models where, for instance, the 'Anti-Ukraine' variable is treated as an independent factor to understand its impact on 'Pro-Russia' sentiment, and vice versa. The research posits five main hypotheses based on the central questions underpinning this study:

- H1. The support of Arabs for the Russian invasion of Ukraine is associated with prevalent anti-Western sentiments among the Arab population.
- H2. Arab support for the Russian invasion is linked to perceptions of Western double standards in global affairs.
- H3. The endorsement of Russia by many Arabs is influenced by Russia's stance on Palestinian issues and conflicts in Arab/Muslim countries.
- H4. The prevalence of anti-Ukrainian commentary among Arabs may be more attributable to widespread anti-Western sentiments rather than a clear pro-Russian stance.
- H5. The sentiment of Arab audiences towards the Russia-Ukraine conflict is shaped by their views on Western propaganda, the portrayal of Arab/Muslim countries, and the Palestine issue, influencing their stance on the geopolitical dynamics between Russia and Ukraine.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The analysis of Arab commentary across 44 videos sourced from seven distinct news networks provides a revealing snapshot of Arab public opinion regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Visualization of these observations (see Fig. 1) indicates a substantial level of support for Russia within the Arab online community. Specifically, pro-Russian sentiments, as reflected in 2,516 comments, account for 17% of the total commentary analyzed, ranking as the second most prevalent viewpoint among the various themes identified. This indicates a significant faction of the Arab online population that endorses Russia's actions in Ukraine.

Concurrently, there is a notable presence of negative sentiments towards Ukraine and the West among Arab commenters. Anti-Ukrainian views lead the dataset, comprising 16% of the commentary with a total of 2,636 comments. Following closely, anti-West sentiments constitute another 16%, with 2,441 comments. These findings suggest a dual narrative prevalent among Arab users online: a substantial backing for Russia's military endeavors in Ukraine coupled with a critical stance towards Ukraine and Western countries.

This juxtaposition of online Arab sentiment with the official stances of Arab leaders, who have predominantly maintained neutrality or expressed condemnation of the invasion, presents a dichotomy between public opinion and political diplomacy in the Arab world [6], [14]. The noticeable discrepancy underscores the complexity of Arab perspectives on international affairs and the divergence between public and governmental positions.

To delve deeper into the underlying factors influencing Arab support for Russia, this study employed two linear multiple regression models. These models aim to dissect the interrelationships between the identified variables — such as Pro-Russia, Anti-Ukraine, and Anti-West sentiments — and ascertain their impact on the overarching narrative of Arab support for the Russian invasion. By applying statistical methods to the qualitative data derived from online commentaries, the analysis seeks to provide a more structured understanding of the motivations driving Arab public opinion in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

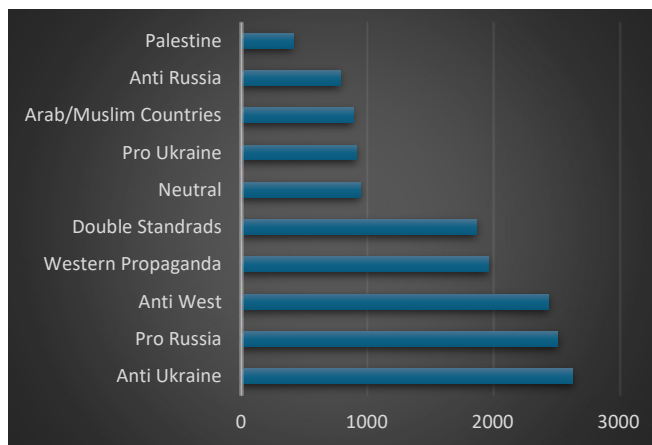


Fig. 1 Summary of Comments by Sentiment Category

#### Supporting Russia and Anti-Western Sentiments

This research posits that the primary factor driving Arab support for Russia is the prevalence of anti-Western sentiments within the Arab community. To evaluate this hypothesis, we employed multiple regression analyses on online commentaries from videos addressing Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The outcomes of the initial multiple linear regression models, computed using Excel, are delineated in Table I. These models exhibit remarkable efficacy, accounting for over 85% of the variances as explained by the models, thereby providing substantial explanatory power regarding the data under investigation.

