

RUSSIA'S PORTRAYAL IN THE WESTERN MEDIA:
A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF LEADING
MEDIA AGENCY NEWS STORIES
IN 2007

by

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ABSTRACT

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This study examined Western media news coverage about Russia. Representative samples from the leading Western wire and international broadcasting services – the AP, BBC and DW – were selected and analyzed using content analysis methodology. The research is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of the agenda-setting and framing theories – considering the reality constructed by mass media and the determinants on foreign news coverage. Findings about Russia's portrayal in the Western media are discussed. A quantitative content analysis was used in identifying the main topics, tones and frames used in Western media news coverage about Russia.

This research concluded that Western media portrayed Russia using various primary and secondary topics and revealed the – number and type of sources, tone of the stories, and frames in news coverage during 2007. Western media often portrayed Russia in the context of international relations and security issues. The main frames used by the Western media to portray Russia were “rising threat”, “Cold War”, “troubled democracy” and “partnership”.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on understanding Russia's portrayal in news stories produced in 2007 by three of the largest global news agencies – the Associated Press (AP), BBC and Deutsche Welle (DW). Using content analysis, this study identifies Russia's overall image, main news topics and the frames used in these news stories during 2007.

The Associated Press, BBC and Deutsche Welle were selected for this study because of their national and international presence in news coverage. As such, these news agencies could have a major impact in setting the media agenda for the Western world. Additionally, they are the three largest news agencies in Western Europe and in the USA.

The theoretical framework used in this study is based on agenda-setting and media framing traditions of mass media research. Both theories note that news coverage is often influenced by factors such as ideologies and pressure groups. These traditions also allow for the examination of the bilateral government relationship between the countries being covered (de Smaele, 1999).

The recent incendiary dialogue from both European and Russian leaders and the increasingly confrontational relationship between Russia and the West present an opportunity to explore the news coverage possibly affecting this relationship. One recent comment by a world leader, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, characterizes the volatile nature of the relationship: "Russia is imposing its return on the world scene by playing its assets, notably oil and gas, with a certain brutality" (International Herald Tribune, 2007).

1.1 Modern Conflict between Russia and the West

Historically, Russia was perceived as a big country on the margins of the European continent, isolated and often far behind the progress of the European civilization. In addition, "Russia has always had a troubled relationship with the countries of the European core"

(Ringmar, 2002). These countries include England, Germany, France, and Russia's immediate western neighbors – Sweden, Poland, Finland, and the Baltic States.

However, the apogee of the tension between Russia and the Western countries began at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1918, Russian tsar Nicolay II and his immediate family members were murdered by Bolsheviks, thus abolishing the Russian monarchy. The ensuing civil war resulted in the formation of the Soviet Union and Bolsheviks holding the control of the state.

Researchers argue that the Soviet Union was always on the path of seeking recognition from the West. Ringmar (2002) suggests that “in the 1920s, the Bolsheviks sought recognition as a “legitimate state”, under Stalin recognition as a “great power”, during the Cold War the position of a “superpower”, and during the Gorbachev era to be acknowledged as a regular inhabitant of the “Common House of Europe.” Initially, the West would not recognize the Soviet Union as a legitimate state. However, during World War II the Soviet Union obtained recognition from the West through its active participation in the alliance against Nazi Germany. Ultimately, the Soviet Union’s recognition and influence in the world was determined by its military achievements, supported by a strong economy and technological development.

Palmieri (1986) noted that a negative tone in American media coverage regarding Soviet Russia prevailed during the 20th century and culminated in the Cold War period. The U.S media portrayed Russia and Russians as an "enemy nation, embodying all that is unattractive and evil ...an adversarial nation whose very existence threatens the US" (Palmieri, 1986, p. 1).

1.1.1 Post-soviet Russia

The Russian Federation was recognized as the Soviet Union’s successor state after the U.S.S.R. collapsed in 1991. However, the newly formed state lacked its predecessor’s military and political power and influence. This is mainly due to the fact that the country endured a severe and long economic depression.

Russian statistics data indicated a 50% decline of the GDP for the period of 1990 to 1995. This is considered to be worse than the situation during the Great Depression in the United States (Russia: Economic Conditions in Mid-1996, 1996). In addition, Russian society was split politically as some studies stated that more than half (54%) of the Russian population regretted the collapse of the Soviet Union (Jamestown Foundation, 1997).

In this context, some journalists rushed to argue that Russia of the 1990's lost its authority and must be considered as another third-world country. In one of his articles, Taylor (2001) concludes:

Internal contradictions in Russia's thousand-year history have destined it to shrink demographically, weaken economically, and, possibly, disintegrate territorially. The drama is coming to a close, and within a few decades Russia will concern the rest of the world no more than any Third World country with abundant resources, an impoverished people, and a corrupt government. In short, as a Great Power, Russia is finished (p. 39).

Despite the problems, Russia has once again attracted the attention of the West when "Who is Mr. Putin?" became the question on everybody's mind in the West. Thus, Russia continues to claim special attention from international media and is closely observed by Western political leaders.

Putin's radical reforms in the areas of taxes, banking, labor and land codes have made it possible for Russia to achieve continuous economic growth over the last eight years following the recession in 1998. Additionally, the improved management of the country's rich natural resources has also contributed to Russia's recent positive economic turnaround. Recently, The Russian economy has an average growth of 6.7% annually (Russian Economic Reports, 2007).

Rising oil prices, increased foreign investment, higher domestic consumption and greater political stability have bolstered economic growth in Russia. The country ended 2007 with its ninth straight year of growth, averaging 7% annually. In addition, the poverty level

continues to decline, contributing to the formation and expansion of the middle class from 8 million people in 2000 to 55 million people in 2006 (Russian Economic Reports, 2007).

The overall economic achievements motivated many global businesses to expand and invest into the Russian market. In the first half of 2007, foreign investment in the Russian economy doubled, reaching \$60.3 billion. Major investors in Russia are the American carmaker Ford, South Korea's Samsung, and Germany's Volkswagen (Russian Economic Reports, 2007).

However, Russia still faces other serious problems because most of its economy is concentrated in a few areas. Natural resources, such as oil, natural gas, metals, and timber make up more than 80% of exports and 32% of the country's budget revenues. This situation is dangerous, as the Russian economy is very vulnerable to the changes in international commodity prices (Russian Economic Reports, 2007).

1.1.2 Relations between Russia and the European Union

Leonard and Popescu (2007) present an intriguing overview of relations between the European Union and Russia: "Although the EU has failed to change Russia during the Putin era, Russia has had a big impact on the EU. On energy, it is selecting individual EU member states and signing long-term deals which undermine the core principles of the EU's common strategy. In Kosovo, it is blocking progress at the United Nations. In the Caucasus and Central Asia, Russian efforts have effectively shut the EU out of an area where it wanted to promote political reform, resolve conflicts and forge energy partnerships. And in Ukraine and Moldova, Moscow has worked hard, with some success, to blunt the appeal of the European system" (Leonard and Popescu, 2007, p.1). Additionally, Leonard and Popescu (2007) conclude that Russia's ultimate goal is to establish itself "as an ideological alternative to the EU, with a different approach to sovereignty, power and world order" (Leonard and Popescu, 2007, p.1).

Russian officials now describe the West as an ally, and Western leaders now believe that the Cold War is over, and Russia is now perceived as a friend state (Reuters, 2007). Yet, Russia has numerous international disputes with almost all of its neighboring nations, starting

with the former USSR member republics such as Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. Russia also has conflict with countries such as Japan, China and several European Union's member-states such as Finland, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. All of these disputes are over national boundaries and national territory delimitation.

Furthermore, Russia was involved in a series of other disputes that affected its relations with the European Union. Leonard and Popescu (2007) have devised a table of the recent Russian bilateral disputes with EU member states under Putin's presidency.

Table 1.1 Russian Bilateral Disputes with EU Member States under Putin's Presidency

Bulgaria	Early renegotiation of gas contracts; threat of pork ban.
Denmark	Diplomatic pressures; harassment of Danish companies and NGOs.
Estonia	Diplomatic pressures; cyber attacks; trade and transportation embargoes; discriminatory rail tariffs.
Finland	Russian export taxes on timber.
Germany	Oil supply cuts.
Latvia	Discriminatory rail tariffs; trade sanctions (canned sprats).
Lithuania	Oil blockade; discriminatory rail tariffs.
Netherlands	Trade disputes (flowers, fruits and vegetables); renegotiation of gas contracts (Shell).
Poland	Meat and vegetables embargo.
Sweden	Russian export taxes on timber.
United Kingdom	Diplomatic pressures; revision of contracts (BP and Shell); pressures on the British Council; murder of Litvinenko and refusal to extradite Lugovoi.

These disputes and other sensitive issues in world politics caused multiple controversial arguments between Russian and Western officials. The most recent argument was expressed by French President Nicolas Sarkozy, showing his concern that "Russia is imposing its return on the world scene by playing its assets, notably oil and gas, with a certain brutality" (International Herald Tribune, 2007).

1.2 The balance of power in contemporary global politics

The results of the last “Voice of the People” (2007), the world’s largest public opinion survey involving 57,000 respondents from 52 countries – reveal collective perspectives over the perceived balance of power in the world’s politics. It is apparent that the world citizens express their desire to see progress of the European Union’s power more so than any other super-power. On the other hand, only 26% of participants agreed that increasing U.S. power will positively affect the world, while 37% think the opposite (Krastev and Leonard, 2007).

Overall, Russia and China gained more negative than positive perceptions in this survey. Approximately one quarter of respondents want the power of these countries to increase, yet almost one third still believe that the world would benefit from a decline in their power (Krastev and Leonard, 2007). Researchers noted that “the negative perceptions of Russia and China seem to be linked to the fact that they are perceived not so much as rising economic or political powers, but as military powers with potentially global reach” (Krastev and Leonard, 2007, p. 8).

Krastev and Leonard (2007) suggest that everywhere in the world, except Western and Eastern Europe, the European Union and the U.S. are considered to be team players in the world politics rather than competing powers. Therefore, this has contributed to raising the image of the West as opponents to Russia and the Middle and Far East. However, people from the Western and Eastern Europe consider the EU “as an alternative to American unilateralism thanks to its stress on multilateralism, the rule of law, and its distaste of power politics” (Krastev and Leonard, 2007). Indeed, respondents’ attitudes differ from area to area. Yet, Krastev and Leonard (2007) noticed “a hardening anti-Western block in global public opinion” (Krastev and Leonard, 2007, p.10).

The results of the study indicate very different perceptions between the Russian and American public. The Russian public has a significantly more positive view of the rise of the U.S. power, while American public is hostile to an increase of Russian power. We assume

Western media played an important role in cultivating these perceptions about Russia. Therefore, a short overview of the selected Western media outlets analyzed in this research is provided.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the discussion in the preceding chapter, one may assume that the negative Western news coverage of Russia during the Cold War period lingers in today's perception of Russia's portrayal in the Western world. This thesis will explore Russia's overall portrayal, main topics and the frames used in news stories released by the Associated Press, BBC and Deutsche Welle during the 2007. First, it is necessary to review the relevant theoretical basis applied in this study.

2.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

In Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922), he notes that mass media link "the world outside" and "the pictures in our heads" (p.31). Lippmann's thoughts became a foundation for agenda-setting theory (Yang & Stone, 2003). Agenda-setting theory suggests that the media do not tell the public what to think but, rather, what to think about (Cohen, 1963). Later, McCombs and Shaw (1972) empirically supported the statement that mass media structure the public's perception of important issues by offering knowledge on the issues, rather than persuading the public's opinion (Dearing & Rogers, 1996).

Agenda-setting theory offered a new way to consider the mass media's influence. However, the power of mass media is relevant only for "a defenseless, exposed public," (Shaw, 1976). People who depend on mass media in searching for information about issues are more likely to be under the influence of media agenda-setting theory than those who do not view mass media as a main source of information (Salwen, 1987).

Researchers of mass-media effects have also suggested the possibility of an inter-media agenda-setting effect (Atwater, 1987). Inter-media agenda-setting is supported by the observation that the journalists' world is constructed through interactions with their colleagues from other media (Tuchman, 1978; Fishman, 1980). Massing (1984) observed that TV news

agenda-setting is influenced by the issues covered in elite newspapers and the leading wire services.

Breed (1955) developed the principle of standardization to describe and partly explain the content and style similarity found in American newspapers (Breed, 1955). He focused on factors that contributed to the standardization process: the news agenda set by wire agencies and the indifference of local editors to considerably change the wire content (Breed, 1955). This is particularly relevant in the context that some researchers suggest that “the way in which international news is framed in news reports may determine the magnitude of salience cues” (Wanta, 1993, p. 139). Wanta (1993) also argues that depending on media coverage, the importance of some issues may increase or decrease.

Werder (2002) identified certain connections between media position, sources’ position, news frame styles, sub-issues and issue effect (Werder, 2002). He concludes that “discernible differences in the journalistic product between national news print media appear ultimately to be a result of different worldviews and identity concepts, influencing the agenda-setting effect” (Werder, 2002, p. 227). This observation is meaningful in terms of examining cultural differences between the West and Russia.

2.2 Framing Theory

The concept of framing is attributed to Erving Goffman, one of the first scholars to introduce framing. In 1974, in his book “Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience” Goffman presented framing as a new method of scientific investigation (Goffman, 1974). Since then scholars have suggested many definitions of framing according to the field of study. Generally, framing theory is widely used in sociology and communication studies (Goffman, 1974).

The social definition of framing emphasizes mainly the social interpretation of framing and its dual interaction between the public discourse message and individual’s perception and interpretation. Klandermans (1997) suggests that “social construction of collective action frames, involves public discourse, which is, the interface of media discourse and interpersonal

interaction; persuasive communication during mobilization campaigns by movement organizations, their opponents and countermovement organizations; and consciousness rising during episodes of collective action” (p. 45).

In communication studies, scholars define framing as “the process by which a communication source, such as a news organization, defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy” (Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997, p. 221). In addition to the differing definitions of framing, researchers approach framing in different ways (Bichard, 2006). Some scholars define framing based on the construction of communication texts. Others look at framing from the perspective of how individuals understand and interpret information (Bichard, 2006).

Indeed, it is not easy to understand the concept of framing by using a single definition, but in general framing implies packaging and organizing information (Entman, 1993) in such a way that people may understand a specific issue according to the way information is framed (Bichard, 2006) resulting in an interpretation that would generate an alternative picture of the reality in their mind (Entman, 1993). Framing is the study of how a society processes information about an issue in order to generate meanings (Fisher, 1997). Bichard (2006) concludes that framing analysis is especially useful when investigating political issues (Bichard, 2006).

Donati (1992) suggests that people frame the object that an issue evolves from, rather than the issue itself. Framing helps to identify how people understand the issue, but does not provide a clear distinction about people’s choice to be “for” or “against” a proposition (Donati, 1992). Framing does not produce data that would enable researchers to explain or predict how mass media, state institutions and other influent groups would influence public policy (Fisher, 1997). Framing is rather a method in studying how people perceive and understand an issue (Fisher, 1997).

