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School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the Department of Journalism
and Institute for Media and Communication Studies at the Department of Political
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by Andreas Rossbach

Constructive Journalism:

– The Effects of Using Positive Psychology To Create
Narratives in Modern-Day Journalism in Russia

Master Thesis

Under the supervision of:
Anna Sergeevna Smolyarova
Associate Professor, PhD. Political Science

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Introduction

Bas Mesters, a pioneer of constructive journalism said:

*'In journalism we have to add a sixth element to the five known 'W's: Who, What, Where, Why and When. It is: **What now?**'*¹

Relevance of the Research Topic: Since the telegraph was invented in the 19th century, news agencies have been the backbone of newsgathering and the first floodgate which controls the large overflow of information and potential news stories that will eventually catch the attention of news consumers. In a rapidly changing, globalized news media environment, which creates new challenges to media professionals including audience fragmentation, overflow of information and digital disruption, news agencies need to take a proactive approach in trying to grab new business opportunities²; and news agencies in Russia are no exception. Therefore, they should upgrade their news production and adapt to news habits and news consumption, so that they can remain relevant and maintain their roles as providers of quality journalism. Many scholars have argued that emotions play an increasingly significant role in the future of journalism. A *constructive journalism approach* carefully considers the role of emotions in journalism. Through the lens of a *constructive journalism approach* to news coverage, the editorial focus of news agencies is on both critical-positive and critical-negative news items. *Constructive news story framing* thus provides a more accurate portrayal of the world while still adhering to journalism's core functions.

¹Cf. Giselle Green (2017). Constructive Voices – A Resource For Journalists Retrieved <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/2-content/1251-constructive-voices-a-resource-for-journalists>

²Cf. Ramos, J. M. (2016). Reinventing the wire: how to prepare for constant disruptions. Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper University of Oxford, 1-28

Novelty of the Research Topic: Scholars failed to provide a clear theoretical concept of emotions in journalism. We aim to contribute to the debate about the role of emotions in journalism. Constructive journalism carefully considers the emotions of media consumers. A new approach that brings new perspectives to journalism research and practice, most significantly by applying evidence from behavioral science, including positive and moral psychology. Academia and has yet not agreed upon a common definition of what constructive journalism is. Hence this research study will contribute to clarification of the approach. Moreover, this approach has not been analyzed before in the context of news coverage by Russian news agencies.

Object of the Research: The research focuses on two major Russian news agencies, both operating globally: Interfax, which is a privately-held news agency, and TASS, which is a government-owned news agency.

Aspect of the Research: This study explores the news frames used in articles about *accusations of Russian hacking in the U.S. presidential election* written by journalists in the two Russian news agencies. It also contributes to a better understanding of the attitudes of journalists towards a constructive approach in their news coverage.

Research aim: The main aim of this research study is to gain knowledge about the principles of constructive journalism and the working routines in Russian news agencies.

Research tasks: They can be divided in four major steps as follows:

- Reviewing academic literature, including theoretical concepts for the study of emotions and journalism, positive psychology and constructive journalism, to identify research gaps and then to find a context in which these theories could be applied: Russian news agencies.
- Identifying research questions and deciding which research methods to apply to answer the research questions.

- Applying the research methods that have been chosen: qualitative news frame analysis and semi-structured interviews.
- Interpreting and discussing the findings and summarizing the research study.

Time Period: Dispatches by both news agencies about the *accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. presidential election* published between June 14 2016, when, for the first time, it was claimed that Russian hackers penetrated the computer network of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and gained access to the entire database of opposition research on GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump and January 24 2017, the inauguration day of U.S.-President Donald Trump.

Methodology: The study can be divided into three major stages. In the first stage, semi-structured interviews with journalists were conducted, analyzed, interpreted and discussed. The second stage included a systematic search in the database *LexisNexis Academic* for online dispatches by both news agencies about the *accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. presidential election* and a pilot study including multiple reviews of the articles, resulting in a final sample for the news framing analysis. Finally, the third stage consisted of the actual qualitative news frame analysis with the help of the software MAXQDA.

Structure of the study: The research study is divided into four main chapters. A short Introduction, followed by chapter 1, which contains a literature review outlining the theoretical foundations of the study and explaining the research context in which they are applied. In chapter 2, research design and methods are explained and limitations of the methods are discussed. Whereas chapter 3 is all about summarizing, discussing and interpreting the findings, chapter 4 contains the conclusion which summarizes the main aspects of this research and highlights areas of future research.

Probation: In December 2016, I attended an international scientific conference on constructed and constructive journalism organized by the Brussels Institute for Journalism Studies, the Department of Applied Linguistics, the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts to present and discuss my research topic. The conference's enthralling presentations, captivating keynotes and interesting informal conversations with scholars from all parts of the world including the U.S., China, Egypt, Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands have led to new and rich insights into the constructed nature of news and into the concept of constructive journalism and inspired me to continue with my research project.

Literature Review: Please note that this list of works is by no means exhaustive.³ Many other academic works have helped the author significantly during this research. Journalism today is interactive, interconnected, more open more global, multi-platform, multi-linear, producing a constant stream of data, analysis and comment⁴; where news agencies are no exception.⁵ Scholars suggest that emotion which has always played a key role in journalism will be even more important in the future of journalism.⁶ Academia also argues that contextual reporting forms, including constructive journalism, could enhance quality news journalism.⁷

³See the bibliography

⁴Cf. Van der Haak, B., Parks, M., & Castells, M. (2012). The future of journalism: Networked journalism. *International Journal of Communication*, 6(16), 2923-2938; Deuze, M., & Witschge, T. (2017). Beyond journalism: Theorizing the transformation of journalism. *Journalism*, 1-17

⁵Boyd-Barrett, O. Researching the News Agencies. in: Volkmer, I. (Ed.). (2012), p. 334. *The handbook of global media research*. Wiley-Blackwell

⁶Cf. Beckett, C., & Deuze, M. (2016). On the Role of Emotion in the Future of Journalism. *Social Media+ Society*, 2(3), 1-6; Peters, C. (2011). Emotion aside or emotional side? Crafting an 'experience of involvement in the news. *Journalism*, 12(3), 297-316

⁷Cf. Fink, K., & Schudson, M. (2014). The rise of contextual journalism, 1950s–2000s. *Journalism*, 15(1), 3-20; McIntyre, K., Dahmen, N. S., & Abdenour, J. (2016). The contextualist function: US newspaper journalists value social responsibility. *Journalism*, 1-19; Gyldensted, C. (2015). *From Mirrors to Movers: Five Elements of Positive Psychology in Constructive Journalism*. Ggroup Publishers

Researchers defined news and its values⁸, in addition to conducting various news frame analyses, both qualitative and quantitative.⁹

Chapter 1: Literature Review and Research Context

1. Journalism, Emotions and Positive Psychology

It is crucial to discuss *the role of emotions in journalism* because it underlines why the *concept of constructive journalism*¹⁰ is worthy to be considered by newsrooms across the globe, including in Russia. More than 50 years ago in 1964 Bernard C. Cohen wrote in his famous book “The press, the public, and foreign policy” that the press ‘*may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling readers what to think about (...) the world will look different to different people, depending (...) on the map that is drawn for them by writers, editors, and publishers of the papers they read*’.¹¹

As journalism and society are permanently in change, *emotions* are becoming an increasingly important dynamic in how news is produced by media organizations and consumed by their audience.¹² Modern-day journalism is ‘*interactive, interconnected, participatory, more open, more global, multi-platform, multilinear, producing constant stream of data, analysis, and comment*’.¹³

⁸Cf. Harcup, T., & O'Neill, D. (2016). What is news? News values revisited (again). *Journalism Studies*, 1-19

⁹Cf. D'Angelo, P., & Kuypers, J. A. (Eds.). (2010). *Doing news framing analysis: Empirical and theoretical perspectives*. Routledge

¹⁰We will discuss this journalistic approach later in-depth starting from chapter 2.4

¹¹Cohen BC (1963), p.13. *The Press and the Foreign Policy*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press

¹²Beckett (2008,2010), p.1 in Beckett & Deuze (2016). On the Role of Emotion in the Future of Journalism. *Social Media+Society*, 1-6

¹³Beckett & Deuze (2016 Op. cit.), p.1

Consequently, media professionals clearly have power within societies which they can use to empower the audience and evoke positive emotions or misuse, resulting in harmful effects on media consumers. Journalists should avoid the misuse of power. The power to engage and inspire the audience the author of this research study argues journalists should make more use of, in particular in digital journalism. Innovating journalism through positive psychology can help them to do so.

1.1 The Face of Changing Journalism

Under the pressure of new technologies, society, politics, and business will change.¹⁴ Journalism is no exception within this rapid transformation of modern societies. *Convergence* creates new kind of interactive media systems, and changes the conditions for old media such as newspapers, TV and radio. The media workplace is changing in the same direction as other industries – the workers must be flexible, there are increasing demands on re-skilling and multi-skilling and commercial pressure is much heavier.¹⁵

Also, the functions of journalists change in the framework of hybrid media systems, including Russia's.¹⁶ For instance a longitudinal study exploring journalism in Russia suggests that the '*use of search engines and the importance of technical skills had most profoundly changed over the last five years*'.¹⁷

¹⁴Cf. Castells, M. (2012). *The rise of the network society: The information age: Economy, society, and culture* (Vol. 1). Wiley-Blackwell

¹⁵Cf. Erdal, I. J. (2009). Cross-media (re) production cultures. *Convergence*, 15(2), 215-231; Deuze, M., & Bardoel, J. (2001). Network journalism: converging competences of media professionals and professionalism.

¹⁶Cf. Litvinenko, A. (2013). A New Definition of Journalism Functions in the Framework of Hybrid Media Systems: German and Russian Academic Perspectives. *Global Media Journal*, 3(1). 1-10

¹⁷Cf. Anikina, M., Frost I. & Hanitzsch T. (2017), p.4. *Country Report: Journalists in Russia*

In the digital and social environment, news is shared and liked. Twitter, Facebook and others are driving traffic and thus news media can observe the needs of their audience. *'Online news therefore presents journalists with instant feedback about whether their news selection decisions (and methods of presentation are with those of significant numbers of readers'*.¹⁸

Once a year, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford conducts the largest ongoing comparative study of news consumption in the world, which sheds light onto the changing environment around news across countries and is based on a survey of more than 50,000 people in 26 countries. Across the entire sample in the 2016 Digital News Report, half (51%) say they use social media as a source of news each week. Around one in ten (12%) say it is their main source. Moreover, Facebook is by far the most important network for finding, reading/watching, and sharing news. In terms of devices, smartphone usage for news is sharply up, reaching half of the report's global sample (53%), while computer use is falling and tablet growth is flattening out.¹⁹ And Russia, where VKontakte is by far the most important network for finding, reading/watching, and sharing news, is no exception from these developments as a recent study based on 49 in-depth interviews with media managers and experts reveals.²⁰

These and other developments bring challenges to global news media. Therefore, the international news industry requires both a modification of academic approaches to the study of media industries and at the same time effective responses from news industry leaders including strategic managerial actions.²¹

¹⁸Harcup, T., & O'Neill, D. (2016), p.5. What is news? News values revisited (again). *Journalism Studies*, 1-19

¹⁹The full report is available here <http://digitalnewsreport.org/>

²⁰Cf. Vartanova, E. et al. (2016). The Russian Media Industry in Ten Years: Industrial Forecasts Westminster. *Papers in Communication and Culture*, 11(1)

²¹Cf. Küng, L., Picard, R. G., & Towse, R. (Eds.). (2008). *The internet and the mass media*. Sage; Vartanova, E. et. al. (Op. cit.)

However, at the same time, ideals and values are sluggish and old ways of thinking clash with new demands in everyday work. Old journalistic culture is perhaps stronger than many advocates of media *convergence* assume.²² The speed of changes in journalism may differ between countries, but there are many similarities and globalization has clearly fueled convergence in journalistic orientations and practices across the globe. A longitudinal research project conducted between 2012 and 2016 including research on more than 60 countries, including Russia, China, Mexico, Sweden and Germany, supports this notion.²³

Moreover, it is crucial to understand that journalism has a double role in modern societies. It is produced and used like other products and services in a capitalistic market economy, but at the same time, journalism is one of the basic functions of political communication and democracy.²⁴ It is impossible to discuss the problems of democracy without considering journalism and the media.²⁵ This is the basic reason for researching how journalists' professional culture, thinking, and daily work is changing, because this also changes the conditions for democracy.

There are studies exploring media systems²⁶ and journalistic cultures²⁷ across countries in-depth. However, we will not go further into detail and assume that this brief overview is enough.

²²Cf. Beckett, C. (2011). *SuperMedia: Saving journalism so it can save the world*. John Wiley & Sons

²³The worlds of journalism project unites researchers in journalism with the aim to explore journalism cultures across nations, find out more here <http://www.worldsofjournalism.org/country-reports/>

²⁴Cf Reuters Institute (2017). *Journalism and Democracy*. Retrieved from: <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/page/journalism-democracy> ; Friedman, M. (1962). *Capitalism and freedom*. University of Chicago

²⁵Wahl-Jorgensen, K., & Hanitzsch, T. (Eds.). (2009). *The handbook of journalism studies*. Routledge.

²⁶Cf. Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge University Press

²⁷Cf. Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., Mellado, C., Anikina, M., Berganza, R., Cangoz, I., & Virginia Moreira, S. (2011). Mapping journalism cultures across nations: A comparative study of 18 countries. *Journalism Studies*, 12(3), 273-293

In what follows, we will briefly discuss *journalism in Russia*, as in this study we analyze news articles published by Russian journalists and aim to explore their attitudes towards constructive journalism.