The analytical framework aims to elucidate the dynamics between the dependent variable 'Pro-Russia' and various independent variables: 'Anti-Ukraine', 'Anti-West', 'Arab/Muslim Countries', 'Double Standard', 'Palestine', 'Western Propaganda', and 'Pro-Ukraine'. These variables were selected based on their perceived relevance to the sentiment of support for Russia among Arab commenters. The regression models seek to establish a parsimonious understanding of the relationships among these variables.

It is important to note that the study purposefully omits the 'Anti-Russia' and 'Neutral' variables from the regression analysis. This decision stems from a preliminary assessment suggesting an absence of a logical or significant relationship between these variables and the principal dependent variable 'Pro-Russia'. This exclusion is intended to enhance the clarity and relevance of the model's findings, focusing on those factors most germane to explaining Arab support for Russia in the

context of the Ukraine conflict.

TABLE I  
 FACTORS FOR ARAB SUPPORT OF RUSSIA

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	28.631***	28.414***	29.187***
Anti-Ukraine	0.030	-	-
Anti-West	0.711***	0.8319***	0.862***
Arab/Muslim Countries	1.732	0.832	0.793*
Double Standard	-1.570	0.569	-
Palestine	-2.214	-3.259**	-3.804***
Western Propaganda	0.862	-	-
Pro Ukraine	0.058	0.041	-
R Square	0.875	0.870	0.868

\*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01

#### Analytical Insights from Regression Models on Arab Support for Russia

Model 1's robustness is evident through its explanatory capacity, with R-squared and adjusted R-squared values at 0.87 and 0.85, respectively. This model highlights a significant correlation between anti-Western sentiments and Pro-Russia support among Arabs, manifesting a positive  $\beta$  coefficient of 0.71 (SE = 0.14,  $p < .01$ ). The prominence of anti-Western sentiments as a decisive factor underscores the geopolitical antagonisms influencing Arab public opinion. However, other variables, including 'Anti-Ukraine', 'Arab/Muslim Countries', and 'Palestine', do not yield significant effects, challenging some prevailing narratives.

Interestingly, while 'Anti-West' sentiment solidifies support for Russia, 'Palestine' and 'Double Standards' variables inversely affect this support, revealing a complex landscape of sentiment where geopolitical and ideological concerns intersect. Specifically, the negative coefficients for 'Palestine' ( $\beta = -2.214$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and 'Double Standards' ( $\beta = -1.570$ ) suggest that issues perceived as unjust or hypocritical may erode support for Russia, highlighting a nuanced Arab response to global injustices and perceived inconsistencies.

The refinement in Model 2, with retained explanatory power (R-squared = 0.87, adjusted R-squared = 0.85), further clarifies the relationship between 'Anti-West' sentiment and Pro-Russia support, with an increased  $\beta$  coefficient (0.8319,  $p < .05$ ). This amplification signifies that, in the absence of other confounding variables, anti-Western sentiment substantially increases support for Russia, pointing to a deeper ideological alignment or opposition.

The emergence of the 'Palestine' variable as significant ( $\beta = -3.259$ ,  $p < .05$ ) but with negative influence stresses the sensitive nature of the Palestinian issue among Arab audiences. As support for Palestine decreases or criticisms arise, there appears to be a concurrent reduction in support for Russia, possibly reflecting disillusionment with Russia's perceived neutrality or inaction in the Palestine conflict.

Model 3 maintains the trend, with anti-Western sentiments continuing to significantly predict Pro-Russia support ( $\beta = 0.86$ ,  $p < .001$ ), reinforcing the notion that opposition to Western policies or interventions catalyzes support for Russia. The increasing negative impact of the 'Palestine' variable ( $\beta = -$

3.804,  $p < .001$ ) in this model underscores the growing discontent with any perceived parallels between Russian and Western positions on Palestine.

The significance of the 'Arab/Muslim Countries' variable ( $\beta = 0.793$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ) in Model 3 introduces a delicate dimension to the discourse. Although weakly significant, its presence hints at a broader contemplation within the Arab world regarding Russia's role in regional politics and conflicts. Despite Russia's involvement in the Arab region, such as its actions in Syria and its complex relations with various Arab and Muslim entities, this nuanced support reflects an intricate balancing act between geopolitical interests and cultural affiliations.