Frames are identified through the analysis of key-words, concepts, metaphors, symbols and visual graphics (Entman, 1993). It involves conceptualizing key ideas and incorporates narrative techniques to support the key ideas (Hallahan, 1999).

2.3 Media-constructed reality

Both agenda-setting and framing theories suggest that media are capable of affecting the audience's perception of events and issues. Content construction is one of the ways media develop the ability to influence the audience. Researchers found that media content has significant effects on its audiences (Perry, 2002). Media content does not exist in a vacuum, but rather is influenced by factors such as culture, politics, and economics.

Content construction was studied by a large number of researchers (Ball-Rokeach & Cantor, 1986; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Chang, Wang & Chen, 2002). Chang et al. (2002) suggest that "media content is often shaped by the dominant conditions of the system, such as the power structure and social alignments" (p. 27). Hartley (1982) believes that news is tied to the social structure, and ultimately are "what those in power say it is" (p.9).

Indeed, social structure affects news content and there are "political, economic, and social realities that set the stage for the nature of media content" (Ball-Rokeach & Cantor, 1986). In addition, McQuail (1987) argues that the societal elites are both sources and subjects of the news, but the large public or groups such as minorities, have a lesser opportunity to be present in news coverage (McQuail, 1987).

Hartley suggests that the social function of the news is to "produce social knowledge and cultural values" (Hartley, 1982). The news is expected to have (required) impartiality and (unavoidable) points of view (Hartley, 1982). However, Fiske says that "news ... can never give a full, accurate, objective picture of reality nor should it attempt to, for such an enterprise can only serve to increase its authority and decrease people's opportunity to 'argue' with it, to negotiate with it" (Fiske, 1987). Therefore, news should not be perceived as a reflection of reality but as a process of selection and construction that is altered by societal norms, elite groups, and journalistic practices (Tuchman, 1978; Gans, 1979; Entman, 1993).

The altered property of news led researchers to view news as a constructed version of reality (Fishman, 1980; Goodwin, 1990; Schudson, 1991; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Chang et al, 1998; Chang et al, 2002). Some researchers pointed out that media content does not reflect an objective reality of the world (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Media content is built by a variety of factors, and the best way to identify the reality is to compare media reality with social reality (Fishman, 1980).

According to Berger & Luckmann (1966) reality is socially constructed. Thus, the audience can view a social event or issue from several perspectives (Davis & Robinson, 1989). In this context, media news coverage provides a limited version of social reality. Perry (2002) suggests that when it comes to exploring reality from the media content prospective, one must understand the journalists' limits on human abilities to describe an objective and external reality.

The present study follows the assumption that media news coverage does not necessarily reflect reality in an objective fashion. In this study, reality refers a variety of situations regarding Russia. As such, media content is altered by numerous factors and the result is that descriptions by the media may be significantly different than reality.

As specific audiences interpret reality based on the media content of an issue; therefore, the role of the media to educate and entertain the public is acknowledged. Since news is a constructed reality, the research is focused to identify Russia's portrayal by a content analysis of the news coverage. Indeed, one may assume that such news media coverage is altered and influenced by multiple factors.

2.4 Determinants of international news coverage

This study seeks to identify Russia's portrayal in news media according to the nature of social reality reported in the selected Western media agencies, specifically the AP, BBC and DW. For the purpose of the study it is important to analyze the main factors that influence the international news coverage in the Western media within a theoretical framework.

Indeed, different media institutions engage different values in their news stories (Salwen, 1987). Often, what is important to one media agency may or may not be important to

another. International news coverage varies from country to country and is determined by multiple factors. First, international news coverage is influenced by a nation's image, and, second, the public perceptions of a foreign nation (Salwen, 1987).

Perry (1980) argues that there is a positive correlation between the exposure to or the use of certain types of news and the audience's knowledge of the world-affairs issues of foreign countries, as well as with the audience's attitude toward those countries (Wanta, Lee & Golan, 2003). The public demand for international news increases as the international news supply about foreign nations also increases (Perry, 1980).

In addition, international news coverage builds up the image of a country or a culture and may impact the flow of international capital for a specific nation (Kunczik, 2002). News coverage on international affairs can determine the relations between the government and the press, thus allowing media to have a greater impact in forming public opinion (Flournoy & Stewart, 1997). Some research findings suggest that the audience's perception of a foreign country is under the influence of foreign news coverage by their home media (Flournoy & Stewart, 1997).

Kunczik (2002) believes there is little or no difference between the criteria editors use to select international news and national or local news (Kunczik, 2002). In addition, Chang and Lee (1992) found that when selecting international news, editors in the U.S. media considered the following factors in the order of importance: (1) threat to the U.S. and world peace, (2) anticipated reader interest, (3) timeliness, (4) U.S. involvement, and (5) loss of lives and property. Meanwhile, the researchers noticed that the U.S. journalists omitted (1) trade relations, (2) physical distance and (3) economic development of a country as important factors in their selection of foreign news (Chang & Lee, 1992).

Wanta (1993) devised four categories of news coverage that have the strongest agenda setting impact: (1) international conflicts involving the U.S., (2) terrorism involving the U.S., (3) crime or drugs, and (4) military or nuclear arms. Hicks and Gordon (1974) argue that

the U.S. involvement in an event or issue was one of the most important factors that influenced international news coverage in domestic media.

Another important factor in determining mass media coverage depends of the media relationship with the political elite of the society. Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm's (1963) explored four theories in order to examine the link between mass media and the political environment: (1) Authoritarian theory, developed during the Renaissance period, was based on the idea that truth and knowledge is the product of the political and social elites; (2) Libertarian theory, also called the free press theory, debated in the works of such thinkers as Locke, Mill, and Jefferson, argues that truth and knowledge is a natural right of every human being; (3) the Soviet Communist theory is a expanded version of the old Authoritarian theory, yet the major difference is that the Soviet Communist theory seeks to provide a complete and objective view of the world according to Marxist-Leninist principles; (4) Social Responsibility theory of the modern day is a model based on the idea that media had certain obligations to society. The Commission on Freedom of the Press (1947) expressed these obligations as "informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity, and balance" (p. 2). Therefore, based on Siebert's four theories of press, one may conclude that the AP, one of the market-driven American media outlets, can be categorized as a libertarian media model, while the BBC and DW, European media, can be categorized by the social responsibility model.

Moreover, some other researchers argue that "proximity", expressed geographically, politically, economically, or culturally, of the home country to foreign states is another major determinant for international news coverage (Cohen, 1995). Indeed, events that occurred in nations perceived as important in U.S. politics and economics had a greater chance to appear in news coverage (Shoemaker et al, 1991). Kunczik (2002) explains that "the higher ranking of geographical or cultural proximity and more economic or ideological relations of a foreign country led to more intensive coverage of the country" (p. 52).

Indeed, most of the research findings discussed in the earlier part of the literature review may apply to the case of Russia, for example, geographical and cultural proximity

(Cohen, 1995; Kunczik, 2002, Wu, 2003). In addition, the types of economic and ideological connections to foreign countries determine the coverage of the country (Cohen, 1995; Kunczik, 2002; Wu, 2003). Moreover, mass media reporting on foreign affairs often governs the image types of a country or a culture, which have a strong influence on the flow of international capital (Kunczik, 2002). It is thus helpful to examine the core values of both Western and Russian cultures.

2.6 Cultural differences between Russia and the West

According to Hofstede (2001), “there is no such thing as a universal management method or management theory across the globe” (Hofstede, 2001). Management is a phenomenon that interacts with other social structures such as family, school, politics, government, religion and science.

Hofstede’s (2001) model is a framework that considers five dimensions of value perspectives between national cultures: (1) power distance is the degree of inequality among people which the population of a country considers as normal; (2) individualism versus collectivism represents the extent to which people feel they are supposed to take care for or to be cared for by themselves, their families or organizations they belong to; (3) masculinity versus femininity describes the extent to which a culture is conducive to dominance, assertiveness and acquisition of things versus a culture which is more conducive to people, feelings and the quality of life; (4) uncertainty avoidance is the degree to which people in a country prefer structured over unstructured situations; and (5) long-term versus short-term orientation identifies values oriented towards the future versus values oriented towards the past and present.

Hofstede provides a 100 point scale to measure the degree of each cultural dimension. Using Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, we can identify similarities and differences, if any, between Russian and Western culture.

Russia’s cultural dimensions scores are as follows: Power Distance Index is 93, Individualism – 39, Masculinity – 36, and Uncertainty Avoidance Index – 95. Hofstede fails to offer a score for Russian Long-Term Orientation. However, observing Long-Term Orientation

scores for similar cultures (Poland – 32, Czech Republic – 13) we can assume the Russian score for Long-Term Orientation dimension is also low (Figure 1.1).

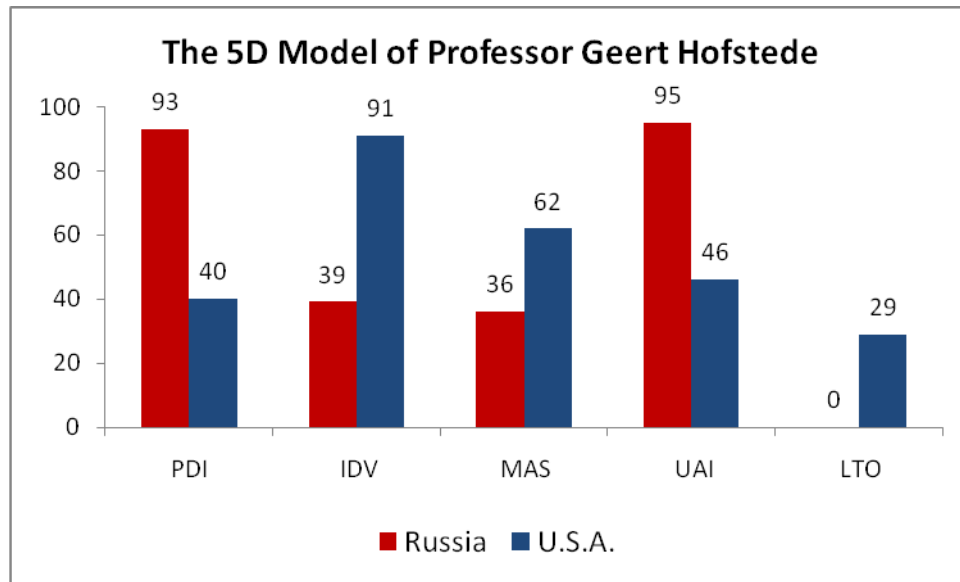


Figure 1.1 Russia – U.S. cultural dimensions

On the opposite spectrum, cultural dimensions scores for Western cultures such as United Kingdom and United States significantly differ from the Russian scores and are very similar among the Western cultures (Figure 1.2).

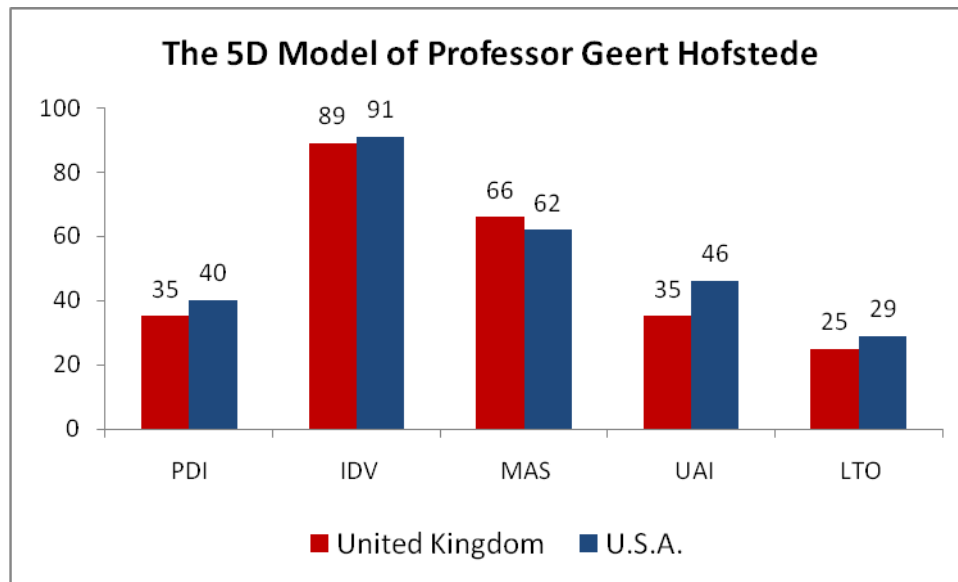


Figure 1.2 U.K. – U.S. cultural dimensions

The United Kingdom and United States' scores are: Power Distance Index – 35 and 40, Individualism – 89 and 91, Masculinity – 66 and 62, and Uncertainty Avoidance Index – 35. The only similarity between Western and Russian cultural dimension lays in a common low Long-Term Orientation. United Kingdom and United States' scores for Long-Term Orientation dimension are very similar, scoring 25 and 29 points.

The difference in scores for the U.S. and the U.K. on one side, and Russia on other, highlights the historical contrast between the West and Russia. Goehner and Richmond (2005) developed a theoretical framework regarding core cultural differences between the West and Russia. In terms of authority, the U.S. perceives it as having power delegated from the people, while the Russian model of authority is centralized and authority flows down to the people.

Americans perceive change as an issue of each individual, while Russians tend to perceive change as something imposed from above and to take place at the societal level. Rights are protected and celebrated for Americans, but Russians rights are subordinated for the benefit of the society. Americans and Russians are also different in terms of diversity. Americans tolerate and pledge pluralism, while Russians tend to accept a single truth.

For Americans, the economy is centered on private property ownership in a free competing market. Instead of using this approach, Russians continue to accept the government-centered economic system. Finally, in terms of warfare, Americans have fought mainly overseas, having little or no war devastation. On the other side, Russians have a history of continuous cruelty, bound with frequent wars and devastation (Goehner and Richmond, 2005).

All of the abovementioned cultural differences help explain the past and present rivalry between West and Russia. Cultural differences affect all areas of West and Russia relations, starting from simple interpersonal relations and ending with differences in terms of state administration, economy, trade, military system, etc.

2.6 The Associated Press, British Broadcasting Corporation and Deutsche Welle: a brief overview

This research defines Western media as news media from developed countries of the West. News agencies based and operating in the U.S., United Kingdom, Germany, France and other Western European countries are widely accepted as the Western mainstream media.

A news agency is an organization of journalists established to sell or supply news. Some news agencies can be corporations that sell news (Reuters, Agence France-Presse), while other agencies collaborate with different media companies in order to collect and share news (Associated Press). News agencies may also be controlled by the government; such cases can be found in China, Australia, Britain, Canada, Russia and other countries. The role of news agencies is crucial when it comes to setting the agenda on international stories other media choose to carry (Skinner, Compton & Gasher, 2005).