The contemporary Russian media industry has been widely discussed by scholars.²⁸ There are many approaches to describe journalism in Russia, two major schools of journalism theory can be distinguished, that of the St. Petersburg State University and that of the Moscow State University. The typical journalist in Modern Russia is '*female, in her mid-thirties and holds a university degree in journalism or communication*'.²⁹ In a study by Anikina (2012) journalists were answering open questions about significant and important professional standards, Russian journalists frequently named: objectivity, impartiality, honesty, efficiency, responsibility, reliability, accuracy and precision.

If all journalists followed this list and chose these standards for themselves in practice, the situation in Russian journalism would be next to ideal. However, it is necessary to take into consideration the existing obstacles and discuss limiting factors such as editorial policy and unofficial censorship, time, the medium, the policy, and inner limits in greater depth. Another study Anikina (2012) mentions explored the main functions of media professionals across different countries and finds for Russia: strong intentions for forming and influencing public opinion, as well as quite low intentions for checking government activity or advocating for social change or motivating people. At the same time, the urge towards attracting an audience which could be seen as positive.³⁰

The remarkable difference between Russia and countries in the Western world is that many Russian scientists emphasize the importance of '*the ideological function*'.

²⁸More about the Russian media industry for instance Vartanova, E. et. al. (2016 Op. cit.)

²⁹Cf. Anikina, M. (2012 Op. cit.)

³⁰Cf. Anikina, M. (2012 Op. cit.), p.27f. in Nygren, G. (2012 Op. cit.).

But there are also basic journalism functions that all experts, both in Russia and, for instance, in Germany, agree upon: providing information and reporting new facts.³¹ However, since the news in the digital age is produced and consumed differently, journalists in Russia no longer have the same kind of prerogative of reporting like they used to have and media consumers do not have the same preferences as in the past.

Therefore, the time for alternative academic and practical approaches in journalism has come. One approach that is gaining ground in recent years among both international scholars and media professionals is constructive journalism, which differs from other approaches in journalism by drawing from the field of *behavioral science* including *positive psychology* while still adherent to the *core functions of journalism*.³² In the following chapter, we will briefly discuss how positive psychology can be applied to journalism and bring beneficial effects to newsrooms.

1.2 Applying Positive Psychology to Journalism

Besides the challenge for news media to find successful digital strategies – both in terms of capturing audience and building a viable revenue base³³, one major challenge of the news media industry in the future will be to become a *‘meaningful, insightful, and trustworthy part of an emerging affective media ecosystem’*.³⁴ Using evidence from psychology can shed light into news decisions made by journalists.³⁵ If we are able to understand why journalists write a story in one way or another, we can, based on those findings, help to improve the quality of their new coverage.

³¹Cf. Litvinenko, A. (Op. cit.)

³²Functions of journalism cf. Hanitzsch et. al. (2011 Op. cit.)

³³Cf. The (2016) digital news report by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford for in-depth information

³⁴Beckett & Deuze (Op. cit.)

³⁵Cf. Donsbach, W. (2004). Psychology of news decisions: Factors behind journalists' professional behavior. *Journalism*, 5(2), 131-157.

A growing number of scholars³⁶ and media professionals³⁷ argue that using evidence from positive psychology can help news reporting to improve. Gyldensted (2015) argues that news reporting in its current form is not portraying the world accurately and could do a significant better job in complying with ethical values.³⁸ McIntyre (2015) argues that taking a constructive approach to news coverage based on evidence from positive psychology can help to fix this.³⁹

Positive psychology is a science of what makes life most worth living and there are attempts to measure different forms of *well-being*.⁴⁰ Abraham Maslow was among the first scholars to use the term *positive psychology*.⁴¹ It was he who noted that the science of psychology has been far more successful on the negative than on the positive side. It has revealed to us much about man's shortcomings, his illness, his sins, but little about his potentialities, his virtues, his achievable aspirations, or his full psychological height. It is as if psychology has restricted itself to only half its rightful jurisdiction: the bad, the darker, meaner half.⁴² More than four decades later, the concept of positive psychology was reintroduced by the American Professor Martin Seligman.⁴³

Today, positive psychology is a term that describes a '*collection of studies aimed at exploring what makes life worth living and an applied approach to optimal functioning*'. It has also been defined as the '*study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals, communities and organizations to thrive*'.⁴⁴

³⁶Cf. McIntyre, K. (2015 Op. cit.); Cathrine Gyldensted (2015). *From Mirrors to Movers: Five Elements of Positive Psychology in Constructive Journalism*. Ggroup Publishing

³⁷For instance, NCVO chair Sir Martyn Lewis, a former BBC News presenter or Stephen Hull, editor-in-chief of the Huffington Post and Rob Wijnberg, editor in chief *DerCorrespondent*

³⁸Cf. Gyldensted C. (2015 Op. cit.)

³⁹Cf. McIntyre, K. (2015 Op. cit.)

⁴⁰Cf. OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being. (2013)

⁴¹Cf. Snyder C. R., Lopez S., (eds.) (2005). *The Oxford handbook of positive psychology*, which provides an comprehensive overview of this science

⁴²Maslow A. (1954). p. 354 in: Snyder C. R., Lopez S. (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (2005) (Eds.)

⁴³Other co-founders and well known scholars are: Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Christopher Peterson

⁴⁴Seligman, M., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014). *Positive Psychology: An Introduction* (1st ed.) pp. 279-298. Berlin: Springer International Publishing AG.

Positive psychology scholars want to gain a deeper understanding of positive emotions, positive traits, and positive institutions.⁴⁵ What we focus on in this study is the role of positive emotions in journalism.

While the field of psychology was formed on the recognition that psychologists have traditionally focused on treating mental illness and otherwise understanding ‘*how people survive and endure under conditions of adversity*’ they have widely ignored ‘*how normal people flourish under more benign conditions*’ or generally lead fulfilling lives.⁴⁶ Following criticism of his “Authentic Happiness Theory”, Seligman made alterations to it and came up with the “Well-being Theory”. As opposed to the goal of achieving happiness, this theory emphasizes the goal of reaching well-being.

According to McIntyre (2015), ‘*this goal is line with the ultimate goal of constructive journalism – to improve individual and societal well-being*’.⁴⁷

Seligman defines well-being as being made up by five major pillars: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment (PERMA).⁴⁸

Catherine Gyldensted is a pioneer in constructive journalism. She first conducted an empirical study in 2011 arguing that news can be transformed applying positive psychology techniques including PERMA.⁴⁹

A frequently cited study supports the notion that it is worth to consider emotions. In the study a sample of 7000 articles published in the New York Times was analyzed during a period of three months, the authors find that the more positive the content, the more likely it is to go viral and that the most shared stories are both positive and emotionally arousing ones.⁵⁰

⁴⁵Positive Psychology / PERMA Theory (Seligman) - Learning Theories. (2017). *Learning Theories*. Retrieved from <https://www.learning-theories.com/positive-psychology-perma-theory-seligman.html>

⁴⁶Seligman, M. & Csikzentmihalyi, M. (Op. cit.) p.5

⁴⁷McIntyre (Op. cit.), p.9

⁴⁸*What is Well-Being? | Authentic Happiness*. (2017). *AuthenticHappiness.sas.upenn.edu*. Retrieved from <https://www.authenticHappiness.sas.upenn.edu/learn/wellbeing>

⁴⁹Cf. Gyldensted, C. (2011). *Innovating news journalism through positive psychology*. Master Thesis University of Pennsylvania

⁵⁰Cf. Berger, J., & Milkman, K. L. (2012). What makes online content viral? *Journal of marketing research*, 49(2), 192-205.

In line with prominent journalism scholars like Charlie Beckett and Mark Deuze (2016)⁵¹ we argue that *emotion* has always played a significant role in journalism and will continue to do so because it ‘*drives people's increasingly intimate relationships with technology, fuels engagement with news and information, and it inspires professionals to pursue a career in an industry that offers anything but reliable for work well done*’.⁵²

However, as Peters (2011) puts it, the most significant change over the past few decades is not that news has become more emotional, indeed it has always been, but rather that the ‘*diversity of emotional styles*’, the acceptability of journalistic involvement and the attempts to involve the audience have become more explicit.⁵³ The author further notes that when emotion is discussed in relation with news, it is often treated dismissively. Hence, this research study will contribute to the on-going discussion and clarify the role of emotions in journalism. The reasons are obvious according to Peters (2011); professional journalists were traditionally thought to ‘*put emotion apart*’.⁵⁴

What might also play a more significant role in the future for journalists is the *contextualist function*.⁵⁵ One recent study that evaluated US newspaper journalists’ attitudes towards contextual news reporting which includes stories that go beyond the immediacy of the news and contribute to social well-being suggests that journalists highly value journalistic roles associated with contextual reporting. Most journalist who were asked placed high value on being socially responsible and accurately portraying the world.⁵⁶

⁵¹Beckett & Deuze (2016 Op. cit.)

⁵²Beckett & Deuze (2016 Op. cit.), p.2

⁵³Cf. Peters, C. (2011). Emotion aside or emotional side? Crafting an ‘experience of involvement in the news. *Journalism*, 12(3), 297-316; Stenvall, M. (2014). Presenting and representing emotions in news agency reports. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 11(4), 461-481

⁵⁴Peters, C. (Op. cit.), p.298

⁵⁵Cf. Fink, K., & Schudson, M. (2014). The rise of contextual journalism, 1950s–2000s. *Journalism*, 15(1), 3-20

⁵⁶McIntyre, K., Dahmen, N. S., & Abdenour, J. (2016). The contextualist function: US newspaper journalists value social responsibility. *Journalism*, 1-19

Constructive journalism is a contextual form of reporting. In 2015, Catherine Gyldensted published a book *'From Mirrors to Movers: Five Elements of Positive Psychology in Constructive Journalism'*.⁵⁷ According to the author constructive journalism is an emerging way for traditional journalists to report and produce more productive stories that aim to improve individual and societal well-being by applying positive psychology and other behavioral sciences to the field. Constructive Journalism can be considered a contextual genre because it is *'a more comprehensive form of journalism'* that accurately portrays the world by covering not only stories about conflict but stories about progress as well.⁵⁸ Finally, efforts to study emotion in relation to journalism focused mainly on emotion conflated with tabloid press, bias and sensationalism putting the professional mantra of *objectivity* in danger. We argue that scholars failed to provide clear theoretical concepts of emotions until now. One way to address this problem can be to take a sociological conception of emotion which can be described as *'the experience of involvement'*.⁵⁹ In this research paper, we follow this conceptualization of emotion with regards to journalism.

⁵⁷Cf. Gyldensted, C. (2015 Op. cit.)

⁵⁸Cf. Gyldensted, C. (2015 Op. cit.), p. 42

⁵⁹Peters, (Op. cit.), p.298

2. News Agencies towards a Constructive Approach

This research study aims to better understand how Russian journalists in Russian news agencies frame news about the *accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. presidential election*⁶⁰ and, based on these findings, learn more about their attitudes towards a constructive way to frame news. We will define what we understand under a constructive frame later.⁶¹

2.1 News Agency Research – Brief Overview

*‘Approaching the study of news agencies in the early 1970s it was not self-evident which available paradigms might most usefully advance thinking (...). One advantage of tackling the subject in this period was that there was still a consensual understanding as to what a news agency was, namely, a journalistic “wholesale” business-to-business organization that gathered news (...) for sale to other media’.*⁶²

In today's digital environment, with 24/7 international broadcasters and online news websites, the operations of news wires include both retail and wholesale operations. Czarniawska-Joerges (2011) describes them as ‘*cyber factories*’ which have to deal with constant information overflow.⁶³ Researchers who studied news agencies come from different academic backgrounds, including anthropology, communication, political science or sociology.

⁶⁰See the major events summarized in the Appendix 3

⁶¹See chapter 2.4 and chapter 3

⁶²Boyd-Barrett, O., in Volkmer, I. (2012), p. 334. *The handbook of global media research* (1st ed). Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

⁶³Czarniawska-Joerges, B. (2011). *Cyberfactories: How news agencies produce news*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing

Among others, Van Dijk (1984),⁶⁴ Rantanen and Vartanova (1995),⁶⁵ Boyd-Barrett (2000) and Ramos (2016)⁶⁶ have made major contributions to news agency research. It is useful to categorize studies when trying to convey a sense of the diversity of news agency research. Boyd-Barrett (2012) identified broad categories⁶⁷ :

Informed-anecdotal: *‘writings which typically take the form of memories of agency work contained in biographical or autobiographical sketches of celebrated journalists’.*

Insider accounts: *‘are more systematic, analytical, and sustained, written by journalists who have devoted a considerable part of their careers to specific, individual agencies, perhaps reaching high executive positions’.*

Official or semiofficial histories of individual news agencies: *‘are generally written by scholars or journalists who have been specifically commissioned for the purpose and granted privileged access.’*

Unofficial histories and other studies of the major international news agencies: *‘by scholars, mainly, and journalists sometimes deal with several of the agencies, comparatively’.*

Unofficial histories or other studies about national news agencies: *‘including edited collections on news agencies (which) also include significant original works by scholars (...), journalists or scholar-journalists on the national and international agencies, including works that look at the relationship between international, national and regional agencies’.*

Sociological Studies: *‘including several that have already been mentioned, often focus on the development of theory, sometimes concerning the relationship of communications systems to social stability and change’.*

⁶⁴Cf. Van Dijk, T. (1982). *News Analysis: Case Studies of International and National News in the Press* (1st ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, Hillsdale, New Jersey

⁶⁵Cf. Rantanen, T., & Vartanova, E. (1995). News Agencies in Post-Communist Russia. *European Journal Of Communication*, 10(2), 207-220

⁶⁶Cf. Ramos (Op. cit.)