These models collectively elucidate a layered understanding of Arab support for Russia. The consistent significance of anti-Western sentiments as a driver of support highlights a reactionary dimension to geopolitical alignments, influenced by historical contexts and current events. Meanwhile, the nuanced responses to issues like Palestine and Arab/Muslim country relations with Russia reveal an Arab public that is critically engaged and selectively aligning based on a matrix of ideological, geopolitical, and cultural considerations. This analytical journey underscores the complex fabric of Arab political sentiment, shaped by both regional affiliations and global perspectives. This extensive support for Russia among Arab communities can be interpreted as an endorsement of Russia's foreign policies towards the Arab world. President Vladimir Putin's administration has consistently supported authoritarian leaders within the Arab region, standing against both internal dissent and external pressures, as evidenced in the cases of Syria and Egypt [15]. This pattern of support, however, is not exclusive to Russia; the United States and other Western countries have historically backed various authoritarian regimes in the Middle East [16], [17] despite their publicized efforts to foster change, particularly during the Arab Spring [9], and their military interventions in countries from Iraq to Libya [5], [8], [18].

The prevailing anti-West sentiment, reflected consistently across all three regression models, underscores the depth of Arab disillusionment with Western interventions in the Arab world. However, the presence of substantial anti-Ukrainian sentiment (recorded at 18%) among Arabs presents an intriguing aspect for further analysis. To unpack the roots of these prevalent anti-Ukrainian views, this study presents a second set of multiple linear regression models, aiming to provide concrete support for the hypothesis that anti-Western sentiments predominantly drive Arab support for Russia's actions in Ukraine.

Interestingly, the analysis reveals no positive correlation between Arab support for Russia and support for the Palestinian cause or perceptions of Western double standards regarding global conflicts. Instead, these variables consistently exhibit a negative impact on Arab support for Russia. Specifically, each point highlighting the perceived double standards in handling the Ukrainian conflict compared to Arab issues correlates with a 1.5-point decrease in Arab support for the Russian invasion. Furthermore, the 'Palestine cause' variable significantly undermines Arab support for Russia across all models: a decline

of 2.2 points in Model 1, 3.25 points in Model 2, and 3.8 points in Model 3, with the third model confirming a strong negative relationship ( $p < 0.01$ ). This trend likely stems from a widespread belief among Arabs that neither Western powers nor Russia genuinely prioritize the Palestinian cause, with many perceiving both to align more closely with Israel [14].

Additionally, Model 3 exposes a nuanced link between Arab support for Russia and the Arab/Muslim sentiment variable, although only marginally significant ( $p < 0.1$ ). A slight increase in the belief that Western nations disregard Arab and Muslim struggles—encompassing the oppression faced by Muslims—leads to a modest uptick in Pro-Russia sentiment (0.79 points). This finding aligns with journalistic analyses suggesting that disillusionment with the West's handling of issues relevant to Arabs and Muslims partly fuels the pivot towards Russia [19].

By maintaining detailed insights and contextual citations, this section deepens the understanding of the multifaceted reasons behind Arab support for Russia, elucidating a complex interplay of geopolitical, ideological, and cultural factors.

#### *Perspectives Opposing Ukraine*

As demonstrated in Table II, comments opposing Ukraine constitute the highest percentage, 17%, of the comments within the dataset. This phenomenon presents a puzzle that this article aims to decipher. By identifying factors that contribute to the rise in anti-Ukrainian perspectives among Arab communities, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding this viewpoint. Certain Arab commentators frequently cite Ukraine's involvement in the 2003 Iraqi occupation and President Zelensky's analogy between Ukrainian resilience and Israeli approaches to threats as underlying reasons for their negative perception of Ukraine [13], [20]. Additionally, the perception of Western double standards and Russia's longstanding support for Arab regimes are also highlighted as factors contributing to negative views toward Ukraine [6], [21].