2.6.1 The Associated Press (AP)

The Associated Press is the world's largest news agency, founded in 1846 and based in New York. The AP is a cooperative owned by its contributing newspapers; radio and TV stations in the United States, these media outlets contribute stories to it and use material written by its reporters (AP, 2007). The AP employs a straightforward, "just-the-facts" writing style, often using the "inverted pyramid formula" for writing that enables news outlets to edit a story to

fit its available publication space without losing the story's essential meaning and news information (AP, 2007).

The main AP's rival English-language news services are Reuters and the English language service of Agence France-Presse. However, these news agencies are based outside the U.S., thus allowing the AP to be the leader of news services in the nation (AP, 2007). The AP structure consists of 243 news bureaus in 121 countries. In the U.S. the AP's news is published and republished by more than 1,700 local and national newspapers, as well as aired by more than 5,000 television and radio broadcasters (AP, 2007).

On the Internet, the AP reaches a considerable number of audiences through its partnership with Yahoo's Top News as well as with other several web-portals. This move has been of major impact to the AP's public image and role, as it gives new credence to the AP's continual mission of having staff for covering every area of news fully and promptly (AP, 2007).

2.6.2 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

The BBC was founded in October, 1922 as the British Broadcasting Company Ltd. Five years later; in 1927, the company was transformed in a state-owned corporation and remains under this status up to this date. Today, BBC is a world's leading producer of programs and information services, broadcasting globally on television, radio, and the internet.

The BBC is a quasi-autonomous public corporation operating as a public service broadcaster: it states that it is "free from both political and commercial influence and answers only to its viewers and listeners" (BBC Press Office, 2006). The mission of the BBC is "to inform, educate and entertain". The motto of the corporation is "Nation Shall Speak Peace Unto Nation" (BBC Press Office, 2006).

BBC News is the largest broadcast news gathering service in the world (BBC Press Office, 2006). The BBC News Online website was launched in November 1997 and today is one of the most popular news websites in the UK. Its traffic consists of almost one quarter of the UK's Internet users (9.4 million) and around four million global readers every month.

Therefore, the BBC's web-site is considered the most popular content-based site in Europe (BBC Press Office, 2006). At least 13.2 million people in the UK have visited the two-million pages produced by the BBC web-site at least once in 2006 (BBC Press Office, 2006). According to Alexa's TrafficRank system, in May 2007, the BBC website was the 20th most popular English Language website in the world, and the 33rd most popular overall. Additionally, the BBC website contains exhaustive international news coverage along with entertainment, sport, science, and political news. Many news stories are supported with additional audio and video content.

2.6.3 *Deutsche Welle (DW)*

Deutsche Welle is Germany's international broadcaster, inaugurated in May, 1953 by German President Theodor Heuss. Later, in 1960, Deutsche Welle became an independent public body. Today, DW broadcasts news and information on shortwave radio frequencies, Internet and satellite radio in 29 languages (Deutsche Welle, 2007).

Deutsche Welle's mission statement is to "communicate German points of view as well as other perspectives" and to "promote intercultural dialog and work to further international understanding and tolerance." Deutsche Welle also works "to provide comprehensive and uncensored information to countries that lack free media, particularly crisis regions and war zones" along with "a cultural mission [to] present the culture from Germany and Europe" (Deutsche Welle, 2007). It is notable that DW tends to "participate actively in the social discourse in Germany," therefore working toward influencing German public opinion (Deutsche Welle, 2007).

In 1994, Deutsche Welle was the first public broadcaster in Germany to be present on the Internet. Later, DW's website evolved into a 30-language content news portal that offers daily exclusive coverage in seven core languages. However, the main focus of the news coverage is on German and European news (Deutsche Welle, 2007).

According to Alexa's Traffic Rank system, in May 2007 the BBC website was the 832nd most popular website in Germany and the 5362nd most popular in the world. DW visitors come

from Germany (14.7%), Iran (8.9%), USA (5.1%), Brazil (4.1%), Chile (3.2%), etc. (Alexa TrafficRank, 2007).

2.7 Research questions

Based on the previous theoretical discussion of framing and agenda setting theory and the literature review, four research questions were proposed. These research questions were designed to describe, explain, and explore Russia's portrayal as it was constructed in Western media. The following research questions were developed:

RQ1: What are the main topics in the news-stories about Russia, released by the AP, BBC, and DW during 2007? Are there any significant differences between the topics in the news-stories about Russia, released by the AP, BBC and DW?

RQ2: What is the number of sources used to document the news-stories about Russia, released by the AP, BBC and DW during 2007? Are there any significant differences between the number of sources used by the AP, BBC and DW?

RQ3: What are the main types of sources used to document the news-stories about Russia, released by the AP, BBC and DW during 2007? Are there any significant differences between the types of sources used by the AP, BBC and DW?

RQ4: Are there any significant differences between topics covered, the tone of the story and the frames used by the AP, BBC and DW during 2007? If yes, what are the differences?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative content analysis was used to investigate the research questions of the study. The content analysis was organized according to the sequence of research procedures such as media selection, data gathering, sampling, coding procedures, and data analysis. Each of these procedures is explained in detail in this chapter, as well as the following chapter.

The quantitative method is used in this thesis to provide insight into Russia's portrayal in Western media. Quantitative research is seen to be objective because the researcher's involvement is less visible than in more intrusive methods. It is confirmatory and deductive in nature, and offers relevant straightforward numerical data (Schmierbach, 2005). Moreover, Schmierbach (2005) notes that the results of quantitative research can be generalized (Schmierbach, 2005).

This particular study uses quantitative methodology to investigate Russia's portrayal in Western media, specifically to reveal the topics, sources and frames used by the AP, BBC and DW. The method used in this study identifies the main topics, nature and number of sources, as well as the frames applied to portray Russia's image in Western media.

3.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research method used "for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson, 1952, p1.8). Krippendorff (1980) defined content analysis as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context. Historically, many mass communication studies have examined the content of mass media using the method of content analysis (Perry, 2002).

Content analysis was used in this study to provide an objective and in-depth description of Russia news coverage in Western media. This method was also selected because of its strength for examining media content. Popping (2000) suggests that in quantitative research,

the goal is to answer questions, thus the notions and theories are formulated in a logical-deductive manner – that is the type of reasoning that proceeds from general principles or premises to derive particular implications of propositions that support or contradict general principles of certain laws. The quantitative content analysis depends on determining numbers within categories, precise coding, and frequency calculations (Perry, 2002). This technique of quantitative content analysis allows the researchers to focus on the structure of news reporting on Russia and on the specific media content unobtrusively and objectively. According to Perry (2002) an unobtrusive and objective technique means that the presence of researchers does not affect the behavior of subjects. In addition, a set of categorization procedures is often used in content analysis studies for making valid and replicable inferences from data (text or images). Additionally, the procedures used in content analysis must be described precisely, so that the findings of the study may be replicated (Krippendorff, 1980).

3.2 Media selection

This study examined the content of the AP, BBC and DW and then investigated how Russia was framed by these three Western media outlets. Western media generally refer to the media system in the more developed countries of the West. In this study, Western media specifically refers to electronic news media originating from the United States (U.S.), the United Kingdom (U.K.) and Germany reporting on international news events and serving the worldwide audience. That is also the criteria for media selection for this study in terms of the scope of news services and the targeted audiences of the AP, BBC and DW. These three media outlets are leaders in supplying information to the national public opinion in each country of origin; as well as influencing the news agenda for other local and national media companies.

The content analysis in this study examines Western media because of the worldwide trend of Western news to contain accurate and comprehensive reporting of world events. Content researcher de Smaele (1999) observed that media systems are shaped by economic, political and cultural factors. The Western media model and its principles have been incorporated into many Eastern media systems since the communist world collapsed in the

early 1990s (de Smaele, 1999). Herman (2002) argues that global media commercialization has made media structures and media outputs across the globe more alike.

The Associated Press (a U.S. medium), BBC, (a U.K. medium), and Deutsche Welle, (a German medium), were selected as representative media agencies to be analyzed in this research. These news organizations are suitable for this research purpose because of their worldwide reputations in providing international news services for interested audiences. The American media system is characterized by a private commercial approach and limited government interference among the Western media model (de Smaele, 1999). The U.K. and German media systems are central to the tradition of West European public service that is presumed to be independent from political or economic pressures. Therefore, it is logical to assume that the U.S., the U.K. and German media are characteristic of the Western media model and can serve the purpose of this research as representatives of Western media. The AP (from the U.S.), BBC (from the U.K.) and DW (from Germany), as three main news suppliers, were thus selected for this research.

3.3 Sampling

To quantitatively analyze the ways that Western media have reported relevant news about Russia over time, this research required access to the news articles released by the three selected Western media outlets – the AP, BBC and DW. News stories in the year 2007 were chosen as the population for the study. There are several reasons for studying the news stories released during 2007: (1) it is a pre-electoral year, the final year of Putin's eight-year presidency, thus motivating international news media to monitor Russia's politics and social life; (2) 2007 is Russia's seventh year in row of economic ascension; (3) it is the most recent year available for study. The news stories were selected as the unit of analysis to investigate the research questions proposed for the study. A content analysis of the whole population was impractical, thus sampling from the population was necessary. It was decided that results about the research questions based on this sample could be used to make predictions about the population.

The population of the study, which consists of news stories about Russia reported by the AP, BBC and DW during the year 2007, was obtained through the online news archives service of each news agency. Each archive was searched with the keyword "Russia", selected to retrieve relevant search results.

The specific search strategies used in each news archive required slight modification to retrieve relevant articles for analysis. The BBC and DW's news archive systems are freely accessible to the public, and the AP's archive is available for a small monthly fee. The search strategy for all three news agencies was based on the keyword "Russia" for the period from January 1, to December 31, 2007. Each database is accessible from the agencies' websites the AP - <http://www.ap.org>, BBC - <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, and DW - <http://www.dw-world.de>. The news archives of the AP and BBC are easily searchable and the results were retrieved in chronological order without duplication. Due to the limitations of the DW search engine, the search strategy for DW news is more complicated. DW news archives online was searched for the keyword "Russia" for the time period of January 1, to December 31, 2007. Search results were chronologically arranged by the researcher, and all duplicated items were removed.

All data resulting from keyword searching from each news archive were first arranged in chronological order, but separately for each news agency. Redundant results and irrelevant data were removed from the data pool. All the data deemed usable were then combined and reordered chronologically. In the end, the total number of reports was 2,184 for all three media outlets.

The probability sample for this content analysis research is random, because of the large data size. Therefore, a quarter of the total was sampled using random number generator software. The news stories were thus selected according to the list of random numbers generated by the software. The total sample size was 546 news stories, the resulting confidence level of the sample drawn was 95% and the margin of error was 4%.

3.4 Variables

To examine the research questions, relevant variables and coding categories were developed. Variables and categories are an important part of content analysis because content analysis is based on defining variables and looking for associations among them.

Ten variables were designed for this study: (1) media agency, (2) primary topic of the story, (3) secondary topic of the story, (4) number of sources mentioned in the story, (5) type of sources, (6) type of governmental sources, (7) type of civil society sources, (8) type of expert sources, (9) tone of the story and (10) frame of the story. These variables were selected in order to create a better understanding of Russia's portrayal in Western media and to answer the research questions of the study.

The independent variables identified in this study are media agency and case number. The rest are treated as dependent variables, which are linked to independent variables. Western media coverage of Russia is measured by the number of relevant news items, the frequencies of the values of these variables, and the relations of variables. The operational definitions of these variables are stated as follows:

1. Media agency refers to the media organization that published the news story. The value assigned is the AP, BBC or DW.

2. The primary topic of the story is defined as the main subject related to Russia that a news story discusses or mentions. Possible values are (a) Russian government, (b) international relations, (c) security issues, (d) economy, (e) society, (f) culture, (g) sports, and (h) other.

3. The secondary topic of the story is defined as the collateral or the second important topic concurrent with the main subject related to Russia that a news story discusses or mentions. Its values could be (a) Russian government, (b) international relations, (c) security issues, (d) economy, (e) society, (f) culture, (g) sport, and (h) other.

4. Number of sources refers to the number of individuals or organizational entities used in a news story about Russia.

5. The type of sources is defined as the individuals or organizational entities used in a news story about Russia.

6. The type of governmental sources refers to the origin of the governmental organizational entities used in a news story about Russia. Its values may be (a) Russian, (b) the U.S.A, (c) the U.K, (d) Germany, (e) combined, and (f) other.

7. The type of civil society sources refers to the origin of individuals or organizational entities representative for the civil society, used in a news story about Russia. Its values could be (a) Russian, (b) Western, (c) combined, and (d) other

8. The type of expert sources refers to the origin of expertise of individuals or organizational entities used in a news story about Russia. Its values may be (a) Russian, (b) Western, (c) combined, and (d) other.

9. The tone of the story is defined as the angle from which a news event or issue about Russia is described by a media organization. Its values include (a) friendly, (b) neutral, (c) unfriendly, and (d) unclear.

10. The frame of the story refers to how a news story about Russia is treated by the Western media. A frame refers to a specific characteristic with clusters of concerns. As the coding method, the frames were listed in the coding sheet. Coders were asked to indicate whether a news story was framed into an identified frame category such as: (a) cold war, (b) Russia as a rising threat, (c) Russia as a partner, (d) Russia's troubled democracy, and (f) unclear. The frames emerged as the main frames during the preliminary test.

3.5 Coding categories, code book, and pretest

The next step of the quantitative content analysis is the coding process using a coding schema and coding categories. Coding is "the process whereby raw data are systematically transformed and aggregated into units which permit precise description of relevant content characteristics" (Holsti, 1969, p94). In the data coding process, a unit of analysis is recorded, identified, and linked to the conceptual categories. The code-book was designed to provide the

rules for assigning a coding unit to one or multiple categories. The coding sheet and the coding instructions are attached in Appendices A and B.

The code-book used for this study was pretested for intercoder reliability in a pilot study to examine the categories devised. Two Russian-English bi-lingual graduate students from the University of Texas at Arlington participated in the pilot study. The coders were trained to accurately identify the recording units and to apply the concept categories correctly. They simultaneously coded about 10% of the sample. Intercoder reliability was calculated based on the percentage of agreements among the two coders. The variables of (1) media agency, (4) number of sources, (5) type of sources, (6) type of governmental sources, (7) type of civil society sources, (8) type of expert sources had 100 percent reliability. The reliabilities of the remaining variables were: (2) primary topic of the story – 84.75; (3) secondary topic of the story – 84.75; (9) tone of the story – 93.25; and (10) frame of the story – 89.64. Holsti's test was conducted and the average intercoder reliability was 95.6.