⁶⁷Boyd-Barrett, O., in Volkmer, I. (Op. cit), pp.331-351

Content Analysis studies: *‘a subcategory of the sociological or social scientific, are mostly published as articles in academic journals and conducted by social scientists or communication scholars’.*

Studies that are focused on the language of news agency news: *‘a few studies have achieved insightful analysis of linguistic aspects, including discourse and translation, of news agency news’ and crisis analysis: ‘there are a few one-off “crisis” studies, often by journalists’ insiders’.*

To address this research gap, in this master thesis we will mainly focus on the *language of news* produced by news agencies. Traditionally news agency journalists conform to the constraints of the *‘objective’* style which White (1998) has named *‘reporter voice’*. However, White further argues that, on the one hand, the register of hard news reporters is *‘interpersonally neutral’* but on the other hand, the lexis in hard news reports often *‘encodes a sense of intensity’*, and can be *‘emotionally charged’*.⁶⁸ Besides the broad categories defined by Boyd-Barrett (2012), we argue that formal interviews, informal talks with agency personnel and their clients, and studies either directly of agency content or of how agency content are used in client media, should be taken into consideration.

⁶⁸White, P. (1998). *Telling Media Tales: the news story as rhetoric*. Unpublished Dissertation, University of Sydney.

2.2 News Criteria

There is a huge variety of studies that examined news production as process. By choosing this route, researchers have tended to focus on interactions among journalists at the small group and organizational levels.⁶⁹ When defining news production as a process, the question of where news comes from arises.

According to the Economist, the answer is '*much of the time, from news agencies*'.⁷⁰ Many of the articles in newspapers, on television, radio and online are based on dispatches filed by the big news agencies.⁷¹ During my research, I posed a simple question to many news editors: '*What is news for you?*' The majority responded that it is information about current events. Pressed on why something has been deemed newsworthy, a typical response was: '*Because it just is!*' When defining what news is, relying on such a '*gut feeling*'⁷² seems arguably obscure as much as they reveal about news selection prompting academia to offer their own definitions, which can involve devising taxonomies of news values. In other words, the practitioner typically constructs a method for fulfilling the daily job requirements. However, he or she rarely has an underlying theoretical understanding of what defining something or someone as newsworthy entails.

Scholars exploring news suggest that the news media select events for reporting according to a complex set of criteria of *newsworthiness*,⁷³ which means that news is not simply that which happens, but that which can be regarded and presented as newsworthy. For journalists, the assessment of *newsworthiness* seems to be an operationalization based on the aforementioned conditions.

⁶⁹Paterson, C., Lee, D., Saha, A., & Zöllner, A. (2016). *Advancing media production research: Shifting sites, methods, and politics*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

⁷⁰Cf. *High wires*. (2017). *The Economist*. Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/node/13109820>

⁷¹Personal talks with Russian news editors

⁷²Cf. Schultz, I. 2007. The Journalistic Gut Feeling. *Journalism Practice* 1 (2): 190–207

⁷³Cf. Shoemaker, P. J., Chang, T. K., & Brendlinger, N. (1987). Deviance as a predictor of newsworthiness: Coverage of international events in the US media. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 10(1), 348-365; Peterson, S. (1979). Foreign news gatekeepers and criteria of newsworthiness. *Journalism Quarterly*, 56(1), 116-125.

To be sure, individual journalists may engage in more abstract musings about their work, but the profession as a whole is content to apply these conditions and does not care that the theory behind the application is not widely understood. These criteria, which are probably more or less unconscious in editorial practice, are referred to by academia as *news values*.⁷⁴ There is a large body of studies exploring news values, one recent study found that news stories must generally satisfy one and preferably more of the following requirements⁷⁵ to be selected⁷⁶:

- *Exclusivity*: Stories generated by, or available first to, the news organization as a result of interviews, letters, investigations, surveys, polls, and so on
- *Bad news*: Stories with particularly negative overtones such as death, injury, defeat and loss (of a job, for example).
- *Conflict*: Stories concerning conflict such as controversies, arguments, splits, strikes, fights, insurrections and warfare.
- *Surprise*: Stories that have an element of surprise, contrast and/or the unusual about them.
- *Audio-visuals*: Stories that have arresting photographs, video, audio and/or which can be illustrated with infographics.
- *Shareability*: Stories that are thought likely to generate sharing and comments via Facebook, Twitter and other forms of social media.

⁷⁴Cf. Galtung, J., and Ruge, M. (1965). The Structure of Foreign News: The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers. *Journal of International Peace Research* 2: 64–90. Harcup, T., & O'Neill, D. (Op. cit.)

⁷⁵The authors stress that there will be exceptions. The above news value taxonomy should be seen as a tool for analysis and further research designed to provoke discussion and, indeed contestation not something to be churned out as if it is the last word on the subject

⁷⁶Harcup, T., & O'Neill, D. (2016) p.13. What is news? News values revisited (again). *Journalism Studies* 1-19

- *Entertainment*: Soft stories concerning sex, show business, sport, lighter human interest, animals, or offering opportunities for humorous treatment, witty headlines or lists.
- *Drama*: Stories concerning an unfolding drama such as escapes, accidents, searches sieges, rescues, battles or court cases.
- *Follow-up*: Stories about subjects already in the news
- *The power elite*: Stories concerning powerful individuals, organizations, institutions or corporations.
- *Relevance*: Stories about groups or nations perceived to be influential with, or culturally or historically familiar to, the audience
- *Magnitude*: Stories perceived as sufficiently significant in the large numbers of people involved or in potential impact, or involving a degree of extreme behavior or extreme occurrence
- *Celebrity*: Stories concerning people who are already famous
- *Good news*: Stories with particularly positive overtones such as recoveries, breakthroughs, cures, wins and celebrations
- *News organization's agenda*: Stories that set or fit the news organization's own agenda, whether ideological, commercial or as part of a specific campaign

Researchers analyzing news observed that negative news items (conflict, drama and bad news) tend to be more influential than comparably positive news items.⁷⁷ This phenomenon has been termed the *negativity bias*⁷⁸ in the news. Previous studies have often applied an implicit '*any news is bad news*' reasoning. Soroka's asymmetrical influences thesis (2006) states that people are generally more responsive to negative than to positive information.

⁷⁷Cf. Arango-Kure, M., Garz, M., & Rott, A. (2014). Bad news sells: The demand for news magazines and the tone of their covers. *Journal of Media Economics*, 27(4), 199-214; Soroka, S. N., & McAdams, S. (2015). News, politics, and negativity. *Political Communication*, 32(1), 1–22.

⁷⁸This term is crucial for the understanding of this Master Thesis and will thus be discussed in-depth in chapter 1.3

Thus, it is likely that negative news will have a larger effect than positive news, even when there is no substantial increase in negative news.⁷⁹ This raises an important question: How might this predominantly negative tone of the news media affect media consumers?

Prior studies, for instance, assessed the impact of news tone on attitudes of media consumers toward one specific outgroup, for instance, immigrants. It has been shown that individuals rely heavily on news portrayals of outgroups especially due to lack of direct contact experiences.⁸⁰ Consequently, the negative or inaccurate media coverage may fuel negative attitudes, such as anti-immigrant attitudes. Zaller (1996) describes this process as follows: people receive information from the news and decide whether to accept this information. When formulating an opinion, people sample from this accepted information. This receive-accept-sample model (RAS) shows how people make use of the news.⁸¹

The flow of news coverage when heavily one-sided (i.e., predominantly negative or positive) can change public opinion at large.⁸² In a predominantly negative media environment, the likelihood that people are confronted with negative messages increases. Advocates of constructive journalism thus argue that we need a balanced media environment including positive-critical and negative-critical news. In what follows, we will discuss why a negativity bias in the news is problematic.

⁷⁹Cf. Soroka, S. (2006). Good News and Bad News: Asymmetric Responses to Economic Information. *The Journal Of Politics*, 68(2), 372-385

⁸⁰Cf. Holtzman, L. (2004). Mining the invisible: Teaching and learning media and diversity. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 48(1), 108–118

⁸¹Cf. Zaller, J. (1996). The myth of massive media impact revived: new support for a discredited idea. In Mutz, D., Brody, R. and Sniderman, P. M. (Eds.), *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*.

⁸²Cf. Zaller, J. (1992). *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Zaller, J. (1996). *The myth of massive media impact revived: new support for a discredited idea*. In Mutz, D., Brody, R. and Sniderman, P. M. (Eds.), *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, pp. 17–79.

2.3 Negativity Bias in the News and the Effects

For decades media scholars have provided evidence illustrating a strong *negativity bias* in the news media.⁸³ Negative news articles have been chosen by editors over positive ones, despite being equal in all other news values.⁸⁴ In a study,⁸⁵ Robert H. Bohle (1986) explored negativism in news selection. He wrote ten negative and ten positive stories and illustrated that media professionals have decided to more frequently choose negative stories in terms of significance and preference to publish. The early study by Bohle does not deliver a satisfying explanation as to why news editors prefer to select negative news stories. One more recent lab study, in which the authors explore consumer demand for cynical and negative news frames, finds that politically interested participants are more likely to select negative stories. Interest is associated with a greater preference for strategic frames as well. And their results suggest that behavioral results do not conform to attitudinal ones.⁸⁶

However, there seems to be not only evidence the *news selection* process seems to be biased but also the *display*; news of a negative nature is preferred over positive news.⁸⁷ These studies may be old, but more recent studies suggest that the old idea of '*hard news that shocks, frightens, disturbs, and alarms*' has not significantly changed.⁸⁸

⁸³Cf. Combs, B., & Slovic, P. (1979). Causes of death: Biased newspaper coverage and biased judgments. *Journalism Quarterly*, 56, 837–849

⁸⁴Cf. Peterson, S. (1981). International news selection by the elite press: A case study. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45(2), 143-163.

⁸⁵Cf. Bohle, R. H. (1986). Negativism as news selection predictor. *Journalism Quarterly*, 63(4), 789-796.

⁸⁶Cf. Trussler, M., & Soroka, S. (2014). Consumer demand for cynical and negative news frames. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 19(3), 360-379.

⁸⁷Cf. Gieber, W. (1955). Do Newspapers Overplay 'Negative News? *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 32(3), 311-318.

⁸⁸Cf. Beckett & Deuze (2016 Op. Cit.)

Today, there are still studies with evidence that journalists tend to prefer negative stories when deciding what stories are newsworthy. Slogans like ‘*if it bleeds it leads*’⁸⁹ and ‘*bad news sells*’⁹⁰ sadly seem to be dominating news rooms. Editors often consider news items that focus on corruption, scandal, murder, famine and natural disasters.⁹¹ This is probably most evident in political news coverage which has risen dramatically in the recent years.⁹² Media Tenor, a global association with strong focus on media content analysis, provides comprehensive reports about media's coverage of certain issues. For instance, the 2016 Global Agenda Index report provides some evidence for the dominance of a negative issues in foreign news coverage.⁹³

That conclusions of research studies from 60 years ago and from today are shared supports the notion that journalists focus predominantly on negative news. Important to stress is that the problem is not that journalists write negative-critical stories, in fact, we argue they should continue to do this and media should continue publishing them. However, we want to underline that the *excess* of writing and publishing negative news is problematic. Because scholars⁹⁴ and media professionals⁹⁵ argue that the excess of negative news creates an *imbalance* in constructing news and thus results in an inaccurate portrayal of the world. This idea of news stories that shock, frighten, disturb and alarm may result moreover in harmful effects.

⁸⁹Cf. Haagerup, U. (2015). *Constructive News: Why Negativity Destroys the Media and Democracy-and how to Improve. Journalism of Tomorrow*. Zürich: InnoVatio Publishing

⁹⁰Cf. Arango-Kure, M., Garz, M. & Rott, A. (2014). Bad news sells: The demand for news magazines and the tone of their covers. *Journal of Media Economics*, 27(4), 199-214.

⁹¹Cf. Haagerup, U. (Op. cit.)

⁹²Cf. Bennett, W. L. (2016). *News: The politics of illusion*. University of Chicago Press

⁹³The full report available on <http://us.mediatenor.com/en/library/reports/921/global-agenda-index-2016>

⁹⁴For instance, Peter Bro from the University of Denmark of Southern Denmark and Catherine Gyldensted Director of Constructive Journalism at the Journalism School at Windesheim University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands

⁹⁵For instance, Rob Wijnberg, De Correspondent editor-in-chief; Giselle Green Journalist, constructive news advocate

The audience can feel *'alienated, disempowered, helpless and, worst of all apathetic, intensive and even hostile to learning about our world'*.⁹⁶ A study at the University of Pennsylvania in which different versions of the same news story were tested on a sample of 710 people, suggests that classical negative news stories left people feeling hopeless and passive⁹⁷

2.4 News Framing Analysis

'Artists know that the frame placed around a painting can affect how viewers interpret and react to the painting itself. As a result, some artists take great care in how they present their work, choosing a frame that they hope will help audiences see the image in just the right way. Journalists, often subconsciously, engage in essentially the same process when they decide how to describe the world'.⁹⁸ In other words: How issues are presented in news stories makes a difference. As simple as this statement is in describing the core of framing analysis, it important to stress right from the beginning, that framing is a very complex and dynamic process.

One of the pioneers in Framing Theory is the sociologist Erving Goffman. His book *'Frame Analysis: An essay on the organization of experience'* was published in 1974.⁹⁹ Many works that were published later are based upon his work. According to Goffman, frames can be used to label schemata of interpretation that further make it possible for people to locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences or events.

⁹⁶Beckett & Deuze (2016 Op. cit.)

⁹⁷Cf. Gyldensted, C. (2011 Op. cit.)