This study employs multiple regression analysis to ascertain the determinants of prevalent anti-Ukrainian sentiments among Arabs. The outcomes of the second set of multiple linear regression models, executed via Excel, are delineated in Table II. These models exhibit robust performance, elucidating over 80% of the variance accounted for by the models. They explore the relationship between various independent variables—namely, Pro-Russia, Anti-West, Arab/Muslim Countries, Double Standard, Palestine, and Western Propaganda—and the dependent variable, Pro-Ukraine sentiment. This analysis specifically excludes Anti-Russia and Neutral stances from consideration, positing that these variables lack a logical correlation with the dependent variable.

Table II illustrates the consistent relationship between anti-Ukraine sentiments among Arabs and their anti-Western inclinations. In all three models, the anti-West variable ( $\beta = .83$ ,  $SE = .40$ ,  $p < .01$ ) remains significantly positive. Conversely, all other variables—Pro-Russia ( $\beta = .01$ ,  $SE = .41$ ,  $p < .01$ ), Western Propaganda ( $\beta = -1.49$ ,  $SE = 2.85$ ,  $p < .01$ ), Double Standards ( $\beta = 2.31$ ,  $SE = 5.57$ ,  $p < .01$ ), Palestine ( $\beta = -2.26$ ,  $SE = 4.27$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and Arab/Muslim Countries ( $\beta = -0.46$ ,  $SE$

= 5.30,  $p < .01$ )—demonstrate no significant statistical relationship with the dependent variable. The first model underscores that "Anti-West" sentiments are the sole statistically significant predictor of anti-Ukraine attitudes among Arabs, with an increase of 0.83 points for each unit increase in anti-Western sentiments.

TABLE II  
 FACTORS INFLUENCING ARAB OPPOSITION TO UKRAINE

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	3.121	3.515	6.215
Pro Russia	0.168	0.160	-
Anti West	0.835**	0.833**	0.857***
Western Propaganda	-1.495	-1.258	-0.695***
Double Standard	2.316	1.848	0.876***
Palestine	-2.261	-2.256	-
Arab/Muslim Countries	-0.465	-	-
R Square	0.804	0.804	0.801

\*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Furthermore, the negative coefficients associated with "Western Propaganda," "Palestine," and "Arab/Muslim Countries" suggest an inverse relationship with anti-Ukraine sentiment, although these findings were not statistically significant. Notably, the data do not corroborate a direct link between anti-Ukraine attitudes and pro-Russian sentiments, indicating that the negative perception of Ukraine among Arabs is more likely tied to widespread anti-Western sentiment.

In Model 2, no significant changes were observed among the variables, with "Anti-West" remaining the only significant predictor of anti-Ukraine sentiment ( $\beta = -0.833$ ,  $SE = 0.394$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Model 3 reveals significant changes, with "Anti-West" ( $\beta = -0.856$ ,  $SE = 0.141$ ,  $p < .000$ ) and "Double Standard" ( $\beta = 0.876$ ,  $SE = 0.251$ ,  $p < .001$ ) emerging as significant factors influencing Arab anti-Ukrainian views. The "Western Propaganda" variable also attained statistical significance ( $p < 0.002$ ), indicating a nuanced understanding of the underlying dynamics.

The multiple regression analysis demonstrates that "Anti-West," "Double Standard," and "Western Propaganda" variables significantly influence Arab perspectives on Ukraine. Specifically, an increase in anti-Western sentiment correlates with heightened anti-Ukraine sentiment, while "Double Standard" and "Western Propaganda" exhibit variable impacts. These findings substantiate the hypothesis that anti-Ukrainian sentiment among Arabs is primarily driven by general anti-Western sentiment. The data also refute the assumption that Arab opposition to Ukraine is predominantly fueled by pro-Russian support. Finally, while the "Palestine" variable was hypothesized to influence Arab attitudes toward Ukraine, the analysis does not support this, instead suggesting a negative correlation with anti-Ukraine sentiment.

## V. CONCLUSION

This article embarked on an investigation into the perplexing issue of widespread Arab support for the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Utilizing a methodological approach, it scrutinized Arab reactions online, analyzing 15,398 comments categorized

into ten distinct themes, across 44 videos from seven renowned news networks available on Facebook. These platforms included CNN Arabic, BBC Arabic, Sky News Arabic, France24 Arabic, DW, Al Jazeera, and Al-Arabiya, selected for their significant Arab viewership on social media. The study applied multiple linear regression analyses to explore the causal dynamics between the "Pro-Russia" and "Anti-Ukraine" sentiments among other dependent variables, developing two models to test the central hypotheses.