Categories are groups of concepts that have similar meanings or connotations, and are an important part of content analysis research. Categories must be carefully defined and have a satisfactory reliability in order to be replicated by other researchers (Perry, 2002, p.102). Additionally, all categories created must be exhaustive and mutually exclusive. In this research, news content was coded into categories according to the definitions of categories; and these categories were used for variables and operationally defined. The complete descriptions and details are shown in Appendix A coding sheet and Appendix B coding instructions.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter describes the research results about Russia's portrayal in the Western media during the year 2007 based on quantitative content analysis techniques. In this study, the Western media specifically refers to news media that originate from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany. The AP, BBC and DW were selected as representative Western media because of their worldwide reputations and highly successful international news services. This chapter presents the quantitative research results, including descriptive tables and cross-tabulations about variables under examination. The discussion about how the research results were used to answer the research questions will be presented in the following chapter.

The quantitative data were coded and analyzed using SPSS 13.0 statistical analysis software. Descriptive tables and cross-tabulations about the relevant variables were created to examine the research questions. The descriptive tables describe the distribution of values of the variables of primary and secondary topics, number and type of sources, the tone used in news, and frames. Additionally, each variable was analyzed using the frequencies and percentages of its values.

The cross-tabulations reveal the relationship between media agency and primary and secondary topic, media agency and number and type of sources, media agency and tone of the story and media agency and frame of the story. All the frequencies and percentages were presented in these cross-tabulations. Chi-squares were also computed to test the significance of the relationships between variables. Some items were combined or omitted to meet the criteria for chi-square analysis, which requires the individual value for each cell to be more than five. The details are shown in the following descriptive tables and cross-tabulations.

4.1. Media agency

This variable shows the distribution of the analyzed news stories released by each media outlet. The total number of news stories about Russia released by the AP during the 2007 was about 824, of which 206 were analyzed in this study. Consequently, BBC and DW released 708 and 652 news stories respectively on Russia and $\frac{1}{4}$ of them (177 and 163) were analyzed.

The total number of analyzed news stories was 546, including 206 (37.7%) news stories released by AP, 177 (32.4%) released by BBC and 163 (29.9%) released by DW. Results from the variable of media agency are shown in Figure 4.1.

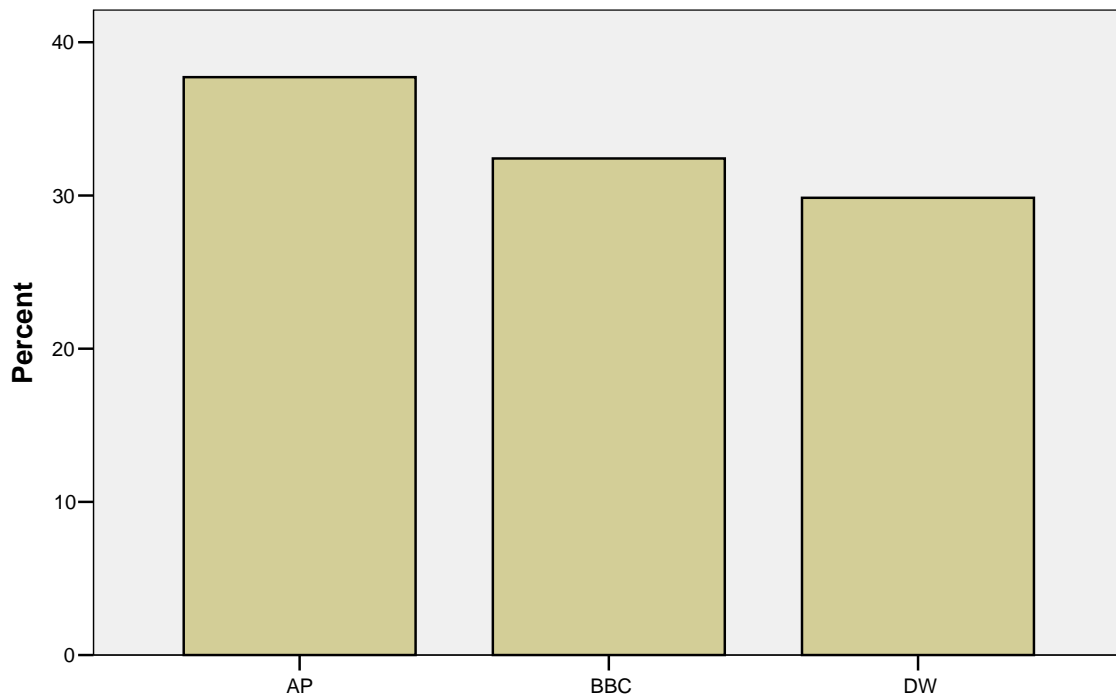


Figure 4.1 Distribution of the analyzed news stories released by each media agency

4.2 Primary topics

This variable examined what kinds of topics related to Russia were of the primary interest to the Western news media. Results on the variable of primary topic are shown in

Figure 4.2 – (a) Russian government, (b), international relations, (c) security issues, (d) economy, (e) society, (f) culture, (g) sport, and (h) other.

“International relations” was the most frequently covered topic related to Russia by the Western news media, accounting for 48.7 percent of the overall news coverage. Other topics were covered less frequently: “society” (17.9%), “economy” (15.2%) and “Russian government” (11.9%). Topics such as “sport” (2.6%), “culture” (1.8%) and “security issues” (1.6%) were covered less as the primary topic of the news stories. The “other” category refers to all other topics such as internal insecurity, poor justice, mass media, environmental issues, etc. and received almost no coverage.

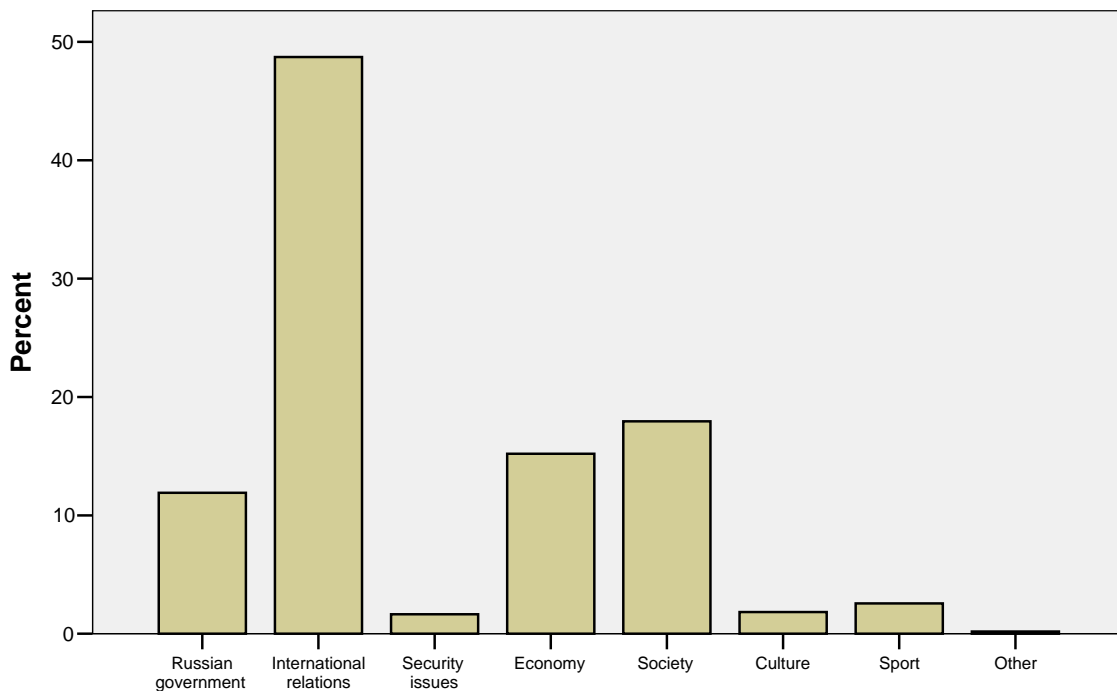


Figure 4.2 Primary topics of the news stories about Russia

4.3 Secondary topics

This variable examined what kinds of topics related to Russia were of secondary interest to the Western news media. Results from this variable are shown in Figure 4.3 – (a) Russian government, (b), international relations, (c) security issues, (d) economy, (e) society, (f) culture, (g) sport, and (h) other. The main secondary topic of the news stories is “security issues” (23.1%), followed by “international relations” (21.6%), “Russian government” (20%), “economy” (13.7%), and “society” (13.6%). The same as less covered primary topic, “sport” (1.8%) and “culture” (0.5%) are less covered as secondary topics of the released news stories. The “other” category (5.7%) refers to all other topics such as internal insecurity, poor justice, mass media, environmental issues, etc. – these received more coverage as a secondary topic than as a primary topic.

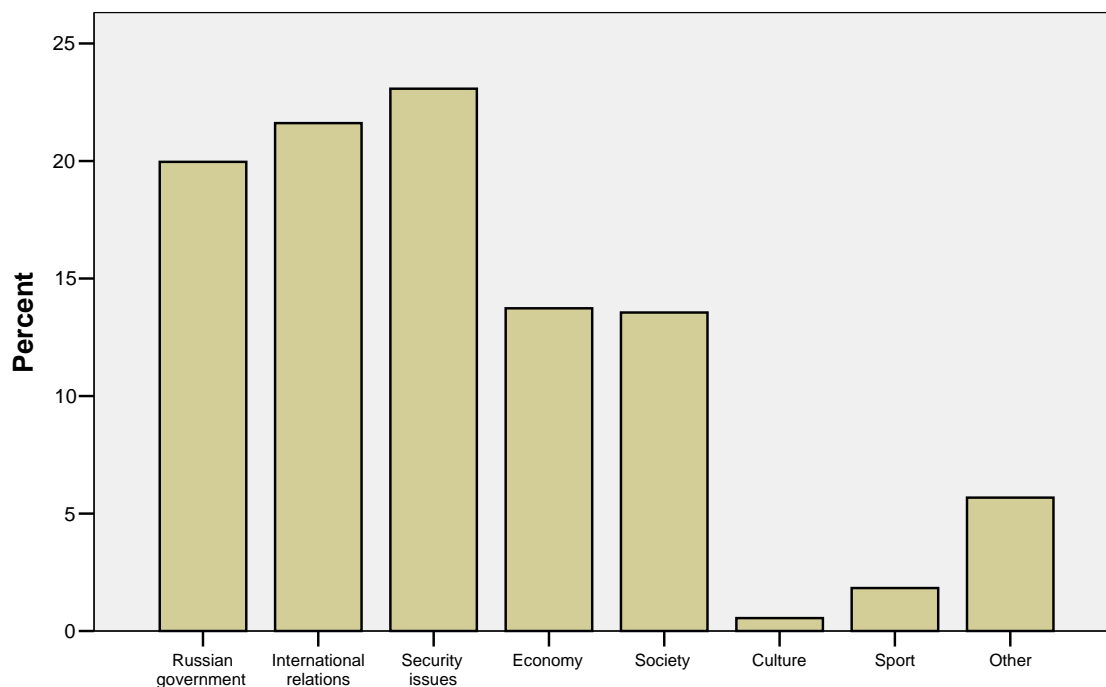


Figure 4.3 Secondary topics of the news stories about Russia

4.4 Number of sources

The variable of number of sources used in news was analyzed to examine number of individuals or organizational entities used in a news story about Russia released by Western media.

According to Figure 4.4 the vast majority of news stories were documented using three or more sources (56.8%). However, there are a significant number of news stories documented using only one source (22%) and the rest (21.2%) were documented using two sources.

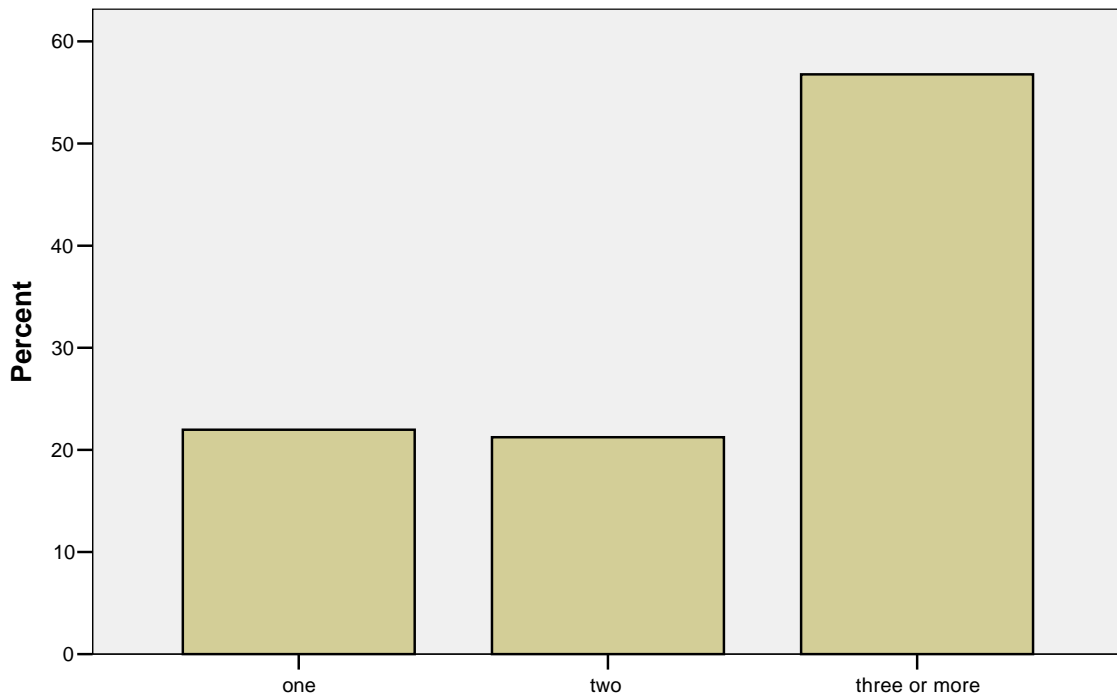


Figure 4.4 Number of sources used in news stories about Russia

4.5 Type of sources

The variable of sources used in news was analyzed to examine the characteristics of sources used by Western media. According to Figure 5.4 the most frequently used source type was governmental individuals or organizational entities, taking 70.7% of the overall sources use.