⁹⁸Cf. Tewksbury D, Scheufele DA (2009) , p. 17. News framing theory and research. In: Bryant J, Oliver MB (eds.). *Media effects: Advances in theory and research*. 3rd ed. (2009). 17-33. New York: Routledge

⁹⁹Cf. Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harvard University Press

However, it was only in 1993, when Robert Entman published his paper '*Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm*'¹⁰⁰, when framing evolved also into a methodology.

Since Goffman introduced the basic concept of framing analysis and Entman applied it to media in his paper, researchers have been using frame analysis to understand how media presents certain information. Consequently, lots of literature on news framing emerged as researchers have applied frame analysis for decades. There is a huge variety of definitions of frame, and scholars have also developed different theoretical and methodological approaches to the analysis of frames. These attempts have opened an ongoing debate regarding notions of '*frame*' and the methodological tensions created by its operationalization.

In what follows we will briefly discuss core works in frame analysis. Then in more detail, theory and typology in news framing and the chosen method in this research namely *computer-assisted qualitative news framing analysis*.¹⁰¹ There are many books by scholars that provide useful tools for news framing research.¹⁰² Among other books, we used "*Talking politics*" written by William Gamson in 1992.¹⁰³ The author was among the first scholars to look at the production and life of frames in democratic societies. Gamson identified a set of collective action frames in American culture and examined how people talk about them. The primary contribution of his work is its demonstration that research can fruitfully examine the origin of frames and how people come to understand them.

¹⁰⁰Cf. Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of communication*, 43(4), 51-58

¹⁰¹Cf. Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative Content Analysis [28 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 1(2), Art. 20, retrieved from <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0002204>

¹⁰²See table 1 in the Appendix 1

¹⁰³Cf. Gamson, W. A. (1992). *Talking politics*. Cambridge University Press

Furthermore Reese, et al. (2001) provides a good summary of extant framing research and areas for future research.¹⁰⁴ Adding to this foundation of academic books is D'Angelo and Kuypers (2010) '*Doing framing analysis: Empirical and theoretical perspectives*', a collection of recent theoretical and methodological works frequently cited by other scholars. Some of the most prominent framing researchers are represented in the book and their contributions truly advanced the field in several areas.¹⁰⁵

Framing Analysis, particularly focused on news agency content has become more popular in the previous decade, and researchers with foundations in phonetics, socio-etymology, and interpretation studies have started to analyze news agency content with a focus on semantic elements and in addition on the news production settings in which they are written.¹⁰⁶ All the works mentioned were very helpful to gain a better understanding of general theoretical and methodological work in framing. Although we could not find a widely-accepted definition, we argue that those that have evolved strongly resemble one another.

What is a frame? A frequently cited definition of media framing is from Gamson and Modigliani (1989) who refer to frames as '*interpretative packages*' that give meaning to an issue. At the core of this package is '*a central organizing idea, or frame, for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue*'.¹⁰⁷ Whereas Gitlin (1980) argues that frames '*help journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely package the information for efficient relay to their audience*'.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴Cf. Reese, S. D., Gandy Jr, O. H., Gandy Jr, O. H., & Grant, A. E. (Eds.). (2001). *Framing public life:*

Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world. Routledge

¹⁰⁵Cf. D'Angelo, P., & Kuypers, J. A. (Eds.). (2010). *Doing news framing analysis: Empirical and theoretical perspectives.* Routledge

¹⁰⁶Cf. Bielsa, E. & Bassnett, S. (2008). *Translation in global news.* Routledge

¹⁰⁷Cf. Gamson, W. A. & Modigliani, A. (1989), p.3. Media discourse a public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95, 1–37.

¹⁰⁸Cf. Gitlin, T. (1980), p.3. *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making & unmaking of the new left.* Berkeley: University of California Press

Cappella and Jamieson (1997) suggest that frames activate knowledge, stimulate ‘*stocks of cultural morals and values, and create contexts*’.¹⁰⁹ In doing so, frames ‘*define problems*’, ‘*diagnose causes*’, ‘*make moral judgments*’, and ‘*suggest remedies*’.¹¹⁰

Issue specific vs. Generic Frames? De Vreese (2002) argues that there are two broad categories of frames; (1) issue-specific frames, which are pertinent only to specific topics or events, and (2) generic frames, which transcend thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different topics, some even overtime and in different cultural contexts.¹¹¹ We will use issue-specific frames because in this research study we focus on a specific event.¹¹²

Framing as a methodological strategy? Framing research in the news shares little conceptual ground and most studies draw on tentative working definitions or operational definitions of frames designed for the specific study. Therefore, there is little consensus as how to identify frames in the news.

One approach is inductive in nature and refrains from analyzing news stories with news frames in mind. Inductive reasoning (bottom-up logic) makes broad generalizations from specific observations. In inductive inference, we go from the specific to the general. We make many observations, discern a pattern, make a generalization, and infer an explanation or a theory. Even if all the premises are true in a statement, inductive reasoning allows for the conclusion to be false. In this research study, we will use inductive reasoning as approach. A second approach is rather deductive in nature and investigates frames that are defined and operationalized prior to the investigation. Deductive reasoning (top-down logic) is used to reach a logical true conclusion.

¹⁰⁹Cf. Cappella, J. N., & Jamieson, K. H. (1997), p.47. *Spiral of cynicism. The press and the public good*. New York: Oxford University Press

¹¹⁰Cf. Entman, R. B. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43, 51–58

¹¹¹Cf. De Vreese, C. H. (2002). *Framing Europe: Television news and European integration*. Aksant

¹¹²See also in the previous chapter for the specific case used

It starts out with a general statement, or hypothesis, and examines the possibilities to reach a specific, logical conclusion.¹¹³ In the following, we will shortly discuss the approach underlying this news frame analysis. We use computer-assisted qualitative news frame analysis to identify news frames in the collected data. Inductive qualitative content analysis,¹¹⁴ which can be defined as an *‘approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification’*¹¹⁵ and grounded theory.

Cappella and Jamieson (1997) state that considering any production feature of verbal or visual texts as a candidate for news frames is too broad a view. They suggest four criteria that a frame must meet. In this research study will stick to the suggested criteria. First, a news frame must have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics. Second, it should be commonly observed in journalistic practice. Third, it must be possible to distinguish the frame reliably from other frames. Fourth, a frame must have representational validity (i.e. be recognized by others) and not be merely a figment of a researcher’s imagination.¹¹⁶

Identifying Frames: The identification of frames requires the researcher to know *‘how’* to look for frames and *‘what’* to look for when identifying frames.¹¹⁷ For *‘how’* for instance Wimmer and Dominick (2006) provide one possible answer:

- Comparative assignment of incidents to categories (or frames)
- Elaboration and refinement of categories/frames
- Searching for relationships and themes among categories/frames; and
- Simplifying and integrating data into a coherent theoretical structure

¹¹³Cf. Mayring, P. (Op. cit.)

¹¹⁴See also figure 1 in the Appendix 2

¹¹⁵Cf. Mayring, Philip (Op. cit.) ; see also figure 1 in Appendix 2

¹¹⁶Cf. Cappella, J. N., & Jamieson, K. H. (Op. cit.)

¹¹⁷See also table 1 in the Appendix 1 other works

For ‘*what*’, Entman (1993) suggests including *rhetorical devices* including word choice, metaphors and exemplars.¹¹⁸

Other devices¹¹⁹ that can be examined are ‘*the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgement*’.¹²⁰ Moreover there are also technical devices. Reese et al. (2003) suggests the following: Headlines, sub headlines, photo captions, leads, source selection, quote selection and concluding statements and paragraphs.¹²¹

3. Towards a Constructive Approach in News Journalism

The United Nations calls international media to take a more constructive and solutions-focused approach. In an interview with the Guardian, the UN director general Michael Møller explained that our individual choices are influenced by the information we are receiving. Thus, the information we consume in media plays an important role in making the world a better place. ‘*In a world of 7 billion people, with a cacophony of voices that are often ill-informed and based on narrow agendas, we need responsible media that educate, engage and empower people and serve as a counterpoint to power*’ he said. According to him media needs to offer constructive alternatives in the current stream of news and they need to see solutions that inspire people to action.¹²²

¹¹⁸Cf. Gamson, W. A., & Lasch, K. E. (1983). *The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy*. University of Michigan

¹¹⁹See also table 1 in Appendix 1

¹²⁰Cf. Entman, R. M. (1993), p.52. Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58

¹²¹Reese, S. D., Gandy Jr, O. H., Gandy Jr, O. H., & Grant, A. E. (Eds.). (2001), p. 101 *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world*. Routledge

¹²²UN to urge media to take more 'constructive' approach to news (2016, April 26). *the Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/apr/25/un-media-constructive-news>

However, Sir Martyn Lewis, a former BBC News presenter and advocate of constructive journalism told the Guardian that, a few years ago, critics dismissed the idea of *constructive journalism* as *'fluffy, feel-good news at the expense of covering real news'*.¹²³ But this is not what a constructive approach to news is all about. The approach is meant to be complementary to traditional approaches in news coverage. *Constructive journalism* aims to provide a more accurate picture of the world, whilst adhering to the *core principles of journalism*, advocates of the approach say.¹²⁴ And it's gaining ground. Scholars¹²⁵, newsrooms¹²⁶ and universities¹²⁷ are getting increasingly involved. In a book that was published in 2014, author and director of news at the Danish Broadcasting Ulrik Haagerup claims that theory and practice of constructive journalism is a *'mega trend'*.¹²⁸

Dictionary definitions of the term *'constructive'* include *'intended to be useful or helpful'*¹²⁹ or *'having or intended to have a useful or beneficial purpose'*.¹³⁰

In keeping with these definitions, Haagerup says that the approach is there to help journalists *'to remember to see the world with both eyes (...) (they must) report on problems, ask critical questions and do stories that inspire.'*¹³¹ Karen McIntyre, a journalism professor and constructive journalism researcher explained that constructive news builds something up; constructive stories are meant to energize or lift people up, including journalists, sources, and audience members.

¹²³ Interview in the Guardian

¹²⁴ Interview in the Guardian

¹²⁵ Cf. Krüger, U. (2017). *Constructive News: A New Journalistic Genre Emerging in a Time of Multiple Crises*. In: Hofkirchner, W. & Burgin, M. (eds.) *The Future in Information Society: Social and Technological Problems*, pp. 403-422. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co

¹²⁶ The BBC is experimenting with constructive formats in its project world hacks see here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04d42vf>

¹²⁷ University of Windesheim's School of Journalism in the world's first school to integrate Constructive Journalism into its curriculum, research and international partnerships.

¹²⁸ Haagerup, U. (op. cit.)

¹²⁹ Retrieved <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/constructive>

¹³⁰ Retrieved <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/constructive>

¹³¹ Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJsRi5k-kzM>

These news stories should leave people feel more engaged, inspired, and positive than before.¹³² Members of the London-based Constructive Journalism Project, which aims to innovate and strengthen journalism by developing methods for journalists to bring more positive and solution-focused elements into conventional reporting, defines constructive journalism as: *‘rigorous, compelling reporting that empowers audiences to respond constructively, presenting a fuller picture of truth while upholding journalism’s core functions and ethics’*.¹³³ The definitions discussed above are more of a practical nature, to create a more academic definition that incorporates the key elements of constructive journalism. According to Karen McIntyre, a PhD scholar from the Virginia Commonwealth University, constructive journalism can be defined as follows: *‘constructive journalism is an emerging style of journalism in which positive psychology and other behavioral science techniques are applied to news processes and production with the aim of engaging readers by creating more productive news stories, all while maintaining core journalistic functions like serving as a watchdog and remaining accountable’*. In this study, we will define constructive journalism by the same working definition. It is worthwhile to mention that in this master thesis, the focus is only on positive psychology.¹³⁴ What follows is a discussion of how constructive journalism approach is different and similar to other styles to news coverage.

Key characteristics: The movement of *constructive journalism* is relatively new. However, it is being practiced in various newsrooms¹³⁵ around the world, and scholars are beginning to study its process and impact. The concept has similarities with several other forms of journalism that have been discussed by media scholars and professionals.

¹³²Personal talk with Karen McIntyre on a International Conference organized by Brussels Institute for Journalism Studies 8-9 December 2016

¹³³Cf. the website of the project: <https://www.constructivejournalism.org/about/>

¹³⁴See also chapter 1.3 for explanation of the concept of positive psychology

¹³⁵Cf. BBC World Hacks, The Guardian glass half full project

Among the most prominent ones are peace journalism¹³⁶ and solutions journalism.¹³⁷ One attempt to find an umbrella term for such practices resulted in '*contextual reporting*'. McIntyre et. al. (2016) define it as 'stories that go beyond the immediacy of the news and contribute to societal well-being'.¹³⁸ Sometimes *constructive journalism* is misleadingly used as term for positive journalism.¹³⁹

Thus, to avoid misunderstandings, it is important to point out that constructive journalism differs from other approaches in its concrete aims, training, practices and commitment to *core functions of journalism*. They are reflected in all parts of the news process, from story generation to news gathering to production.

The main similarities and differences of the above-mentioned approaches will be briefly discussed and definitions will be summarized in a table.¹⁴⁰

According to the Solutions Journalism Network, Solutions journalism is '*rigorous and compelling reporting about responses to social problems*'.¹⁴¹ In solution news stories issues are investigated and explained in-depth, in a clear-eyed and critical way. The focus of this kind of journalism is not simply on what may work out, but on how and why it appears to be working, thus providing more context to a story.¹⁴² Peace journalism '*tries to depolarize by showing the black and white of all sides, and to de-escalate by highlighting peace and conflict resolution as much as violence*.