The findings from the initial regression model offer substantive support to the article's primary assertion: the Arab support for Russia significantly correlates with prevalent anti-Western sentiments. This result, consistently significant across all models ( $p < 0.1$ ,  $0.05$ , and  $0.01$ ), underscores the influence of anti-Western sentiment on pro-Russian orientations. However, the analysis did not substantiate the secondary and tertiary hypotheses, as neither "Double Standards" nor "Palestine" variables demonstrated statistical significance in any model, with the latter showing a negative correlation with support for Russia.

Furthermore, the analysis uncovered a prevailing anti-Ukraine sentiment among the Arab audience on Facebook, evidenced by 17% of comments opposing Ukraine, surpassing the 16% in favor of Russia. This anti-Ukrainian sentiment presents another dimension this research aimed to elucidate. Results from subsequent models confirmed a significant correlation between anti-Ukraine and anti-West stances, maintaining the statistical significance of the anti-West variable. Conversely, the variables "Pro-Russia," "Palestine," and "Arab/Muslim Countries" displayed no significant correlation with anti-Ukraine sentiment.

A notable discovery of this investigation was the negligible impact of the "Palestine" variable on both "Pro-Russia" and "Anti-Ukraine" sentiments, remaining statistically insignificant and negatively influenced. This finding suggests a broader Arab disillusionment with Russian and Western policies toward the Arab domain and Palestine, highlighting a lack of engagement with the Palestinian cause—a topic warranting deeper investigation.

In conclusion, the empirical evidence reinforces the central thesis that anti-Western sentiment predominantly motivates Arab backing of the Russian stance, amplified by perceived Western double standards in addressing the Ukrainian conflict relative to Arab world issues. This sentiment, coupled with increased Western support for Ukraine, has led to pronounced anti-Western and anti-Ukraine reactions, reflecting a geopolitical backlash rather than an inherent animosity towards Ukrainian citizens.

## VI. SHORTCOMINGS, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

### A. Shortcomings

This study, while providing significant insights into the Arab world's perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, acknowledges several limitations. The reliance on data from social media comments, specifically from Facebook, may not

encompass the full spectrum of Arab public opinion. This methodological choice, driven by the accessibility and volume of data, could introduce biases related to internet access, user demographics, and platform-specific discourse norms. Additionally, the focus on comments from selected news networks may not represent the diversity of media consumption within the Arab world. The temporal scope of the study, confined to the period immediately following the invasion, might not capture evolving attitudes as the conflict progresses or in response to subsequent international developments.

### B. Contributions

Despite these limitations, this article makes significant contributions to the emerging discourse on the geopolitical dynamics of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and its perception within the Middle East. By bridging the gap between journalistic observations and scholarly analysis, this research offers a nuanced understanding of Arab public opinion. The findings underscore the complexity of Arab perspectives, highlighting prevalent anti-Western sentiments and revealing nuanced attitudes toward global political narratives. This work enriches the academic dialogue surrounding Middle Eastern geopolitics, providing a foundation for subsequent inquiries into regional responses to international events.

### C. Future Research Directions

Future research should aim to address the identified limitations by incorporating a broader array of data sources, including surveys, interviews, and analysis of different social media platforms, to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of Arab public opinion. Comparative studies examining variations across different Arab countries, age groups, and social strata could unveil the multifaceted nature of public sentiment. Additionally, longitudinal studies are necessary to track changes in Arab perspectives over time, particularly as the Russia-Ukraine conflict and associated international relations evolve. Exploring the impact of media framing, state propaganda, and the role of language in shaping public opinion could further elucidate the mechanisms behind the observed support for Russia. Lastly, investigating the intersections between regional issues, such as the Palestine-Israel conflict, and global geopolitical attitudes could offer deeper insights into the complex interplay between local and international politics in shaping public opinion in the Arab world.

In essence, this research sets the stage for a broader, more detailed exploration into the intricacies of Arab public opinion and its implications for international politics. By advancing the academic inquiry from mere speculation to empirical analysis, this study invites a more rigorous and multidimensional examination of the Arab world's stance on the unfolding global narrative.

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