Following this were the expertise sources, taking 23.4%, and 5.5% sources representative for the civil society,

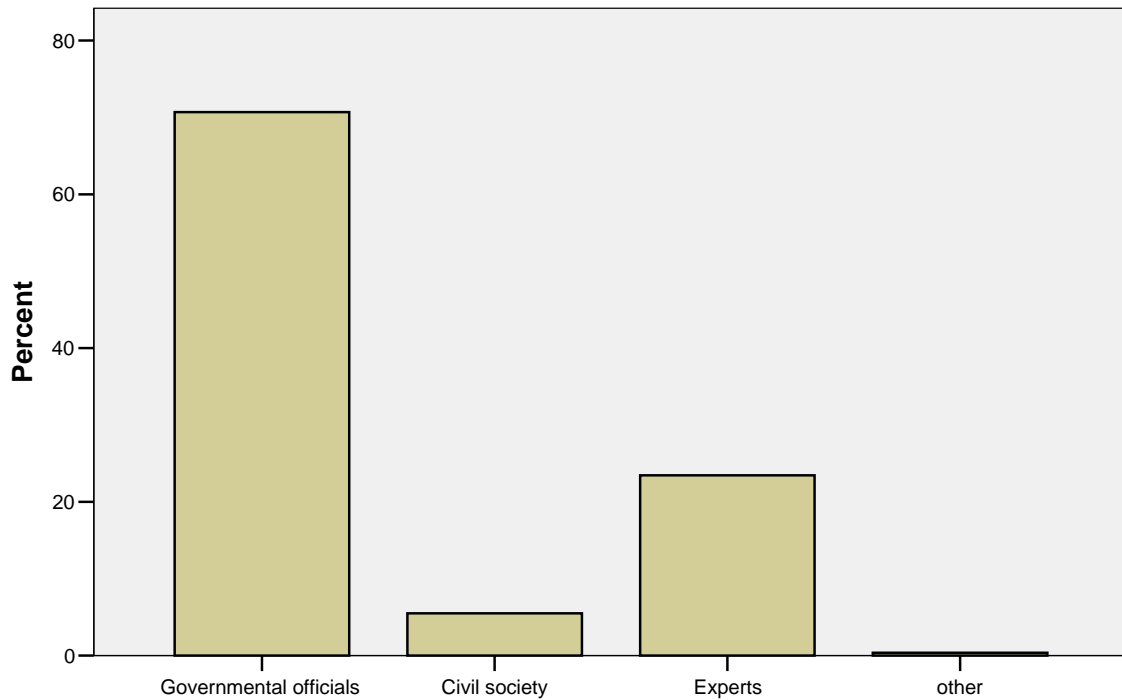


Figure 4.5 Type of sources used in news stories about Russia

4.6 Type of governmental sources

The variable referring to the type of governmental sources was used to determine the origin of the governmental organizational entities used in a news story about Russia. In news coverage about Russia media outlets such as AP, BBC and DW prefer to use a combination of government sources. This means that the news stories were documented based on multiple governmental sources originating from different countries. The “combined” approach was used to document 44% of the total number of news stories about Russia involving any kind of governmental sources. This is followed by Russian governmental sources (22.7%), American (2.9%), German (2%) and British (1.1%) officials. The category “other” (2.6%) includes

governmental officials representing other countries than the ones enumerated above. These countries are Belorussia, India, Iran, Serbia, Poland, Czech Republic, etc.

The “n/a” category was treated as a missing value because it denotes the absence of any governmental sources used to document the news story. Instead, sources such as experts and civil society were involved to document the rest (24.7%) of the stories.

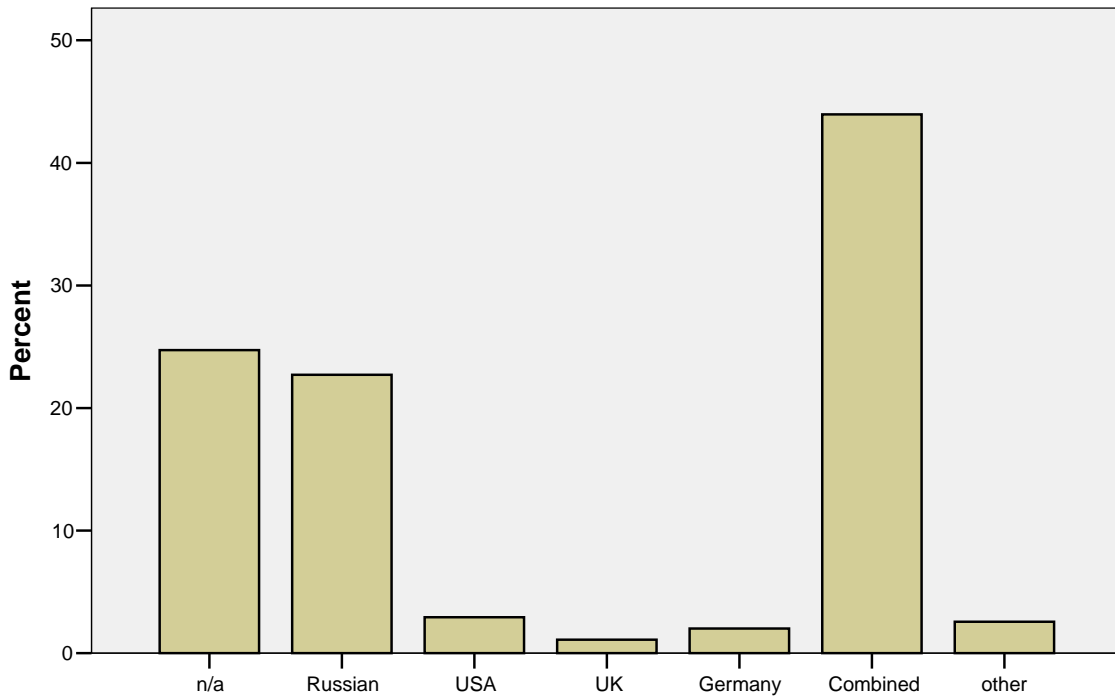


Figure 4.6 Type of governmental sources used in news stories about Russia

4.7 Type of civil society sources

The type of civil society sources refers to the origin of individuals or organizational entities representative for the civil society, used in news stories about Russia. Civil society sources were used to document only 17.2% of the news stories about Russia. From the total number of news stories about Russia, 14.8% were documented using Russian civil society representatives, 1.1% using Western civil society representatives and 1.1% using both Russian

and Western civil society representatives. The civil society representatives from other countries were almost absent (0.2%) as sources for the news stories about Russia.

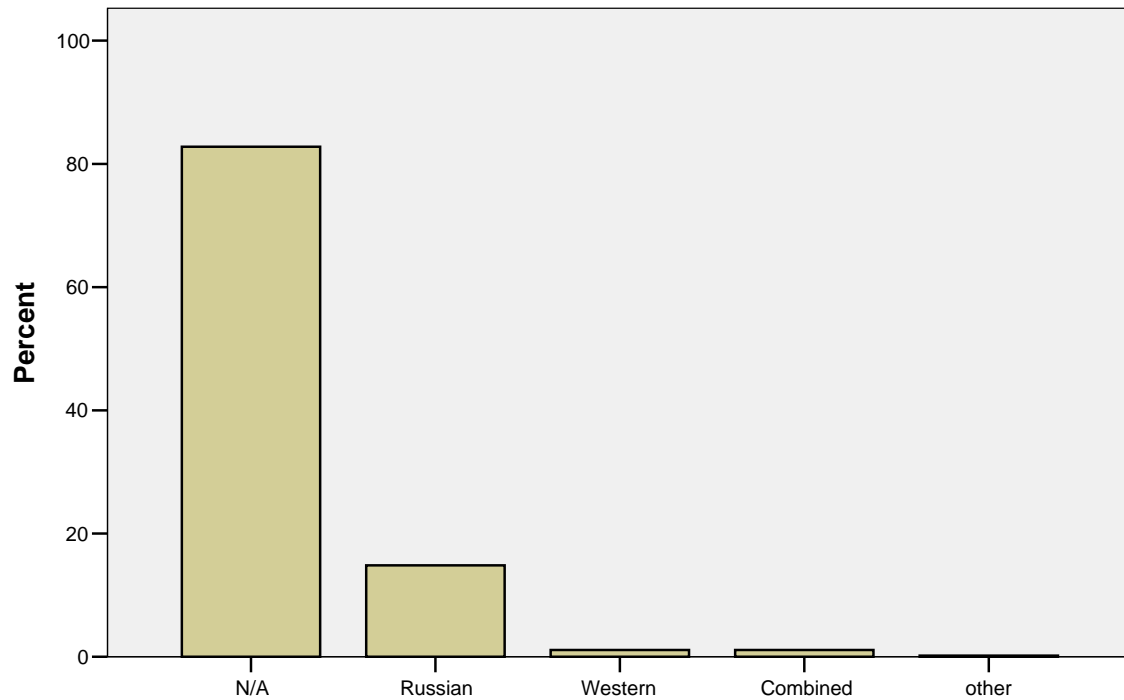


Figure 4.7 Type of civil society sources used in news stories about Russia

4.8 Type of expert sources

The type of expert sources variable refers to the origin of expertise of individuals or organizational entities used in a news story about Russia. Expert sources were used to document about half (48.7%) of the news stories about Russia released by AP, BBC and DW during 2007. From the total number of news stories about Russia, 26.4% were documented using the expertise of the Western experts, 10.3% using Russian experts and 5.9% using both Russian and Western experts. As the case for “type of civil society sources” variable, experts from other countries were almost absent (0.2%) as sources for the news stories about Russia.

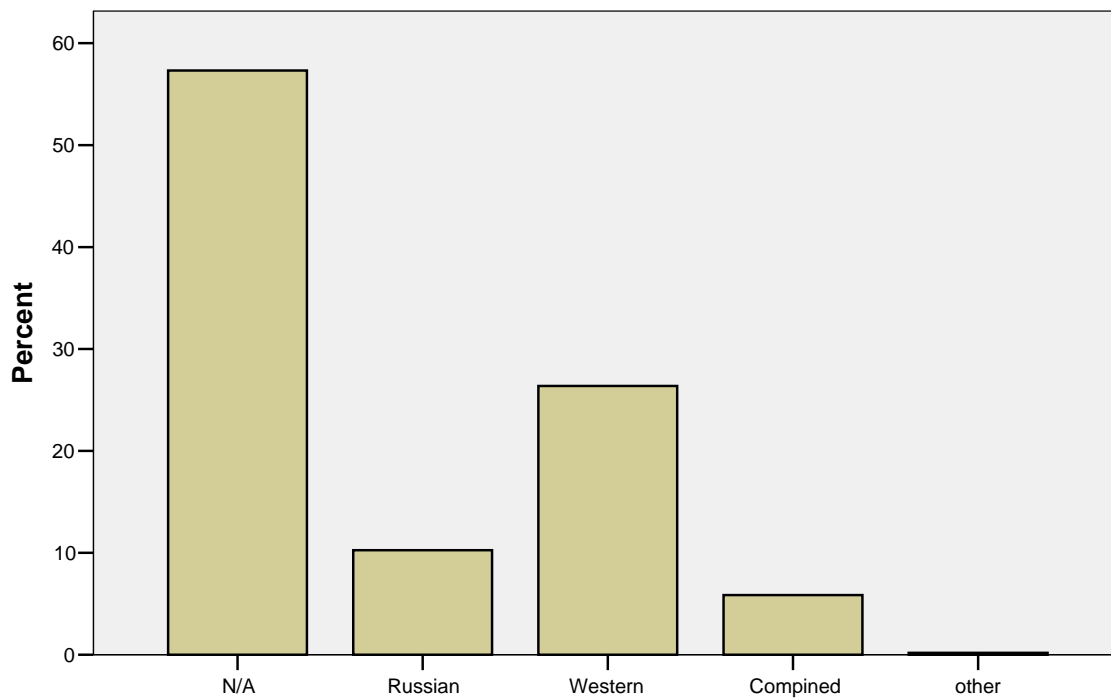


Figure 4.8 Type of expert sources used in news stories about Russia

4.9 Tone of the story

The tone of the story variable is defined as the overall positive or negative nature a news event or issue about Russia is described by a media organization. Researchers identified that about a half (50.7%) of the news stories about Russia were presented from a neutral point of view; while the other half (45.6%) were presented from an unfriendly standpoint. There is also an insignificant number (3.7%) of news stories presented in a friendly manner.

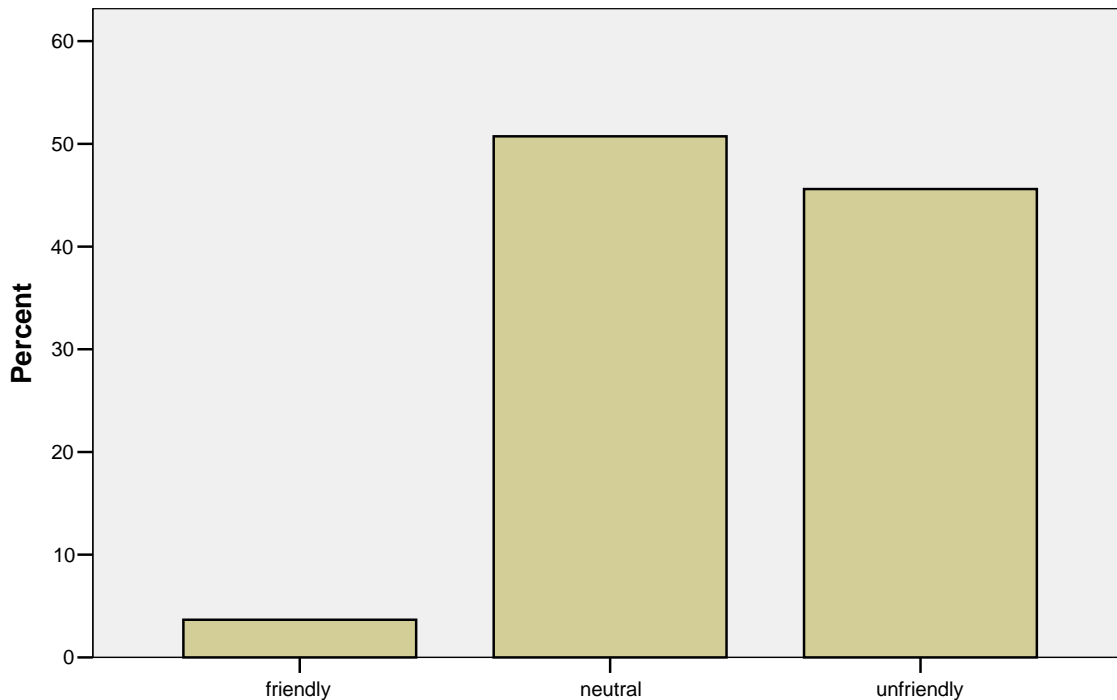


Figure 4.9 Tone of the story used in news stories about Russia

4.10 Frame of the story

The frame of the story refers to how a news story about Russia is treated by Western media. A frame refers to a specific characteristic with clusters of concerns. The results show that the main emerging frame is “rising threat” (26.6%), that is presenting news in such a way that Russia becomes a counter-power to the West what may involve a certain dose of political, economic and military threat to the Western world.

The second emerging frame is the Russian “troubled democracy” (23.7%), that is framing Russia as a country with little or no democracy, absence of transparency in governmental affairs and corruption of the state system.

The “Cold War” frame is the third emerging frame identified in 20.9% of the news stories about Russia. This particular frame implies framing news in such a way that Russia would emerge as a military rival to the Western world. The last emerged frame is “partnership”,

identified in 12.1% of the news stories. The “partnership” frame assumes framing Russia as a political, economic or military partner of the Western world.

Researchers were not able to identify any specific frame in 17% of the cases. However, some minor frames such as poverty, social injustice, environmental problems and others are worth mentioning.