¹³⁶Cf. Lynch, J., & McGoldrick, A. (2005), p.5. *Peace journalism*. Stroud: Hawthorn Press

¹³⁷Cf. Curry, A. L., & Hammons, K. H. (2014). The power of solutions journalism. *Solutions Journalism Network and Engaging News Project*.

¹³⁸Cf. McIntyre, K., Dahmen, N. S., & Abdenour, J. (2016), p.1. The contextualist function: US newspaper journalists value social responsibility. *Journalism*, 1-19

¹³⁹Cf. McIntyre, K. & Gibson, R. (2016). Positive News Makes Readers Feel Good: A Silver-Lining Approach to Negative News Can Attract Audiences. *Southern Communication Journal* 81 (5),: 304-315

¹⁴⁰See table 2 in the Appendix 1

¹⁴¹Cf. Courtney Martin. What is Solutions Journalism? (June 9, 2013). *Solutions Journalism Network*, retrieved <http://solutionsjournalism.org/what-is-solutions-journalism/>

¹⁴²Curry, A. L. and Hammons K. H. (Op. cit.)

How successfully has to be seen, but changing the discourse within which something is thought, spoken of and acted upon is a very powerful approach'.¹⁴³

Positive Journalism consists 'of journalists and writers covering stories from a more positive side, often showcasing the highlights and good factors of a story or headline'.¹⁴⁴ When a journalist is interested in sharing positive journalism, he or she often searches for quotes, history and information that is relevant to the story but also helps to give the story itself a positive spin.

The novelty of a *Constructive Journalism* lies in the use of research and application from behavioral science like *positive psychology*, moral psychology and related domains.

Key components: Based on the work by Catherine Gyldensted (2015) a pioneer of constructive journalism, the author of this research study suggests that a constructive journalism approach¹⁴⁵:

- includes solution-oriented framing of articles
- values social responsibility function of journalists
- is critical but never cynical
- poses new questions to those in positions of power and to apparent victims and experts
- educates, engages and empowers people
- provides context
- is open to the possibility of co-creation
- calls on the press to take its commitment to democratic participation and public debate seriously

¹⁴³Galtung, J. & Fischer, D. (2013), p.99. *Johan Galtung: Pioneer of peace research*. Springer

¹⁴⁴Cf. <https://www.openschoolofjournalism.com/distance-education-program/courses/positive-journalism-jg310>

¹⁴⁵Gyldensted, C. (2015 Op. cit.)

The author wants to point out that some of those components should not be new to journalism and journalists, but this is an attempt to remind them. These components define what we consider a *constructive frame* of a news story. The single components are identified by certain rhetorical and technical devices, we will discuss them a bit later.¹⁴⁶

Key outcomes: In a study by Catherine Gyldensted (2011), different versions of the same news story were tested on a sample of 710 people. Among the findings was that articles with a constructive peak midway and a hopeful ending was deemed good reporting and left readers feeling informed. The data overall suggested that readers of the more positive articles were left with more energy to engage and take action. More recently, a study by Zhang & Matingwina (2016) finds that significantly, the practice of constructive journalism *'contributes to effective health communication, which is vital in the overall strategy to identify, contain and cure diseases such as Ebola.'*¹⁴⁷

While this article advances constructive journalism as an empowering approach, in narrating Ebola-related and African stories, for its focus on possible solutions more studies could be conducted in the future analyzing other cases.¹⁴⁸ Constructive Voices also incorporates an online resource designed to help journalists find case studies that provide practical solutions to problems.¹⁴⁹

Best Practice: Constructive Voices advocates constructive journalism and an increasing number of news organizations, such as the BBC, Guardian and Huffington Post, are implementing this approach into their news coverage.

Evidence shows that the public is turned off by negative news¹⁵⁰ and young people in particular want reporters to examine solutions as well as problems.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ We will discuss them more in depth in chapter 3.1

¹⁴⁷Cf. Zhang, Y., & Matingwina, S. (2016), p.1. A new representation of Africa? The use of constructive journalism in the narration of Ebola by China Daily and the BBC. *African Journalism Studies*, 37(3), 19-40.

¹⁴⁸Zhang, Y., & Matingwina, S.) (Op. cit.)

¹⁴⁹Retrieved <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/constructive-voices-for-charities>

¹⁵⁰Denise Baden. Shock! Horror! Behind the ethics and evolution of the bad news business. (March 27, 2015). *The Conversation*, retrieved from <http://theconversation.com/shock-horror-behind-the->

Audiences are more likely to stick with news outlets that provide this type of coverage,¹⁵² and to share these types of stories on social media. They are also better for advertisers, as it's been shown that readers are more likely to purchase a product if its ads are next to a positive rather than a negative news story.¹⁵³

4. Research Questions

RQ1: Which techniques do journalists in news agencies use to frame news about the accusations of Russian hacking in the U.S. presidential election?

RQ1.1: Which frames were used by the journalists?

RQ1.2: Can constructive frames be identified in news articles?

RQ 1.3: Is it possible to identify a negativity bias in the choice of frames?

ethics-and-evolution-of-the-bad-news-business-39211

¹⁵¹Caroline Scott. 5 key research findings about young online audiences from BBC World Service. (<https://www.journalism.co.uk/news/five-key-research-findings-about-young-online-audiences-from-bbc-world-service/s2/a588021/>). (November 30, 2015). BBC, retrieved from

¹⁵²Alex Curry. Solutions Journalism. (2017). *Engaging News Project*, retrieved from <https://engagingnewsproject.org/research/solutions-journalism/>

¹⁵³Gabriel Arana. The Benefits Of Positive News Ripple Far Beyond The First Smile. (August 19,2015). *Huffington Post*, retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/michelle-gielan-broadcasting-happiness_us_55d3b320e4b055a6dab1ee4b

RQ2: What are news journalists' attitudes towards constructive journalism?

RQ2.1: Did journalists hear about constructive journalism before?

RQ2.2: Did journalist use a constructive approach to news?

RQ2.3: Do journalist think that a constructive approach to journalism could be useful in their work?

RQ 2.3: Which arguments do journalists have against using a constructive approach to news coverage?

Chapter 2: Methods and Design

Terkildsen and Schnell (1997) suggest *'that framing is important whenever an issue can be presented in multiple ways which may potentially influence how people think about an issue'*.¹⁵⁴ We argue that news articles published by Russian news agencies about accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. presidential election can be presented in various ways and thus have a significant effect on the audience. Referring to the factors that could influence how a journalist frames an issue Scheufele (1999) suggests societal norms and values, journalistic routines, and the journalist's ideological orientations.¹⁵⁵ Flourie (2001) claims that framing *'describes the influence on the public of news angles used by journalists'*.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴Cf. Terkildsen, N., & Schnell, F. (1997). How Media Frames Move Public Opinion: An Analysis of the

Women's Movement. *Political Research Quarterly*, 50(4), 879-900

¹⁵⁵Cf. Scheufele, D. A. (1999), p. 109. Framing as a theory of media effects. *Journal of communication*, 49(1), 103-122.

¹⁵⁶Cf. Fourie, P. J. (2001), p. 305 The effects and power of mass communication. *Media Studies: Institutions, theories, and issues*, 1

This research study in particular aims to capture central elements of how journalists in two Russian news agencies presented the news they published about a certain issue. What narrative device or approach was used by journalists in composing the story. For example, was the story built around the conflict inherent in an issue, or was the story built around the points of agreement among stakeholders in an issue? Thus, in the following chapter a qualitative news frame analysis is conducted.

2.1 News Framing Analysis

2.1.1 Procedure

We decided to conduct an inductive qualitative frame analysis of news. A qualitative news frame analysis can be done to achieve various media research purposes. These include *'defining problems, diagnosing causes, making value judgments, and suggesting remedies'*.¹⁵⁷ The single steps of the analysis were as follows:

Choice of Media and Case: The first step was to choose a specific medium for the study from a variety of available media. The choice was informed by the research problem outlined in chapter 1. It is a comparison of framing of one specific issue covered by two publications. Russian news agencies are a good choice for a medium of analysis as they have yet to be widely explored.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, in comparison to the number of studies focusing on news framing analysis of news in print newspapers, online versions of print newspapers, radio and TV, framing analysis of articles published by national news agencies still seem underexplored, even though they are often cited in other media.

¹⁵⁷Entman, R. M. (1993), p. 53. Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of communication*, 43(4), 51-58.

¹⁵⁸Cf. Boyd-Barrett (2012 Op.cit.)

Surprising as in fact, media is increasingly relying on content produced by newswires, especially the big international ones¹⁵⁹ and their dominance of international news in the internet.¹⁶⁰ However, there are scholars with backgrounds in linguistics, socio-linguistics, and translation studies that have begun to examine news agency content with a high intensity of concentration on linguistic features as well as on the production contexts in which content is constructed.

Scholars including Alan Bell (1991)¹⁶¹, Esperanza Bielsa and Susan Bassnett (2008)¹⁶². The larger share of studies focuses however on the global players in the Western world including Reuters, AP, AFP and others. Only a few works have focused on globally operating newswires based in Russia. Terhi Rantanen and Elena Vartanova (1995) conducted a study decades ago in which she analyzes news agencies from a historical point of view. The authors explore the transformation of Russian news agencies occurred within the general framework of perestroika and the ongoing economic, political and social turmoil of Russian society.¹⁶³ Given these circumstances the author decided it is relevant to advance news agency research in Russia. Thus, in this study the focus is on two globally operating Russian news agencies, TASS and Interfax. Before discussing the case, we have chosen we will shortly introduce and discuss why those two news agencies were chosen.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Boyd-Barrett, O., & Rantanen, T. (Eds.). (1998). *The globalization of news*. Sage.; Oliver Boyd-Barrett (2012 Op. cit.)

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Paterson, C. (2005). News agency dominance in international news on the internet, in: Skinner, D., Compton J. R., Gasher, M.(eds.): *Converging Media, Diverging Politics: A Political Economy of News in the United States and Canada*. Lexington: Rowman and Littlefield, 145-164.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Bell, A. (1991). *The language of news media*. Oxford: Blackwell.

¹⁶² Cf. Bielsa, E., & Bassnett, S. (2008). *Translation in global news*. Routledge.

¹⁶³ Cf. Rantanen, T., & Vartanova, E. (1995). News agencies in post-communist Russia: From state monopoly to state dominance. *European Journal of Communication*, 10(2), 207-220.

TASS: The Russian news agency was founded in 1902 as Commercial Telegraph Agency. Since 1904 it has been Russia's leading news agency. It is owned by the Government of Russia. The headquarters are in Moscow, Russia. The newswire has 70 offices in Russia and in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as well as 68 bureaus around the world. More than 5,000 corporate subscribers across Russia and the world are recipients of TASS products. Among them are 1,000 mass media organizations, 200 diplomatic missions, 250 financial companies and banks, and 200 industrial enterprises, research and educational organizations and libraries. The news agency has over 1,500 professionals in Russia and abroad.¹⁶⁴ According to a media monitoring website TASS was the most cited news agency in other online media (Latest numbers March 2017).¹⁶⁵ According to a 2016 study in which 48 semi-structured interviews with high-ranked Russian media experts were conducted, TASS will also play an increasingly significant role as content provider in the Russian media environment of the future.¹⁶⁶

Interfax: Interfax is a privately-held independent major news agency in Russia headquartered in Moscow. Interfax provides general and political news, business credit information, industry analysis, market data and business solutions for risk, compliance and credit management. The company employs over 1,000 staff in over 70 bureaus worldwide and publishes over 3000 stories each day. According to a media monitoring website Interfax was the third most cited news agency in other media (Latest numbers March 2017).¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Personal talk with journalists of TASS

¹⁶⁵ Cf. *Федеральные СМИ - март 2017*. (2017). *Медиаалогия - система мониторинга СМИ*. from <http://www.mlg.ru/ratings/media/federal/4748/#internet>

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Vartanova, E., Vyrkovsky, A., Makeenko, M., & Smirnov, S. (2016). The Russian Media Industry in Ten Years: Industrial Forecasts. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 11(1)

¹⁶⁷ *Федеральные СМИ (Op. cit.)*

According to a 2016 study Interfax will also play an increasingly significant role as content provider in the Russian media environment of the future.¹⁶⁸ As for the case we decided to focus on the following issue: *Hacking incidents during the 2016 US presidential campaign and allegations by the US that the Russian government meddled in the election.*

Determination of a Time-Frame: Once a topic/medium has been selected, the second step is that the researcher must determine a time- frame. The time frame chosen for this analysis was between *June 14 2016*, when first an article appeared in the Washington Post claiming that the Russian government hackers penetrated the computer network of the Democratic National Committee and gained access to the entire database of opposition research on GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump and *January 24*, the inauguration day of US-President Donald Trump.

Data collection: We decided to use the database *NexisLexis Academic*¹⁶⁹. This tool used by international scholars has two main advantages. The first one is that it provides a broad range of useful search parameters to find the relevant data for the analysis quickly. The second one is that the texts published by the news agencies TASS and Interfax could easily be exported as .pdf files.

Pilot study: The first sample of articles in the defined period was carefully reviewed multiple times. Then the author decided to reduce the initial sample of articles for the actual news frame analysis because some articles published by Interfax were not related to the case under analysis, included only a headline or have been simply identical to another article. For the final study N1= 33 articles by Interfax and N2= 48 articles by TASS have been selected.

¹⁶⁸Vartanova, E., Vyrkovsky, A., Makeenko, M., & Smirnov, S. (2012 Op. cit.)

¹⁶⁹The database is available here: <https://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic/>

Selection of a frame typology: The selection of news frames is crucial to the success of a frame analysis. The author was led by open coding of technical and rhetorical devices¹⁷⁰ based on a grounded theory approach including ‘*the systematic generation of theory from systematic research*’.¹⁷¹ Consequently applying a set of rigorous research procedures leading to the emergence of conceptual categories to identify frames.