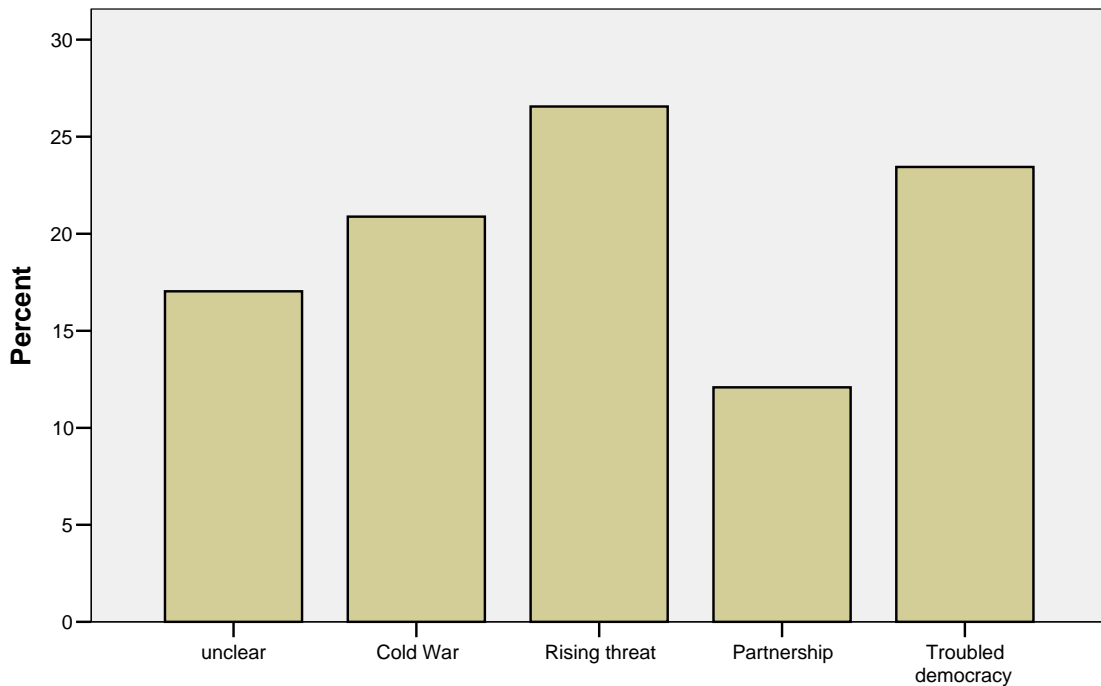


Figure 4.10 Frames used in news stories about Russia

4.11 Relations between variables

Cross tabulations were generated to examine the research questions proposed in the study. Table 4.1 shows the cross-tabulation for the relationship between the variable “media agency” and the variable “primary topic of the news story”.

Table 4.1 Media Agency * Primary topic cross-tabulation

Agency	Russian government		International relations		Economy		Society	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
AP	23	12.0	83	43.2	45	23.4	41	21.4
BBC	21	12.9	80	49.1	16	9.8	46	28.2
DW	21	13.4	103	65.6	22	14.0	11	7.0

X² (d.f.=6, N=521)=39.199 p=.000

Based on the Chi-square analysis (Table 4.1), the primary news topics emphasized by each media agency were significantly different, X^2 (d.f.=6, N=521)=39.199 p=.000. To meet the assumptions required for the Chi-square analysis, categories with less than 50 cases were omitted, including security issues, culture, sport, and other.

All three media outlets emphasized international relations as the primary topic in most of the news stories released during 2007. From the total amount of news stories, the AP reported international relations as the most frequent primary topic in 83 news stories – less than a half of the cases (43.2%), BBC in 80 cases – roughly half of the news stories (49.1%) and DW in 103 news stories – almost 1/3 of the cases (65.6%).

The second primary topic emphasized by the AP was economy – 45 cases or 23.4% of the total number of news stories about Russia. Subsequently, as the second most frequently primary topic, BBC reported about Russian society (46 cases, 28.2%) and DW about economic issues (22 cases, 14%).

The third most frequently primary topic reported by the AP was Russian society (41 cases, 21.4%), while BBC and DW reported news regarding Russian government: BBC – 21 cases, 12.9% and DW – 21 cases (13.4%).

The least covered primary topic by the AP was Russian government (23 cases, 12%). BBC reported less on economic topics (16 cases, 9.8%) and DW about Russian society (11 cases, 7%).

Table 4.2 shows the cross-tabulation for the relationship between the variable “media agency” and the variable “secondary topic of the news story”.

Table 4.2 Media agency * Secondary topic cross-tabulation

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Russian government</i>		<i>International relations</i>		<i>Security</i>		<i>Economy</i>		<i>Society</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
AP	43	23.5	37	20.2	47	25.7	32	17.5	24	13.1
BBC	54	34.2	19	12.0	29	18.4	27	17.1	29	18.4
DW	12	7.5	62	38.5	50	31.1	16	9.9	21	13.0

X² (d.f.=8, N=502)=62.955, p=.000

Based on the Chi-square analysis (Table 4.2), the secondary news topics emphasized by each media agency were significantly different, X^2 (d.f.=8, N=502) =62.955, p=.000. To meet the assumptions required for the analysis, categories with less than 50 cases were omitted including culture, sport, and other.

Security issues were the most frequently covered secondary topic in news stories released by the AP (47 cases, 25.7%). The BBC preferred to report mostly on Russian government as the top secondary topic (54 cases, 34.2%). However, as in the case for the primary topic, DW emphasized the topic of international relations as the most frequently covered secondary topic in its news stories (62 cases, 38.5%).

The second and third most frequently used secondary topic emphasized by the AP was the Russian government (43 cases, 23.5%) and international relations (37 cases, 20.2%). Subsequently, BBC and DW reported about security issues and Russian society as second and third most frequently secondary topic. These categories were identified in 29 different cases reported by BBC that is 18.4% for each category. However, DW reported more about security issues (50 cases, 31.1%) and less on Russian society (21 cases 13%).

The least frequently covered secondary topics about Russia by the AP were the economy (32 cases, 17.5%) and Russian society (24 cases, 13.1%). BBC and DW also reported less on the economy (27 cases, 17.1% and 16 cases, 9.9%), while BBC reported even less on international relations (19 cases, 12%) and DW on Russian government (12 cases, 7.5%).

The cross-tabulation for the relationship between the variable “media agency” and the variable “number of sources” is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Media agency * Number of sources cross-tabulation

<i>Agency</i>	<i>One</i>		<i>Two</i>		<i>Three and more</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
AP	53	23.7	58	28.2	95	46.1
BBC	41	23.2	42	25.7	94	53.1
DW	26	16.0	16	9.8	121	74.2

X^2 (d.f.=4, N=546)= 32.583 p=.000

All three media agencies prefer to use three or more sources to document their news stories: the AP – 46.1%, BBC – 53.1%, and DW – 74.2%. However, there are some differences between agencies when it comes to documenting news stories using one or two sources. The AP and BBC have more news stories documented by two sources – 28.2% and 25.7%, respectively, followed by news stories documented based only on one source – 23.7% and 23.2%. By contrast, DW has more news stories documented using one source (16%), than those documented using two sources (9.8%).

Based on the Chi-square analysis (Table 4.3), the number of sources used by each media outlet to document the news stories about Russia was significantly different, X^2 (d.f.=4, N=546)= 32.583 p=.000.

The cross-tabulation for the relation between the independent variable “media agency” and the dependant variable “type of sources” is shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Media agency * Type of sources cross-tabulation

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Governmental</i>		<i>Civil society</i>		<i>Experts</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
AP	165	80.1	17	8.3	24	11.7
BBC	96	54.5	10	5.7	70	39.8
DW	125	77.2	3	1.9	34	21.0

X^2 (d.f.=4, N=546)= 49.269, p=.000

Governmental sources appeared to be the most frequently used type of source in documenting news stories released by all three media outlets: the AP – 80.1%, BBC – 54.5%

and DW – 77.2%. However, there is a significant difference when it comes to the extent of usage of the second and third most frequent type of sources used by each media agency. The AP used experts as sources for news coverage in 11.7% of cases and civil society sources in 8.3% of cases. The BBC used experts in 39.8% of cases and civil society in 5.7% of cases, while DW used experts in 21% of cases and civil society in 1.9% of cases.

Based on the Chi-square analysis (Table 4.4), the type of sources used by each media outlet to document the news stories about Russia was significantly different, X^2 (d.f.=4, N=544)= 49.269, $p=.000$.

The cross-tabulation for the relation between the independent variable “media agency” and the dependant variable “tone of the story” is shown in Table 4.5

Table 4.5 Media agency * Tone of the story cross-tabulation

Agency	Friendly		Neutral		Unfriendly	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
AP	8	3.9	94	45.6	104	50.5
BBC	7	4.0	83	46.9	87	49.2
DW	5	3.1	100	61.3	58	35.6

X^2 (d.f.=4, N=546)= 10.574, $p=.032$

The unfriendly tone of the story is the most frequently used tone in AP’s and BBC’s news coverage on Russia (50.5% and 49.2%). In contrast, DW journalists preferred to use the neutral tone in its news coverage in Russia, identified in 61.3% of the cases.

AP and BBC had less neutral news stories (45.6% and 46.9%); while DW had less unfriendly news stories (35.6%). However, the friendly tone was used rarely by all three media outlets: the AP – 3.9%, BBC – 4%, and DW – 3.1%.

Based on the Chi-square analysis (Table 4.5), the tone of sources used by each media outlet to document the news stories about Russia was significantly different, X^2 (d.f.=4, N=546)= 10.574, $p=.032$.

The cross-tabulation for the relation between the independent variable “media agency” and the dependant variable “frame” is shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Media agency * Frame cross-tabulation

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Unclear</i>		<i>Cold War</i>		<i>Rising threat</i>		<i>Partnership</i>		<i>Troubled democracy</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
AP	38	18.4	39	18.9	49	16.0	33	17.5	47	22.8
BBC	41	23.2	32	18.1	46	7.3	13	17.1	45	25.4
DW	14	8.6	43	26.4	50	30.7	20	12.3	36	22.1

X² (d.f.=8, N=546)= 22.422, p=.004

The most frequent frame used in the news coverage about Russia was “rising threat”: the AP – 23.8%, BBC – 26%, and DW – 30.7%. The second most frequently used frame by the AP and BBC was “troubled democracy” (22.8% and 25.4%), while DW used “cold war” frame in 26.4% of cases.

Other frames identified in news stories released by the AP and BBC was “cold war” (18.9% and 18.1%) and “partnership” (16% and 7.3%). In the rest of cases (18.4% and 23.2%) the frame was unclear, thus not identifiable. DW had emphasized the frame of “troubled democracy” (22.1%) and “partnership” (12.3%), while in other 8.6% of cases the frame was unclear.

The Chi-square analysis (Table 4.6) shows that the frame used by each media outlet to document the news stories about Russia was significantly different, X² (d.f.=8, N=546)= 22.422, p=.004.

4.12 Summary

This chapter described the results of the quantitative content analysis. The results contributed to the portrayal of Russia as reflected in Western media reporting. The first part of this chapter presented the analysis of variables’ frequencies. The second part included cross-tabulations and chi-square tests in order to test variables analyzed. These results are useful in obtaining richer and more detailed findings about Russia’s portrayal in the Western media news coverage during the year 2007.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter interprets the results of news using content analysis and generates a conceptual understanding of Western news media coverage of Russia during the year 2007. Results of the quantitative content analysis, presented in chapter four, are analyzed in this chapter. As explained in the previous chapters, the Western media mentioned in this study refer to news media that originate from the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. Specifically, the AP, BBC and DW were selected as representatives of Western media because of their worldwide reputations and presumed high-quality news services. The rationale for using the AP, BBC and DW for this research purpose was explained in chapter three. In chapter four, the results outlined Russia's overall portrayal in terms of primary and secondary topics, number and type of the sources used in the news, tone and frame of the news. Based on the research results, chapter five discusses how the research questions were answered by the study.

5.1. Western media news coverage of Russia: RQ1

This research began with exploring what topics about Russia dominated the agenda of Western media. The first research question (RQ1) was: "What are the main topics in the news-stories about Russia, released by the AP, BBC, and DW during 2007? Are there any significant differences between the topics in the news-stories about Russia, released by the AP, BBC and DW?" This question asked what events or issues about Russia were included in the news agenda of Western media. According to the overall results (shown in Figure 2.4 and Figure 3.4), the topic of "international relations" was given the greatest coverage as the primary topic (48.7%) and the topic of "security issues" was the most frequently used secondary topic (23.1%). Other primary topics that had been covered during the 2007 were "society" (17.9%), "economy" (15.2%) and "Russian government" (11.9%) and secondary topics such as

“international relations” (21.6%), “Russian government” (20%), “economy” (13.7%), and “society” (13.6%).

The finding relating to the primary topic of "international relations" being most frequently covered by Western media may be primarily due to (1) Russia's effort to regain its old political power in the global politics, supported by its rapid economic ascension, (2) the government's attitude toward the importance of playing the role of an important international authority, and (3) Russia's efforts to live up to its commitments to such international groups and organizations such as G8, UN, EU, WTO, and NATO. From an economic perspective, the energy export to Western European countries is the likely reason for the greater coverage of the topic of "international relations". The factors such as Russia's government attitude and Russia's efforts in the international organizations are likely the political reasons for the extensive coverage on this topic.

The Russian government's attitude toward fostering Russia's international reputation and authority development may be the key factor in extensive coverage of the “international relations” topic. Russia's economic improvement during the last years motivated its government to seek to regain and improve Russian authority in the global politics. Although economic factors supported such ambitions, political reasons prompted multiple arguments between Russia and the Western world, specifically regarding security issues and democracy.

The first ten years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia struggled with various issues: politics, economy, and social. Russia had to learn how to live in an emerging market economy, thus Russia opened its economy to international competition. The Russian government had to find a new means of dialog with its international partners and rivals, especially the United States and the European Union. However, the key turning point came in the year 2000, when Vladimir Putin was appointed and later elected as the president of the Russian Federation. Putin's ascension to power brought Russia news social reforms, economic improvement, a greater amount of social stability, as well as a stronger international presence.

The economic relationship between Russia and the West helps explain the presence of Russia in Western media news coverage. This finding strengthens the existing theoretical research on the determinants of foreign news coverage (Ahern, 1984; Ismail, 1989; Kim & Barnett, 1996; Wu, 2003). Consequently, Russia's efforts to enter the international market economy and its commitment to its trade partners contributed to the increased foreign interest and involvement in the Russian economy. Therefore, the establishment of a market economy in Russia caught the attention of Western countries. This meant that economic concerns about Russia's international relations were unavoidably reflected in the news coverage of Western media. This is the likely explanation for the finding that suggests the "international relations" topic was the most frequently covered topic about Russia.