The author’s decision has been made on the process of selecting frames for the study, the researcher decided to identify one primary and one secondary frame in each of the news articles after several instances of open coding. The dominant frame is the main theme of the news article, while the secondary frame is a supplementary idea that supports the main theme.

Operationalization: The researcher must provide operational definitions of selected news frames. If the concepts have been studied by other researchers, it is advisable to consider their definitions, if not new precise definitions of frames must be found. Capella and Jamieson (1996) suggest the following criteria for a frame¹⁷²:

- a frame must have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics
- it should be commonly observed in journalistic practice;
- it must be possible to distinguish the frame reliably from other frames;
- and a frame must be recognized by others and not be a figment of a researcher’s imagination.

Identifying news frames: The process of identifying news frames can only begin once the foundation (steps 1-6) has been laid. The identification of news frames requires the researcher to know ‘*how*’ to look for frames, as well as ‘*what*’ to look for when identifying frames.

¹⁷⁰See Appendix 1 Table 1

¹⁷¹Grounded Theory Institute - *The Grounded Theory Methodology of Barney G. Glaser, Ph.D. - What is GT?* (2017), retrieved from <http://www.groundedtheory.com/what-is-gt.aspx>

¹⁷²Cappella, J. N., & Jamieson, K. H. (Op. cit.), p.89

The ‘*how*’ of identifying news frames is based on: Alozie (2005), he suggests the following: (1) general multiple reading of the articles while taking descriptive notes about the content; (2) a second reading to identify certain recurring themes, frames, values and topic categories; and (3) in-depth interpretation of the articles.¹⁷³

The ‘*what*’ of identifying frames implies that the researcher analyses the text for ‘*symbolic devices*’ or ‘*signature elements*’ that are located within news stories.

Gamson & Lasch (1987) argue that there are several devices used to frame a specific event/story. The research problem will guide the researcher in terms of whether to look for a single framing device (such as news sources) or multiple framing devices. For the purposes of this article, these framing devices will be divided into two categories: rhetorical devices and technical devices.¹⁷⁴

Rhetorical devices include word choice, metaphors, and exemplars. Other devices that can be examined are ‘*the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgement*’¹⁷⁵. Gamson and Lasch (1981) offer comment on the above-mentioned¹⁷⁶:

- Metaphors: They always have two parts – the principal subject that the metaphor is intended to illuminate, and the associated subject that the metaphor invokes to enhance readers’ understanding;
- Exemplars: While metaphors rely on imagined events to frame the principal subject, real events of the past or present are frequently used for the same purpose;

¹⁷³Alozie, E. (2005), p.66. Sudan and South Africa - a framing analysis of Mail & Guardian Online's coverage of Darfur. *Ecquid Novi*, 26(1), 63-85.

¹⁷⁴Gamson, W. A., Braungart, R. D., & Braungart, M. M. (1987), p.399. Research in political sociology, vol: 3. *Research in political sociology*, vol: 3.

¹⁷⁵Entman, R. (1993), p.52. Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal Of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58

¹⁷⁶Gamson, W. A., & Lasch, K. E. (1981), p.4. *The political culture of social welfare policy*.

- Catch-phrases: Commentators on events frequently try to capture them in a single theme statement, tag-line, title or slogan that is intended to suggest a frame. Catch-phrases are attempted summary statements about the principal subject; and
- Depictions: News stories have certain principal subjects that they characterize in a particular fashion. They may do this through metaphors.

Technical devices include various elements of news-writing, as well as technical elements such as layout and visuals. Tankard in Reese et al. (2001) suggests the following technical framing devices: headlines; subheadings; photo captions; leads; source selection; quote selection; and concluding statements and paragraphs.¹⁷⁷ News sources are considered important framing devices. According to Pan and Kosicki (1993), who is quoted, how they are identified, and where the quote is placed in the story is important.¹⁷⁸ These authors (ibid.) add that quotes are used as effective framing devices by *'quoting experts to claim empirical validity or facticity; by quoting official sources to link certain points of view to authority; and by quoting a social deviant to marginalize certain points of view'*. Headlines are another important indicator of the frame of a news story. As Pan and Kosicki (1993) observe, *'a headline is the most salient cue to activate certain semantically related concepts in readers' minds: it is thus the most powerful framing device of syntactical structure'*.

Relevant frames in this study: The frames that are needed in our study are (1) political frame (2) technological frame, (3) conflict frame and (4) constructive frame. As for the political frame, it shapes political attitudes and behavior. To identify this frame, we look at key political actors, the word choice, key words, headlines, leads and quotes.

¹⁷⁷Cf. Tankard in Reese, S. D., Gandy Jr, O. H., Gandy Jr, O. H., & Grant, A. E. (Eds.). (2001). p. 101 *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world*. Routledge

¹⁷⁸Cf. Pan, Z., & Kosicki, G. M. (1993), p. 60. Framing analysis: An approach to news discourse. *Political communication*, 10(1), 55-75

As for the technological frame, we look at key IT-actors, the word choice, key words, headlines, leads and quotes. For the conflict frame we rely on Neuman, Just & Crigler's (1992) definition which they argue '*deals with the news media's game interpretation of the political world as an on-going series of contests, each with a new set of winners and losers*'. Moreover, it refers to conflict between individuals, groups, institutions or countries.¹⁷⁹ In the case of the constructive frame, we defined it earlier too.¹⁸⁰ Both frames are identified by analyzing the devices outlined for (1) and (2).

2.1.2 Limitations

Framing research sees substantial diversity in ways that frames are conceptualized and studied, in theoretical explanations for the effects of frames on audiences, and in potential relationships between framing and other processes. This intellectual diversity is a source of concern for some scholars, but others see it as inevitable and even desirable for a research domain with much to offer the field of communication. Studies taking an inductive approach, as we propose in this research, have also been criticized for relying on too small a sample and for being difficult to replicate.¹⁸¹ We also assume that another area of concern regarding this methodology remains the subjectivity of the process, coupled with the fact that consensus on a standard frame typology does not exist yet. Given the limitations, this research study is however a good base for future research in which bigger samples of data can be collected over a longer period, be analyzed with various quantitative and qualitative research methods. Indeed, we argue that a mixed-method approach will be very effective with regards to future research in this area.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Neuman, R. W., Just, M.R., Crigler, A. N. (1992), p.74. *Common knowledge. News and construction of political meaning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

¹⁸⁰ Cf. chapter 1 Section 3

¹⁸¹ Cf. Reese, S., Gandy, O., Grant, A., & Reese, S. (2001). *Framing public life* (1st ed.). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.

2.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviewing, according to Bernard (1988) is best used when you will not get more than one chance to interview someone.¹⁸² This was clearly the case in this research study, I conducted interviews and follow up interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher and the participant to engage in a dialogue in real time. The interviewer has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered. However, with semi-structured interviews the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered, and, perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher. The answers are open-ended, and there is more emphasis on the interviewee elaborating points of interest.¹⁸³

2.2.1 Procedure

It is crucial, that researchers have developed their interviewing skills before interviewing. Apart from mastering active listening and the ability to ask open-ended questions free from hidden presumptions, the interviewer should know to build rapport and gain trust of the participant. A kind of ‘warm-up discussion’ was necessary to reduce the interviewee’s tension and get him or her ready to discuss more sensitive or personal issues.

Conducting semi-structured interviews, it was also helpful to prepare an interview plan in advance. It is merely a guide to facilitate a natural flow of conversation. It can include key questions or areas the researcher wants to discuss.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸²Cf. Bernard, H. R. (1988). *Research methods in cultural anthropology* p. 117. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

¹⁸³Cf. Denscombe, M. (2014). *Good research guide* (1st ed.). Maidenhead, England: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press

¹⁸⁴See Appendix 5: Sample Interview Guide

Apart from open and expansive questions which encourage participants to talk at length, it may be also be convenient to think about prompts. These may be helpful if participants find some questions too general or abstract. Before semi-structured interviews were conducted we thought about a plan answering the following questions:

- (1) Who am I going to interview and why?
- (2) How many people am I going to interview?
- (3) What do I need to consider before to interview an expert?
- (4) What is important during the interview process?
- (5) What is important when transcribing interviews?
- (6) How can we analyze, interpret, and discuss the collected data later?

Identifying respondents: Key informants are people who write about foreign political news at TASS or Interfax, or people because of their position like senior editors, deputy editors, editors in chief and experienced correspondents, or people that are editors or reporters and have a good understanding of the problem to be explored. These witnesses are not necessarily members of the population targeted by the study, but they all have a major interest in that population, in addition to being privileged witnesses of specific problems. It was useful to draw up a broad list of potential respondents before launching the recruitment process. Drawing on a bigger number of respondents gave the interviewer the ability to react flexibly to unforeseen issues that can always occur in research.

Among them, interviewees may refuse to give an interview, agree to be interviewed, but not appear or postpone the interview several times, have less time than promised for the interview, or simply ‘force majeure’.

Number of interviews: It is hard to determine the exact number of interviews that must be done for this research study. However, several aspects were considered when deciding on how many interviews to conduct: (1) it is important to cover all relevant issues with a range of sources. In this context, semi-structured interviews may be viewed as a way of supplementing other data collection methods, and it may be sufficient to conduct only a few interviews with key informants. (2) However, if semi-structured interviews are the sole source of information, more interviews should be conducted. (3) Semi-structured interviews can be a way of capturing concerns and perceptions of issues that have not been contacted with other data collection methods. (4) Available time and resources. At least two days are needed to prepare, conduct, transcribe and analyze a semi-structured interview. It is recommended, therefore, that the number of interviews scheduled consider available time and resources. It is also important to consider the fact that key informants are often stakeholders in high demand and therefore not always available. As well, there is the question of the total length of the data collection phase. (5) Data saturation. Under optimal conditions, data collection from key informants should end once data saturation is achieved, i.e. when interviews do not provide any new or additional insights because the information gathered is repetitive.

Preparing interviews: Even though semi-structured interviews are flexible in general, they require rigorous preparation. It is essential to define their objectives, devise an interview guide and draw up a consent form. Some of the main steps the interviewer must consider are as follows:

- (1) Study the interview plan multiple times
- (2) Decide which questions are most appropriate for the respondent or prepare new ones
- (3) Draw up a consent form specifying the rules of the interview and the confidentiality commitment, or adapted the sample form given

- (4) Contact the respondent: explain the goal of the interview, the permission, schedule an appointment and agree on where the interview will be held
- (5) The place selected should be neutral, confidential, comfortable, quiet, free of distractions, and easily accessible for the respondent
- (6) If necessary, send the consent form and the interview plan to the respondent
- (7) If necessary, prepare equipment for recording the interview
- (8) Contact the respondent again to confirm the date and location of the interview

Interviewing respondents: Semi-structured interviews should last from 60 to 90 minutes. Sixty-minute interviews are perfectly acceptable and ensure that neither the interviewer nor the respondent lose their concentration.

Recording and Transcribing Interviews: Recording is allowed only with permission. A letter of consent was filled out by the interviewee and the interviewer informed the respondent again and asked if he is still allowed to record. Besides recording the interviewer decided it is also important to make extensive notes. After the recorded interviews were conducted the interviewer immediately transcribed the interviews in order not to forget important aspects. Intensive transcribing took about 4 -5 hours per hour recording, so in total at least 24 hours. Then transcribed reviewed, which took at least 1 hour more per interview, in total 6 hours.

Data analysis: To analyze the collected data from the transcribed semi-structured expert interviews the author conducted a computer-assisted inductive qualitative data analysis (MAXQDA Software).¹⁸⁵ The data analysis is based on grounded theory which is a systematic methodology in the social sciences involving the construction of theory through the analysis of data. Grounded theory is a research methodology which operates almost in a reverse fashion from social science research in the positivist tradition.

¹⁸⁵The software is available here: <http://www.maxqda.com/>

One type of coding was applied: open coding which includes labeling concepts, defining and developing categories based on their properties and dimensions. It is used to analyze qualitative data and part of many qualitative data analysis methodologies.

2.2.2 Limitations

It is important to recognize and address the weaknesses of any scientific method used in research studies. As for semi-structured interviews Denscombe (2010) finds that people respond differently depending on how they perceive the interviewer, the ‘interviewer effect’. In particular, the gender, age, and the ethnic origins of the interviewer could have a significant influence on the amount of information interviewees will be giving to the interviewer and their honesty about what they reveal.¹⁸⁶ Whereas Patton (2002) mentions that comparability is reduced because sequencing and wording will probably be different in each interview. However, what is potentially lost here is gained by allowing interviews to develop their own coherence, which itself can be analyzed. Moreover, the method depends very much on the interviewer skills. In any situation experts that are interviewed could lie. There is never an 100% guarantee that they have told the truth; they could be under pressure from management, for example, and be forced to answer in a certain way. In the end, it is the responsibility of the researcher to pull evidence from the data which when interpreted sounds convincing, credible and reliable. Finally, semi-structured interviews have also been criticized as being time-consuming regarding both data collection and analysis because they need to be transcribed, coded and possibly translated as was the case in the present study.

¹⁸⁶Cf. Denscombe (Op. cit.)

Seale (2011) summarizes the disadvantages of interviewing as follows: (1) time-consuming, (2) small scale, (3) never 100% anonymous (4) potential for subconscious bias, (5) potential inconsistencies.¹⁸⁷

Chapter 3: Findings and Discussion

Before the findings are presented and discussed it is important to note that issues of *validity* and *reliability* of research instruments are of great importance to the findings of any scientific research. In its broader context, validity refers to the degree to which a study reflects the specific concepts it aims to investigate. Two types of validity are discussed in social science literature: internal and external (Berg, 2007). Internal validity refers to the extent to which an investigation is measuring what it is supposed to measure. This type of validity answers the question: are the differences found related to the measurement? while external validity answers the question: Can the findings be generalized? On the other hand, reliability refers to the extent to which a research instrument yields the same results on repeated trials.¹⁸⁸

3.1 Findings & Discussion News Framing Analysis

Spotting frames is all about seeing the bigger picture; looking outside and beyond the frames that we find. And that can be inspiring: it can lead to larger, positive and appealing visions, which in the long term will be more effective. The researcher must provide operational definitions of identified news frames.

¹⁸⁷Cf. Seale, C. (2011). *Qualitative research practice* (1st ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE

¹⁸⁸Cf. Berg, B. L., Lune, H., & Lune, H. (2004). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (Vol. 5). Boston, MA: Pearson

If the concepts have been studied by other researchers, it is advisable to consider their definitions, if not new precise definitions of frames must be found. Capella and Jamieson (1996) ¹⁸⁹suggest the following criteria for a frame:

- a frame must have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics
- it should be commonly observed in journalistic practice;
- it must be possible to distinguish the frame reliably from other frames;
- and a frame must be recognized by others and not be a figment of a researcher's imagination.

We conducted a qualitative news frame analysis¹⁹⁰ to identify frames inductive and to answer the following main research question: which techniques do journalists in news agencies use to frame news about the accusations of Russian hacking in the U.S. presidential election? Therefore, we also aimed to shed light into the question which frames were used by the journalists?

We also wanted to find out if constructive frames can be identified in the corpora of texts we analyze and finally if it is possible to identify a negativity bias in the choice of frames? The software MAXQDA was very useful to analyze the texts more systematically because it enabled us to code words, sentences and paragraphs and to see frequencies of certain key words.

Overall Findings & Discussion: One of the essential features of news agency reporting is the continuous flow of dispatches. This means that on one major story, updated versions follow each other, with new information, but also including a lot of repetition from the earlier reports.

¹⁸⁹ Jamieson (Op. cit.)

¹⁹⁰ See also Appendix 4: Coding instructions, we are only discussing single examples to illustrate how we systematically analyzed the whole text corpora

News coverage from Russian news agencies about the accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. election seems to be no exception from this tendency, as we find in the analysis of our texts. Interfax news agency used this tactic frequently. It was less the case for the news wire TASS, but they still published updated versions. Moreover, unlike the online agency reports available for all media consumers, these dispatches, sent to subscribers of the news agencies, begin with additional information: bylines, datelines, editor's notes, and so on.

Another notable characteristic we find during the analysis, is that news reports must be newsworthy, this has also been suggested by scholars in previous studies.¹⁹¹ However, it is still fiercely discussed among scholars what makes news stories newsworthy and journalists' opinions vary significantly. Furthermore, we find the following structural characteristics typical for news reporting in our analyzed text corpora.¹⁹² News writing attempts to answer all the basic questions about any event: who, what, when, where and why (the Five Ws) in a straightforward, factual style. This form of structure is sometimes called the "*inverted pyramid*", to refer to the decreasing importance of information in subsequent paragraphs.¹⁹³ So the least important information is on the bottom of the text.

Moreover, news stories have an introductory paragraph often also referred to as a lead, which has two related purposes. The first is to engage the reader instantly, and the second is to summarize what the story is all about. According to Tony Harcup (2015) the intro is a crucial part of a news story because it sets the tone for what follows. A poorly written intro might confuse the readers, mislead or simply bore them, whereas when it is well-written, it will encourage the readers to stay with you on the strength of the information and angle you have started with.

¹⁹¹Harcup, T. & O'Neill, D. (Op.cit.)

¹⁹²Cf. Itule, B. D., Anderson, D., & Simon, J. (2006). *News writing and reporting for today's media*. Simon. James

¹⁹³Cf. Stephens, M. (2007). *A history of news*. Oxford University Press

Harcup (2015) further explains that after the intro a body follows in which news journalists amplify the story, adding new information, providing detail, explanation and quotes.¹⁹⁴ Across the whole sample of texts we identified short intros and 2-7 further paragraphs depending on the text and including the elements just described by Harcup (2015).

What scholars also argue is that news is selected according to certain news values, which Bell (1991) argues '*are not neutral, but reflect ideologies and priorities held in society*'.¹⁹⁵ This can also be seen in some of the articles that have been analyzed in this research as the journalist's choice of words and sentence structures indicate. The conventional formula of hard news reports stresses the importance of *newsworthiness*¹⁹⁶ and *objective, impersonalized writing style*¹⁹⁷, but we find that this conventional formula tends to blur into vague language in some of the analyzed articles knowing that this finding needs to be further investigated in future research to be representative.

Nevertheless, this observation already finds some support in academic literature, scholars have argued that routines of news writing naturally affect the way emotions are described in the news; as Wahl-Jorgensen (2013) states, '*long-standing practices of objectivity create particular parameters for the expression of emotion*'. When examining Pulitzer Prize-winning stories, Wahl-Jorgensen (2013) has concluded that '*[e]motional expression is carefully policed, but extensive, systematic and routinized*'.¹⁹⁸

These definitions also apply to my corpus of the general news agency reports, which surely is one of the most '*carefully policed*'. In what follows we will present a more detailed outline and in-depth discussion of single findings.

¹⁹⁴Cf. Harcup, T. (2015). *Journalism: principles and practice*. Sage

¹⁹⁵Cf. Bell, A. (1991), p.156. *The language of news media*. Oxford: Blackwell

¹⁹⁶Cf. chapter 2.3

¹⁹⁷Cf. Westerståhl, J. (1983). Objective news reporting general premises. *Communication research*, 10(3), 403-424

¹⁹⁸Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2013), p.141. The strategic ritual of emotionality: A case study of Pulitzer Prize-winning articles. *Journalism*, 14(1), 129-145.

Findings & Discussion: Technical and Rhetorical Devices: As mentioned earlier in this research study there are technical and rhetorical devices in texts that can be analyzed and a certain combination of them results in a primary and/or secondary frame of a news story. Reese et al. (2003) suggest the following devices: headlines, sub headlines, photo captions, leads, source selection and quote selection.¹⁹⁹ In this study there was no need to analyze sub headlines and photo captions as they did not exist. However, the other devices were analyzed with qualitative framing analysis in MAXQDA. For the analysis of texts by TASS news agency we find the following:

(1) Headlines: Most headlines in the analyzed text corpora can be considered neutral which is a first hint for a combination of a political and technical frame. To illustrate this picking one headline of a text published by TASS news agency as examples:

‘Russia interested in cooperation with US regarding hackers’ attacks’

The headline indicates that the Russian government is ready to find a solution together with the U.S. government regarding the allegations of hacking. It includes political actors, thus indicating a political frame. It also contains hacking, thus providing evidence for a technical frame.

Whereas headlines in some of the other texts that have been analyzed can be considered a first hint for a combination of political and conflict frame because of certain vocabularies used ²⁰⁰ (for instance words like smash or accuse) or unusual sentence structure.

¹⁹⁹Reese et al.(Op.cit.)

²⁰⁰Cf. Appendix 4 Coding Instructions

So, we find carefully policed headlines which are arguably formulated in a factual, objective way, because they include emotion-loaded vocabulary and their structure is unusual too. To illustrate this, we can look at the following headlines from text published by TASS and compare them to other headlines:

‘Accusing Russia of involvement in hacking Clinton's private emails is "absurd" - Kremlin’

First, a quote by the Kremlin is used as headline which is a hint for a political frame. Then the quote starts with the word ‘*accusing*’ and instead of accusing Russian Hackers it is accusing ‘*Russia*’ as a country. And finally, we are noticing an emphasis on the word ‘*absurd*’. Using the words accusing and absurd provides some evidence for a conflict frame. Another example we find in another text is as follows:

‘Lavrov slams NBC report about Putin's involvement in US election hack as nonsense’

Again, a quote is used in the headline which we argue is unusual. That the quote is by Russia’s foreign minister Lavrov provides some proof for a political frame. Then the verb to ‘slam’ is used in the quote which is according to the Oxford Dictionary an informal expression to criticize someone severely; and the word ‘*nonsense*’ even when considering that is used in a quote is in combination with smashing indicating confrontation. These two words provide some hints for a conflict frame. So overall this two headlines just discussed as examples would provide some proof for a primary political frame and a secondary conflict frame.

The author suggests that this headline by Reuters news agency is an example of how to formulate a rather objective and factual headline instead that would provide some evidence for a primary political and secondary technical frame²⁰¹:

‘U.S. formally accuses Russian hackers of political cyber attacks’

(2) Leads: We find that leads in the analyzed texts are neutral by nature, providing some evidence for a primary political frame and a secondary technical frame. For instance, the following lead:

‘Russia is interested in cooperation with the U.S. on hacker attacks, blame for which is apportioned to Russian IT specialists, Maria Zakharova, the official spokesperson for the Russian Foreign Ministry said in an interview with Komsomolskaya Pravda radio’.

In this lead, Russia’s foreign minister is quoted providing some evidence for a primary political frame. Moreover, the words IT-specialists, and hacker attacks are included, thus indicating hints for a secondary technological frame.

However, some carefully policed leads include elements which indicate that they are not neutral and thus a primary political frame and secondary conflict frame could have been used in the article. For instance, the following lead:

‘Accusing Russia of any involvement in hacking private emails of US Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton is absurd, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday’.

We argue that choosing this quote, in which ‘Russia’ as a country is accused of Hacking might be carefully policed to provoke certain emotions against the U.S.

²⁰¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-cyber-russia-idUSKCN12729B>

Moreover, the word ‘absurd’ and ‘accusing’ provide some evidence for a conflict frame.

(3) Source Selection: Most frequently official statements by spokespersons from the government are the choice in the analyzed texts. Also, often official statements by spokespersons from foreign ministries and embassies are referred to as primary source. Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin spokesperson is by far the most cited source in all analyzed articles. Other spokespersons selected as sources are the White House spokesperson Sean Spicer and the press officer of the Russian embassy in Prague, Alexei Kolmakov. Moreover, the texts included statements of politicians like Vladimir Putin, Sergei Lavrov, Sergei Ryabkov, Maria Zakharova, Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, and Barack Obama. Finally, both news agencies use reports by other Russian and International media, formal documents, press releases and social media as sources. We find that there could be a bigger variety of source selection in some articles as this results in more perspectives. Consequently, adds more context to the news articles and providing context to news is widely seen as a key function of journalism and increasing audience participation, the author of this research study argues in line with other scholars can help journalists to provide more context.²⁰² To illustrate how we analyzed sources in each text, we can give one example. A political actor, Russia’s president that has been chosen as a source in this text would provide some evidence for a political frame:

‘In September, Russian President Vladimir Putin said in an interview with Bloomberg that the Russian government was not involved in hacking the Democratic National Committee servers’.

²⁰²Cf. Lowrey, W., & Anderson, W. (2005). The journalist behind the curtain: Participatory functions on the Internet and their impact on perceptions of the work of journalism. *Journal of Computer- Mediated Communication*, 10(3), 00

The following source that has been chosen in the text provides some evidence for a technology frame:

'Russia's influencing the results of the presidential election in the US through hacking attacks is hardly likely, Dr Michal Kosinski, Assistant Professor in Organizational Behavior at Stanford Graduate School of Business, said'

(4) Quote Selection: Overall the selected quotes in the single texts that have been analyzed are short and precise which is typical for news articles. What has been described for source selection is closely connected to quote selection, thus we are not going to discuss this in detail and direct the attention of the reader to the previous paragraph. In essence: the most frequently selected sources are also most frequently quoted ones. What is more interesting is the number and variety of quotes because as argued earlier providing context is widely seen as a core function of journalists. Consequently, choosing to quote many various sources results in various perspectives on an issue and thus in a more balanced news report. We find that in some of the analyzed texts only one source is cited which we find is not enough. Such articles lack context. For example, several news reports contain only quotes from Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov. We argue that a news text should include multiple perspectives, at least two different sides should be shown in a news report.²⁰³ As this is not the case in some texts we analyzed we argue that they are unbalanced.

²⁰³Williams, E. (2007). *Grassroots journalism: a practical manual for doing the kind of newswriting that doesn't just get people angry, but active--that doesn't just inform, but inspires: for journalists and journalism students*. New York, NY: Dollar and Sense

The selection of quotes provides some evidence for which frames are used in a story, quotes by politicians and government spokespersons indicate a political frame, whereas quotes by IT-specialists a technical frame and quotes by actors including negative vocabulary and /or a unusual sentence structure indicate a conflict frame. For instance, the following quote in a text by TASS provides evidence for a primary political frame and a secondary conflict frame:

‘As for any unfounded accusations of involvement of the official Moscow in these crimes (hacker attacks), we believe that these accusations are absurd,’ Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters’

The words: accusations, crimes, attacks, absurd indicate a conflict frame. Whereas the fact that the quote is by the Russian presidential spokesman is some evidence for a political frame.

(5) Keywords: By far the most frequently identified word was Russia or Russian across the whole sample of articles. Other keywords included Kremlin, Hackers or Hacking, attacks, crime, Trump, Obama, Peskov, Putin, accusations or accusing or allegations, Democratic or Democrats, Republican or Republicans, Democratic National Committee (DNS), and Department of Homeland Security (DHS).²⁰⁴ The frequencies of certain keywords help us identify the frame of the text. When for instance the following key words are used frequently: *accuse, allege, allegations accusation, crime, terrorism, absurd, non-sense*, it provides some evidence for a conflict frame. When words like: names of politicians like *Trump, Putin and Obama* or names of *U.S. and Russian diplomats* or names of *government spokespersons* are used frequently and moreover words like, talk, discuss, speak and meet are used, this is some proof for a political frame.