As shown in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3, the distribution of covered topics reported by Western media was significantly different between the three media organizations. This finding indicates that the news media outlets, the AP, BBC and DW, showed different concerns about Russia. The distribution of primary and secondary topics covered by the news agendas of the AP, BBC and DW was found to be significantly different. The Western media agencies are generally not state run or state controlled. De Smaele (1999) pointed out that democracy and a free market are considered to be closely interwoven with Western media. As members of Western media organizations, the AP, BBC and DW provide international news services first for the national audience and second for the world-wide public.

Fundamentally, the AP, BBC and DW differ in their philosophies and purposes. The AP, one of the market-driven American media outlets, has the mission "to be the essential global news network, providing distinctive news services of the highest quality, reliability and objectivity with reports that are accurate, balanced and informed" (AP, 2007). On the other hand, the BBC and DW, European media, are government-bounded media structures, that are funded by the government, thus are exposed to limited government interference. Moreover, Deutsche Welle's state of mission indicates that "[Deutsche Welle] communicate German points of view as well as other perspectives" (Deutsche Welle, 2007). However, public service

broadcasting is publicly funded and thus independent from any political or economic pressure from outside (de Smaele, 1999).

Indeed, the AP, BBC and DW had different news values when they developed a news agenda about Russia. This may be explained by the differences in "proximity", expressed geographically, politically, economically, or culturally, of the home country to foreign states is another major determinant for international news coverage (Cohen, 1995). Thus the AP, BBC and DW have different news agendas when reporting about Russia. Kunczik (2002) explains that "the higher ranking of geographical or cultural proximity and more economic or ideological relations of a foreign country led to more intensive coverage of the country" (Kunczik, 2002).

As mentioned earlier, Western media, the AP, BBC and DW provide international news services for a worldwide audience. The AP, BBC and DW design their news agenda to gratify their customers, therefore, the construction of the AP, BBC and DW's news agendas reflect the needs of their audience. That is to say, the world-wide audiences who are consuming the AP, BBC and DW news services are presumed to be more interested in the topics of international relations, security issues, society, economy and Russian government. As one of the most important players in the global politics, European energy sector and as a military power, Russia is in the focus of politicians, economists, and experts around the world. Moreover, based on the research findings it can be concluded that the topics of "international relations", "security issues", "Russian government", "economy", and "society" were thought important by the Western media and were given more extensive coverage.

The AP, BBC and DW's concerns about Russia were found to be significantly different in this study. Among all the topics, the topic of "international relations" and "security issues" were most frequently covered by Western media during the examination period. Based on the agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), it can be inferred that people not only acquired factual information about Russia through the Western news media, but also learn the importance attached to a specific topic by the emphasis placed in terms of news amount.

Therefore, the topics covered by an extensive amount of news would be perceived more important than the topics with less coverage.

5.2. Western media news coverage on Russia: RQ2 and RQ3

The ways that Western media covered the news about Russia were examined quantitatively in this research. The nature of coverage is discussed in this section by answering two research questions, RQ2 and RQ3. These three research questions were examined from the perspectives of news reporting, the sources selected for news articles, and the differences between the covered topics and sources used by AP, BBC and DW.

RQ2 asked: "What is the number of sources used to document the news-stories about Russia, released by the AP, BBC and DW during 2007? Are there any significant differences between the number of sources used by the AP, BBC and DW?" The answer to this question is that the vast majority of news stories were documented using three or more sources (56.8%). However, there is a significant number of news stories documented using only one source (22%) and the rest (21.2%) were documented using two sources. However, the study identified a significant difference in the number of sources used by each media outlet to document the news stories about Russia. These differences could be caused by the amount of resources available to each media outlet when reporting about Russia. The AP does not have a Russian bureau, nor does it offer a Russian version of its news flow. On the other hand, both, BBC and DW, have permanent bureaus in Russia and offer their news in Russian language.

The usage of three and more sources reveals the tendency of Western media to reflect events and facts from an objective standpoint. Collaboration of facts with multiple sources implies not only presenting several sources supporting a story, but also sources that would support different point of views and present different arguments on the same topic. However, some critics argue that total objectivity is nearly impossible to apply in practice – media inevitably take a point of view in deciding what stories to cover, which topics to emphasize, and what sources to quote.

RQ3 asked: "What are the main types of sources used to document the news stories about Russia, released by the AP, BBC and DW during 2007? Are there any significant differences between the types of sources used by the AP, BBC and DW?" Governmental sources appeared to be the most frequently used type of source in documenting news stories released by all three media outlets: the AP – 80.1%, BBC – 54.5% and DW – 77.2%. The AP, BBC and DW prefer to use a combination of government sources. This means that the news stories were documented based on multiple governmental sources originating from different countries. The “combined” approach was used to document 44% of the total number of news stories about Russia involving any kind of governmental sources. This is followed by Russian governmental sources (22.7%), American (2.9%), German (2%) and British (1.1%) officials. Again, using the combined approach in almost half of the news stories reflects the trend toward the objective journalism in the Western Media. On the other hand, Russia is a very centralized state; therefore it is understandable that Western media would often use Russian governmental sources as their main source when reporting on Russia.

The nature of Western media news coverage about Russia can also be revealed the quantity and type of sources used in news stories. As shown in Table 4.4, all three media agencies prefer to use three or more sources to document their news stories: the AP – 46.1%, BBC – 53.1%, and DW – 74.2%. However, the AP, BBC and DW's use of a number of sources was found to be significantly different when it comes to documenting news stories using one or two sources. The AP and BBC have more news stories documented by two sources that are 28.2% and 25.7%, followed by news stories documented based only on one source, 23.7% and 23.2%. By contrast, DW has more news stories documented using one source (16%), than those documented using two sources (9.8%). Moreover, news stories using one source were citing the opinions of different experts and as narratives of journalists' observations.

Along with the usage of the three or more sources, governmental sources appeared to be the most frequently used type of source in documenting news stories released by all three media outlets: the AP – 80.1%, BBC – 54.5% and DW – 77.2%. However, there is a significant

difference when it comes to the extent of usage of the second and third most frequent type of sources used by each media agency. The AP used experts as sources for news coverage in 11.7% of cases and civil society sources in 8.3% of cases. The BBC used experts in 39.8% of cases and civil society in 5.7% of cases. Finally, DW used experts in 21% of cases and civil society in 1.9% of cases. As shown in Figure 4.6, the AP, BBC and DW prefer to use a combination of government sources (44%), followed by Russian governmental sources (22.7%), American (2.9%), German (2%) and British (1.1%) officials.

Source selection is one of the ways that Western media present news about Russia. Results of sources used indicated that although Russian sources were selected most frequently, Russian sources were not the only ones used by the Western media. Non-Russian sources were also selected by Western media to present the reality of Russia. The non-Russian sources were U.S., British, German, or other country sources. The usage of various sources demonstrates that Russia had been connected with non-Russian entities – reflected in the news agendas of Western media.

5.3. Western media news coverage on Russia: RQ4

RQ4 asked: “Are there any significant differences between topics covered, the tone of the story, and the frames used by the AP, BBC and DW during 2007? If yes, what are the differences?” The findings of the study indicate the different ways each media outlet emphasizes specific issues. The AP’s concern about international relations in connection to the security issues is motivated by the U.S. plans to deploy a missile defense shield in Poland and the Czech Republic – a proposal that Russia contends could touch off a new arms race, while disputes over the status of Kosovo region and the suspicious partnership between Russia and Iran rages on. On the other side, BBC was more concerned about international relations from the prospective of opportunities and difficulties to deal with the Russian government. Finally, DW portrayed Russian international relations with Germany and other states as a means of diplomatic affair, using negotiations as the means of dialog and avoiding direct conflict. Thus international relations were both the most covered primary and secondary topics.

Based on the Chi-square analysis (Table 4.2), the primary news topics emphasized by each media agency were significantly different, χ^2 (d.f.=6, N=521)=39.199 p=.000. Although, all three media outlets emphasized international relations as the primary topic in most of the news stories released during 2007, there is a significant difference in the second and third most covered topics by each media agency. The second primary topic emphasized by the AP and DW was economy (23.4% and 14%), but BBC reported more about Russian society (28.2%). Subsequently, the third most frequently covered primary topic by the AP was Russian society (21.4%), while BBC and DW reported news regarding Russian government: BBC (12.9%) and DW (13.4%). The least covered primary topic by the AP was the Russian government, which measured (12%). Additionally, the BBC reported less on economic issues (9.8%) and DW about Russian society (11 cases, 7%).

This finding may simply result from the nature of the three news organizations. The BBC is a non-commercial news organization, funded by the British government. Its news reporting is presumed to be free of commercial interests. Therefore, the "economic" perspective did not have a priority in news selection. Unlike the BBC, the AP is a more commercially-oriented media company. AP's news service is a business, thus it is logical to conclude that the AP reported more news from the "economic" perspective than other news perspectives. On the other hand, DW reported more on economics due to Germany's energy reliance on Russian energy resources, specifically on natural gas.

The same difference was found to be valid when testing the relationship between the variable "media agency" and the variable "secondary topic of the news story". However, there is no issue covered with the same frequency by each media outlet. For example, the most frequently covered secondary topic by the AP was "security issues" (25.7%), by BBC – "Russian government" (34.2%) and by DW – "international relations" (38.5%).

The second and third most frequently used secondary topic emphasized by the AP was Russian government (23.5%) and international relations (20.2%). Subsequently, BBC and DW

reported about security issues (18.4% and 31.1%) and Russian society (18.4% and 13%) as second and third most frequently secondary topic.

The least frequently covered secondary topics about Russia by the AP were the economy (17.5%) and Russian society (13.1%). The BBC and DW also reported less on economy (17.1% and 9.9%), but BBC reported less on international relations (12%) and DW on Russian government (7.5%).

The findings reflected the priorities of Western media agendas in terms of topics coverage. By presenting primary topics in relations to secondary topics, Western media not only emphasize specific primary topics about Russia to their audiences' attention. Additionally, they also call the attention of their audiences to different aspects of a primary topic. Thus, in case of the AP news coverage, the most covered primary topic of international relations was supported by the most covered secondary topic of security issues. This was followed by the less covered secondary topics of Russian government and international relations. On the other hand, the most covered primary topic by BBC and DW, international relations was supported by the most covered secondary topic of Russian government by BBC and international relations by DW, followed by less covered secondary topics of security issues and Russian society.

Another perspective that the Western media utilized to report news about Russia was illustrated in the variable of "tone of the story", that is defined as the overall positive or negative nature a news event or issue about Russia, described by a media organization with values such as friendly, neutral and unfriendly. Results in Figure 4.9 show that about a half (50.7%) of the news stories about Russia were presented from a neutral point of view, and the other half (45.6%) were presented from an unfriendly standpoint. There is also an insignificant number (3.7%) of news stories presented in a friendly manner.

Findings about the most frequent and dominant uses of "unfriendly" tone of the story indicate that issues or events about Russia that were portrayed in an "unfriendly" fashion. These tended to weigh over other perspectives on the news agendas of Western media. Although the Western media tend to conform to the standards of objective journalism by using

multiple sources and a combined model of sources, the media describe Russia in merely negative perspectives.

The different tone attitudes of the three media organizations may be related to the different extent of "proximity", expressed geographically, politically, economically, or culturally toward Russia. The AP and BBC had more unfriendly news stories due to the international rivalry between their countries of origin and Russia. The attitude of the U.S. and British officials toward Russia may have resulted in the extensive use of an unfriendly tone and decreased the uses of the friendly and neutral tones by Western media. On the other hand, DW was mostly neutral while reporting on Russia due to the intense bilateral cooperation in the energy sector and as a result of the recent overall positive relations between Germany and Russia, represented by Germany's ex-chancellor Schroder and Russia's president Putin.

The unfriendly tones were reflected by negative word or phrase usages for news reporting on Russia. The Russian government was portrayed as a non-democratic government that imposed tight controls on media, economy, and was criticized for intimidating the opposition parties. Criticism was applied to the lack of democracy, human rights, freedom of speech and corruption in Russia.

Overall, the attitudes that Western media conveyed in reporting on Russia were merely a mix of unfriendly and neutral tones. The AP and BBC applied the unfriendly tone more frequently and DW proved to be mainly neutral when reporting on Russia. The unfriendly and neutral tone was used more frequently than the friendly tone.

The ways that western media covered news about Russia can also be seen in the types of frames used in news stories. The frame of the story refers to how a news story about Russia is treated by Western media.

The most frequent frame used in the news coverage about Russia was "rising threat": the AP – 23.8%, BBC – 26%, and DW – 30.7%. The second most frequently used frame by the AP and BBC was "troubled democracy" (22.8% and 25.4%), while DW used "cold war" frame in 26.4% of cases. Other frames identified in news stories released by the AP and BBC was "cold

war” (18.9% and 18.1%) and “partnership” (16% and 7.3%). In the rest of cases (18.4% and 23.2%) the frame was unclear, thus not identifiable. The DW had emphasized the frame of “troubled democracy” (22.1%) and “partnership” (12.3%), while in the other 8.6% of cases the frame was unclear.

The extensive amount of news framing Russia as a rising threat shows that Western media portrays Russia as an emerging rival in terms of economic and political authority. Europe’s reliance on Russian energy resources such as natural gas and crude oil, explain Western media concern about Russia’s greater influence on the continent.

As the second frequently used frame in Western media coverage about Russia, “Russian troubled democracy” is another big concern of the West. Almost univocally, Western countries perceive Russia as a country lacking democracy, yet not considering enormous cultural differences studied by Hofstede (2001). Hofstede’s (2001) cultural dimensions framework places Russians as individual who are willing to subordinate personal rights for the benefit of the society. In addition, instead to tolerate and pledge pluralism, Russians tend to accept a single truth. These cultural values of the Russian nation may explain why Russia as a nation tends to refute democracy and would rather follow a strong and authoritative leader. Moreover, the tone of the news stories could be less unfriendly if Western journalists and experts would understand and consider the core cultural values of the Russian nation when commenting and reporting about Russia.

5.4. Summary

An overall portrayal of Russia was outlined in terms of primary and secondary topics, the number and type of news sources, the tone used in news, and the uses of news frames. This research found that, although the Western media covered diverse topics about Russia, the international relations and security issues were the topics given greatest attention. Russia was presented as an active actor in the global politics, impressive military power, and as an ascending economic authority in Europe and worldwide.

However, conflicts between the economic development and the domestic social/political environment of Russia were highlighted on the Western media coverage. Therefore, the frames such as “rising threat”, “Cold War” and “troubled democracy” were more often utilized by Western media to frame news about Russia. In addition, the sources used in news and the countries mentioned in news confirmed the existing literature on the determinants on foreign news coverage. Russian sources and sources from other countries were both cited in the news stories. The mention of Western countries can increase the chances of an event or issue about Russia being selected into the Western media's agendas. Moreover, the news discussion was often situated in the international economic and political context. A mix of unfriendly, neutral and friendly tones was applied to the news about Russia. However, a more unfriendly and neutral tone was used than friendly tone, and the uses of neutral and friendly tones differed across media organizations. The AP and BBC applied more unfriendly than neutral tones to news on Russia while DW applied more neutral than unfriendly tones. All three media outlets applied the friendly tone in a very low extent.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Russia has earned worldwide attention due to its politic, economic and military power and potential displayed in the modern international environment. Russia's social and political changes and rapid economic growth have attracted the interest of the Western leaders, investors, analysts, and researchers. Russia is developing so quickly that it merits research, especially in terms of media coverage of those developments. According to Kunczik (2002), mass media reporting on foreign affairs often governs the image of a country or a culture, which has a strong influence on the flow of international capital. It is thus helpful to examine scientifically relevant theoretical and practical knowledge about those images and influences.

In this study, the AP, a U.S. medium, BBC, a U.K. medium, and DW, a German medium, were selected as representative Western media outlets because of their worldwide reputations and high quality international news services for targeting audiences. The AP, BBC and DW provide a range of political, economic, social and cultural affairs reporting in multiple languages. The AP is commercial while the BBC and DW are known for their worldwide news services free of commercial interests and political bias. The American media system is characterized by a private commercial approach and limited government interference among the Western media model (de Smaele, 1999). The U.K. and German media systems are central to the tradition of West European public service broadcasting. The selection of the AP, BBC and DW balances the coverage of this research with commercial and noncommercial news service providers. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that the U.S., the U.K. and German media have the basic characteristics of Western media and may represent Western media.

6.1 Conclusions

The research found that major Western media sources covered diverse topics about Russia, and international relations and security issues were the news topics given the most

attention. By giving more attention to the topic of "international relations", the analysis of Western news media has shown what interested them most about Russia and the importance they attached to the topic. Therefore, media audiences gained more information on matters related to the international relations and security issues involving Russia.

The number and type of sources, as well as the tone of the story, were other important factors that comprised the Western media portrayal of Russia. By presenting certain topics from different aspects and selecting different sources, Western media not only brought events or issues about Russia to the audience's attention but also called attention to some specific aspects of those topics, thus, these findings reinforce the assumptions of the framing theory. All three media organizations primarily used three or more sources to document their news stories. Also, all three media outlets primarily documented their news stories using a mix of Russian, American, British and German governmental sources. The "unfriendly" and "neutral" tones of the news story were found to be used more frequently when reporting about Russia.

Framing was another way the Western media portrayed Russia in news stories. The main frames used by the Western media were "rising threat", "Cold War", "troubled democracy" and "partnership". The "rising threat", "Cold War", and "troubled democracy" frames were the most frequently used frames. The AP and BBC used the "rising threat" frame more frequently. DW's main frame was "Cold War" when reporting about Russia. For each specific frame, the emphasis of the AP, BBC and DW were a bit different, but the AP and BBC had more common perspectives between themselves than with DW.

6.2 Contributions to theory and practice

The research's findings contributed to filling the a lack of knowledge about how Russia is portrayed by leading Western news agencies. Within the existing literature, there is a lack of research on the images used in Western media portraying Russia. This research has demonstrated what was salient about Russia according to the Western mass media. Moreover, this research pointed out which aspects of Russia's reality were emphasized when the Western media reported on Russia.

This study contributed to the media content studies on Russia, and has revealed certain media functions. Mass media have the functions of gathering and dissemination of information, transmission of education and socialization, and entertainment (Lasswell, 1948). Media functions can be reflected in media content and then be implemented through ways of presenting and framing such media content for the audiences. This is known as the agenda-setting influence of the news media. What news is available and how the news is structured in the news agenda influences the audience's understanding of social reality. Since the mass media is one of the means by which the public gain new knowledge, what and how mass media portray Russia will influence how these concerned publics perceive events or issues on Russia. This research addressed concerns related to Russia for audiences such as political leaders, international investors, and academic researchers by providing research results about how Western media portrayed Russia during 2007. Moreover, this study contributed to the public understanding of the situation of modern Russia. As such these research findings are helpful in advancing public knowledge about Russia, its achievements and its further development.

This research adds to previous research on the influence of home country on foreign news coverage. Previous research had found that the U.S. involvement in an event or issue was found to be a major factor influencing international news coverage (Hicks & Gordon, 1974). In addition, the U.S. news media gave increased attention to the rest of the world, particularly when the U.S. was involved (Hicks & Gordon, 1974; Gonzenbach et al, 1992). However, the overall tone in its foreign news coverage remained negative (Kunczik, 2002). In this research, the mention of Western countries increased the chances of an event or issue about Russia being selected. The sources of Western countries were cited in the news stories about Russia in addition to Russian sources. Unfriendly tone was more utilized by Western media in the news coverage of Russia. Therefore, findings about the source uses in news and the countries mentioned in news have added to the existing literature on the determinants on foreign news coverage. Moreover, the findings about the Western approach to news reporting strengthened

the existing literature on characteristics of Western news media on their news coverage of the foreign countries.

6.3 Limitations of the study

This research has some limitations. This research conducted a content analysis of news about Russia on Western media for a period of one year. Therefore, research conclusions are a snapshot of Russia's portrayal in Western media at a specific time. The current and future portrayal of Russia may be the same or may be different. The method of content analysis is suitable for identifying the specifics of the present situation, but it is not able to detect and predict future trends.

Another limitation is the source selection. This research assumed that the audience can access Western media, and Western media are a major information source. The analysis of Western media coverage produced a macro-level picture of how international media portray Russia. This research did not include the media from the Eastern countries or from local media in various countries. Because the media systems in the Eastern world are different from Western media, the framing applied by the Eastern media organizations may be different. The same stories covered by different media may be similar or may be different. Moreover, Russia is open to competition. It allows not only Western companies access to its resources, but also allows companies from other countries to do so. The increasing number of participants in Russian political, economic and social life makes it necessary to explore the image of Russia in other media. Thus, media selection was one of the limitations of this research. Future study may need to explore the image of Russia from the perspective of Eastern media.

Quantitative content analysis provided support in identifying the overall portrayal of Russia in Western media coverage of events and issues about Russia. Yet, qualitative research of the Western news coverage of Russia may be needed to further probe the findings of this study.

6.4 Suggestions for future research

Future research may explore media images of Russia from various approaches, such as from the perspectives of the gatekeepers and the audiences. The gatekeepers are those who set the news agenda because they have the power to determine what news is provided and how the news is provided. A study of gatekeepers might help to determine factors related to agenda building in news coverage. Research on journalists' perceptions of current coverage on Russia could assist various Russian institutions and other social groups to better organize their media relations efforts.

Research from the audience perspective could help in examining the impact of news agendas. Also, people can improve their knowledge about Russia through mass media. The public perceptions of foreign nations are related to the agenda-setting influences of news media coverage (Salwen & Matera, 1992). To get such public opinions, a survey research method could be conducted in various countries to measure the effects of news coverage on the levels of public knowledge about Russia. In-depth qualitative audience research may be implemented to enable a richer understanding of how various audience groups perceive the news coverage of Russia.

To eliminate the limitation of the source selection, more local or regional news media from a wider range of countries, especially from the developing countries can be used. This may help in attempting to examine the Russia's portrayal in various media systems. Such research can either utilize the same research method, content analysis, or attempt other methods, such as qualitative approaches, to examine the wider image of Russia.

Moreover, continuing content analysis of Western media coverage on Russia is also needed. To get an updated trend on Russia's portrayal in Western media, future research needs to be conducted over a new time period. Finally, Russia's portrayal in Western media should be updated periodically to trace the longitudinal trend of the development of Russia's portrayal in the mass media.

In conclusion, this thesis has uncovered the ways that that leading Western news agencies portrayed Russia during a tumultuous time in the country's development. One may assume that since Western media often portrayed international relations and security issues of Russia during the year studied, these Western audiences may be likely to view Russia within this context. The main frames used by the Western media to portray Russia – “rising threat”, “Cold War”, “troubled democracy” and “partnership” may also be an indication of how the country will be covered by the Western press in the near future. Given the growing power and influence of Russia, especially within Europe, further study of the nature of news coverage given to Russia is needed to promote Western understanding of this changing country.

APPENDIX A

CODE-BOOK

Name of the coder _____

Date _____

#	Media agency	Primary topic	Secondary topic	Number of sources	Type of the sources	Tone of the news story	Frames

Media agency
1 – AP
2 – BBC
3 – DW

Primary topic
1 – Russian government
2 – International relations
3 – Security issues
4 – Economy
5 – Society
6 – Culture
7 – Sport
8 – other issues

Secondary topic
1 – Russian government
2 – International relations
3 – Security issues
4 – Economy
5 – Society
6 – Culture
7 – Sport
8 – other issues

Number of sources
1 – one source
2 – two sources
3 – three or more sources

Type of the sources
1 – Gov officials
a) Russian
b) U.S.
c) U.K.
d) German
e) Combined
f) other
2 – Civil society
a) Russian
b) Western
c) Combined
d) other
3 – Experts
a) Russian
b) Western
c) Combined
d) other

Tone of the story
1 – friendly
2 – neutral
3 – unfriendly
0 – unclear

Frames
1 – cold war
2 – rising threat
3 – partnership
4 – troubled democracy
0 – unclear

APPENDIX B

CODING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Media agency refers to the media organization that published the news story. The value assigned is the AP, BBC or DW. If the news story under coding is published by the AP, select and write down "1" on the blank. If the news story under coding is published by BBC, select and write down "2" on the blank. And if the news story under coding is published by DW, select and write down "3" on the blank.

2. The case number is defined as the routine number assigned to a news story. It has no meaning since it is used just for the purpose of ordering the samples.

3. The primary topic of the story is defined as the main subject related to Russia that a news story discusses or mentions. Possible values are (1) Russian government, (2) international relations, (3) security issues, (4) economy, (5) society, (6) culture, (7) sports, and (8) other.

- (1) Russian government refers to the perspective that an event or issue is treated under the control of law or authority, emphasizing on Russian government, legislations, law enforcement, government relations, national politics, and so on.
- (2) International relations refers to how Russia is evaluated on its international links, such as intergovernmental relations, international authority, a member of the international groups and organizations; as an active and indispensable participant in the international global decision making.
- (3) Security issues refer to the perspective that an event or issue is treated as a international security concern, military rivalry, sabotage, espionage, etc.
- (4) Economy refers to the perspective that an event or issue is treated to be relating to finances, investments, financial transactions, consumption of goods and services.
- (5) Society refers to the perspective that an event or issue is treated to be relating to social issues of the individuals, group, and communities.
- (6) Culture refers to the perspective that an event or issue is treated to be relating to arts and all kind of Russian artistic expressions, including music, painting, ballet, theatre, etc.
- (7) Sports refers to the perspective that an event or issue is treated to be relating to any kind of athletic activities, both internationally and nationally, such as football, hockey, gymnastics, tennis, ice scating, etc.
- (8) Other includes news whose topic is unknown or unclear or doesn't fit into any the above topics.

4. The secondary topic of the story is defined as the collateral or the second important topic concurrent with the main subject related to Russia that a news story discusses or mentions. Its values could be (1) Russian government, (2) international relations, (3) security issues, (4) economy, (5) society, (6) culture, (7) sports, and (8) other.

- (1) Russian government refers to the perspective that an event or issue is treated under the control of law or authority, emphasizing on Russian government, legislations, law enforcement, government relations, national politics, and so on.
- (2) International relations refers to how Russia is evaluated on its international links, such as intergovernmental relations, international authority, a member of the international groups and organizations; as an active and indispensable participant in the international global decision making.
- (3) Security issues refer to the perspective that an event or issue is treated as a international security concern, military rivalry, sabotage, espionage, etc.
- (4) Economy refers to the perspective that an event or issue is treated to be relating to finances, investments, financial transactions, consumption of goods and services.
- (5) Society refers to the perspective that an event or issue is treated to be relating to social issues of the individuals, group, and communities.

- (6) Culture refers to the perspective that an event or issue is treated to be relating to arts and all kind of Russian artistic expressions, including music, painting, ballet, theatre, etc.
- (7) Sports refers to the perspective that an event or issue is treated to be relating to any kind of athletic activities, both internationally and nationally, such as football, hockey, gymnastics, tennis, ice scating, etc.
- (8) Other includes news whose topic is unknown or unclear or doesn't fit into any the above topics.

5. Number of sources refers to the number of individuals or organizational entities used in a news story about Russia. Possible values are (1) one, (2) two or (3) three and more sources.

6. The type of sources is defined as the individuals or organizational entities used in a news story about Russia. Possible values are (1) governmental sources, (2) civil society sources, (3) expert sources.

- (1) The type of governmental sources refers to the origin of the governmental organizational entities used in a news story about Russia. Its values may be (1) Russian, (2) the U.S.A, (3) the U.K, (4) Germany, (5) combined, and (6) other.
- (2) The type of civil society sources refers to the origin of individuals or organizational entities representative for the civil society, used in a news story about Russia. Its values could be (1) Russian, (2) Western, (3) combined, and (4) other.
- (3) The type of expert sources refers to the origin of expertise of individuals or organizational entities used in a news story about Russia. Its values may be (1) Russian, (2) Western, (3) combined, and (4) other.

7. The tone of the story is defined as the angle from which a news event or issue about Russia is described by a media organization. Its values include (1) friendly, (2) neutral, (3) unfriendly, and (4) unclear.

- (1) Friendly tone refers to the perspective that an event or issue is narrated in a favorably manner, the journalist or the sources are inclined to support the events and issues.
- (2) Neutral tone refers to the perspective that an event or issue is narrated in a neutral manner, the journalist or the sources are neither supporting the events, nor disagreeing.
- (3) Unfavorable tone refers to the perspective that an event or issue is narrated in an unfavorable manner, the journalist or the sources are hostile about the events and issues.
- (4) Unclear includes news whose tone is unknown or unclear or doesn't fit into any the above categories.

8. The frame of the story refers to how a news story about Russia is treated by Western media. A news story can be framed as one of the following categories: (1) cold war, (2) Russia as a rising threat, (3) Russia as a partner, (4) Russia's troubled democracy, and (5) unclear.

- (1) Cold War refers to the perspective that an event or issue is treated as a military rivalry between Russia and the West; it also includes concerns about security, sabotage, espionage, etc.
- (2) Russia as a rising threat refers to Russia's developments as a strong economic and political rival of the West. Russia's expansions, strengths, progresses, performances, success, or achievements are presented as potentially threatening Western countries.
- (3) Russia as a partner refers to regulatory or economic cooperation, either domestically or internationally, such as joint ventures, merger and acquisition,

business alliance, investment in Russia, agreements of policy, and government cooperation.

- (4) Russia's troubled democracy refers to events or issues, such as excessive control of the government, corruption, infringement of human rights and freedom of expression, etc.
- (5) Unclear includes news whose frame is unknown or unclear or doesn't fit into any the above categories.

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