²⁰⁴ See also Appendix 4: Coding Instructions

When vocabulary like e.g. hacking, Hackers, cyber, emails, servers, big data is used this provides some evidence for a technology frame.

In what follows we present and discuss the findings of the analysis of texts by Interfax news agency briefly as they are similar to what has been discussed for texts by TASS. We find the following:

(1) Headlines: Most headlines in the analyzed corpora can be considered neutral, because no vocabulary that provide evidence for a conflict frame. (for instance, words like accuse, nonsense, smash and absurd) or unusual sentence structures could be identified in the process of open coding.

This headline in a text by Interfax that was analyzed provides some evidence for a political and a technical frame:

‘Cyber-attack accusations should become subject for Russia-U.S. talks - Russian diplomat’

A quote by a political actor, a Russian diplomat is chosen here as headline providing some evidence for a political frame. He calls for political dialogue between the two nations about a technological issue ‘cyber-attack accusations’, which is a hint for a technical frame. Overall this provides some evidence that the text overall could have a primary political and secondary technical frame.

However, in some articles we find carefully policed headlines which are arguably formulated in a factual, objective way, because they include emotion-loaded vocabulary and their structure is unusual too, thus indicating a combination of a political and conflict frame. To illustrate this, we can look at the following headline and compare them:

‘Kremlin calls absurd Obama's accusations against Russia, declares Russian adherence to fight against cyber terrorism and hacking’

What we notice is that the headline begins with the Kremlin. Then the word ‘absurd’, which means according to the Oxford dictionary wildly unreasonable, illogical, or inappropriate.²⁰⁵ Finally, ‘to fight against cyber terrorism and hacking’ creates defensive and conflict atmosphere right from the beginning.

We argue that this headline by BBC News can be consider a rather neutral example for a headline providing some evidence for a primary political and secondary technical frame²⁰⁶ :

‘US hacking claims: Russia says ‘indecent’ without evidence’

(2) Leads: All the leads in the analyzed corpora can be considered neutral, because no emotion-loaded vocabulary or unusual sentence structures could be identified in the process of open coding. Thus, this provides evidence for a combination of a political and technical frame. For instance, this lead provides evidence that the text might have a primary political and secondary technological frame.

‘Russia and the United States should get to the negotiating table to discuss cyber-attack accusations, a senior Russian diplomat said.’

A quote by a political actor, a Russian diplomat is chosen here for the lead. He calls for political discussions between the two nations about a technological issue ‘cyber-attack’.

²⁰⁵ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/absurd>

²⁰⁶ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38341569>

(3) Source Selection: What we find here is close to what has been discussed in the case of articles by TASS. We will thus direct the reader's attention back to the paragraph about source selection in articles discussed for TASS news agency. Also in the case of articles published by Interfax we find that there could be a bigger variety of source selection as this results in more perspectives and consequently adds more context to the news articles. Providing context to news is widely seen as a key function of journalism, the author of this research argues that it can significantly help journalists to increase the overall quality of the article. The following source selection in a text would for instance provide some evidence for a political frame

'As food for thought, I want to say that maybe instead of groundlessly accusing each other of crimes related to the violation of a country's sovereignty, one should get to the negotiating table,' the diplomat said

As for technical frame in the same text:

'It was reported in July that mail servers of the U.S. Democratic National Committee were hacked'

(4) Quote Selection: Overall the selected quotes in the single texts that have been analyzed are short and precise which is typical for news articles. In essence: the most frequently selected sources are also most frequently quoted. The actors that are frequently quoted we already discussed, see (4) Quote Selection for TASS. What is more interesting is the number and variety of quotes because as argued earlier providing context is widely seen as a core function of journalists. Consequently, choosing to quote many various sources results in various perspectives on an issue and thus in a more balanced news report.

We find that in some of the analyzed texts only one source is cited which we argue is not enough. Such articles lack context. For example, several news reports contain only quotes from Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov. We argue that a news text should include multiple perspectives, at least two different sides should be shown in a news report. As this is not the case in some texts we analyzed we argue that they are unbalanced. For example, this quote in a text by Interfax provides some evidence for a political frame:

‘These very serious accusations absolutely lack any proof,’ Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov’ said in a commentary available on the Russian Foreign Ministry website.

Whereas this quote in an analyzed article by Interfax provides some evidence for a technical frame:

‘The website WikiLeaks earlier published electronic correspondence of the U.S. Democratic Party, details of which caused the resignation of the head of the party's national committee and triggered accusations against Hillary Clinton that the party administration de facto worked for her during the primaries.’

(5) Keywords: What we find is similar to the paragraph about keywords in analyzed articles about TASS, so we direct attention to the paragraph (5) for TASS. Overall, the frequencies of certain keywords help us identify the frame of the text. When for instance the following key words are used frequently: *accuse, allege, allegations accusation, crime, terrorism, absurd, non-sense*, it provides some evidence for a conflict frame.

When words like: names of politicians like *Trump, Putin and Obama* or names of *U.S. and Russian diplomats* or names of *government spokespersons* are used frequently and moreover words like, talk, discuss, speak and meet are used, this is some proof for a political frame. When vocabulary like e.g. hacking, Hackers, cyber, emails, servers, big data is used this provides some evidence for a technology frame.

Findings & Discussion Frames used: It is important to mention that we operationalized frames in the very end of the data analysis.²⁰⁷ The choice of frames is based on rhetorical and devices, as well as vocabularies²⁰⁸ Overall for both news agencies we find that a combination of a political frame as primary frame and a technology frame as secondary frame is most frequently used in articles by journalists. However, there are also stories that seem to include a primary political frame and a secondary conflict frame. We could not find any constructive frame in the articles analyzed.

Findings & Discussion Negativity bias in the choice of frames: Overall there is no reliable evidence for both Russian news agencies with regards to a negativity bias in the selection of news frames because most dispatches is written in an objective, factual way. The explanation seems obvious, journalists ideally aim to be unbiased and objective, but in reality, this is not the case. Many scholars have observed in the past among them Hackett (1984) decades ago.²⁰⁹ Thus, we argue that observing how news editors report stories will remain a core task of future research because emotional expression is often carefully policed in news.

²⁰⁷ Cf. chapter 2.1.1 Procedure

²⁰⁸ Based on works like e.g. Benford, R.D. (1993). You could be the hundredth monkey: collective action frames and vocabularies of motive within the nuclear disarmament movement, *Sociological Quarterly*, 34(2), 195–216 a list of vocabulary was developed see also in the Appendix 3: Coding Instructions

²⁰⁹ Hackett, R. A. (1984). Decline of a paradigm? Bias and objectivity in news media studies. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 1(3), 229-259.

3.2 Findings & Discussion Semi-Structured Interviews

In total, we intensively interviewed six journalists, three per news agency. The interviews lasted 60-90 minutes and we asked them open questions about their working conditions, technological changes, their ethical standards, political issues, news production, audience, constructive journalism and the future of journalism. In what follows we will summarize and discuss the findings. The main question we aimed to answer with the interviews was: What are news journalists' attitudes towards constructive journalism? Therefore, we first had to explore if journalists in Russian news agencies have heard about constructive journalism. And if so, did they use a constructive approach in their news coverage? Finally, we were also interested in knowing if journalists think that constructive journalism can be useful in their work and if not which arguments journalists have against using a constructive approach to news coverage?

Although journalists claimed to embrace some of the values inherent in constructive journalism, they were not directly familiar with the specific terms used to describe the approach in academia. The majority has not heard about the approach before. One journalist from TASS, who I asked if he had heard about constructive journalism before answered, *'no not directly under this term, but I think some of the approach's aspects have been discussed in newsrooms before'*.²¹⁰ Whereas a journalist from Interfax said, *'I've read about constructive journalism on Wikipedia before you called me'*.²¹¹ Only one interviewee, a correspondent from TASS has heard about constructive journalism before. *'Yes, I have heard about it, it's about telling positive stories, right?'*, he said. That people misleadingly confuse positive journalism with constructive journalism has also been discovered in previously.

²¹⁰Cf. Appendix 5: Interviews

²¹¹Cf. Appendix 5: Interviews

NCVO chair Sir Martyn Lewis, a former BBC News presenter in the 80s and 90s and advocate of constructive journalism explains it like this in an interview with the Guardian: *'It's 23 years almost to the day that I first spoke out about the need for more balanced news agenda. I have been misunderstood in the past, with people believing I just wanted fluffy, feel good news at the expense of covering real news'*, he said. *'This is not the case at all. I'd like to see the media engage in solutions-driven journalism which not only reports problems but explores potential solutions to those problems as well.'* Moreover, he stresses that constructive journalism does not mean giving up the traditional approach to journalism, but is complementary to it and, interestingly, he argues that there is growing evidence that it makes a lot of commercial sense as well.²¹²

So, positive journalism is in contrast consists 'only' of journalists covering stories from a more positive side, often showcasing the highlights and good factors of a story or headline. So, when a journalist is interested in sharing positive journalism, he or she often searches for quotes, history and information that is relevant to the story but also helps to give the story itself a positive spin.²¹³ Whereas constructive journalism is about positive-critical and negative-critical news stories and is defined as *'an emerging style of journalism in which positive psychology and other behavioral science techniques are applied to news processes and production with the aim of engaging readers by creating more productive news stories, all while maintaining core journalistic functions like serving as a watchdog and remaining accountable.'*²¹⁴

²¹²Cf. UN to urge media to take more 'constructive' approach to news (2016, April 26). *the Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/apr/25/un-media-constructive-news>

²¹³Cf. chapter 3

²¹⁴Cf. chapter 3

Overall, we find that the interviewed Russian journalists in both news agencies TASS and Interfax support the constructive journalism approach, however they all agree that it depends on the topic, genre and type of media and their audience. One journalist working for TASS news agency puts it like this: *‘I think it is possible, but it depends on the media and what you write about, it only works for media that works with a specific audience’*. Another interviewee from Interfax argues *‘I think yes, but it really depends on the kind of story’*.²¹⁵

Moreover, the semi-structured interviews reveal that news journalists valued the professional role, to work accurately and to report the truth. One correspondent working for TASS news agency said, *‘truth and accuracy is very important, journalists cannot always guarantee ‘accuracy and truth’, but getting the facts right is the cardinal principle of journalism’*.²¹⁶ According to Gyldensted (2011) one major goal of constructive journalism is to portray the world more accurately²¹⁷ and thus to provide the whole picture of the world.

When asked about the function to provide context²¹⁸, another key element of constructive journalism, all journalists claimed that they are trying to do this already, to their best knowledge. For instance, one of the respondents from TASS news agency said *‘Yes, of course. I do not see anything new in the necessity to provide more context. For me it’s an essential part of journalist’s job’*.²¹⁹

Another key characteristic of constructive journalism is that it is critical but never cynical. One correspondent from TASS which I interviewed said the following: *‘I think one should accumulate the whole range of information and present it in a story, but it is important to remember that critical approach should be combined with objectivity as well’*.²²⁰

²¹⁵Cf. Appendix 5: Interviews

²¹⁶Cf. Appendix 5: Interviews

²¹⁷Cf. Catherine Gyldensted (2015 Opt.cit)

²¹⁸Cf. McIntyre, Dahmen & Abdenour (Op.cit)

²¹⁹Cf. Appendix 5: Interviews

²²⁰Cf. Appendix 5: Interviews

Critics of constructive journalism argue it is not possible to do critical news stories choosing a constructive frame. One news reporter from Interfax said *I'm not familiar with constructive journalism on the deep level, but I think that these critics confuse terms. And I have some concerns about even possibility of objectivity so this approach could not be a threat to it.*²²¹ So in fact that the interviewed journalists value accuracy, taking a critical approach to covering news stories and providing context lends some support to constructive journalism.²²²

However, there is yet still two other significant elements to constructive journalism which is to provide solutions and to report independent.²²³ The first element is to most interviewed journalists not a core function of journalism. One senior editor expresses it this way *'yes, that's a good idea, but I think it is a bit another type of news than good old reporting'*.²²⁴

The reasons why journalists refuse this function may be the following: *'journalists might compromise their objectivity when they approach a story with the goal of proving that a specific solution is valid. The journalist goes into the topic with some sort of outcome in mind. That's fine if you are looking for examples of agreement'*.²²⁵ Since the nineteenth century, the theory of objectivity has been considered a cornerstone principle of journalism. However, during the last decades of the twentieth century, both communication scholars and practitioners increasingly began to contest the main notions.²²⁶

²²¹Cf. Appendix 5: Interviews

²²²Cf. Catherine Gyldensted (Opt.cit)

²²³Cf. Catherine Gyldensted (Opt.cit)

²²⁴Cf. Appendix 5: Interviews

²²⁵Cf. *Is Solutions Journalism the Solution?* (2017). *Niemanreports.org*. Retrieved from <http://niemanreports.org/articles/is-solutions-journalism-the-solution/>

²²⁶Cf. Muñoz-Torres, J. R. (2012). Truth and objectivity in journalism: Anatomy of an endless misunderstanding. *Journalism Studies*, 13(4), 566-582.

Deuze (2005) argues that some traditional functions of journalism must be reconsidered. Professional identity and ideology of journalists have changed during the last decades.²²⁷

As independence in reporting, another key characteristic of constructive journalism²²⁸, overall the interviewed journalists claimed that they can express their views freely. None of the journalists said that he belongs to a political party or non-governmental organization (NGO). Also, journalists did not feel that their political views must be the same as the ones of their editorial office and audience. However, as for TASS news agency, the interviewees acknowledge that their media organization belongs to a certain political camp and is thus obliged to cover certain news with regards to the government for sure. The situation for Interfax is similar, though journalists did not confirm that their media organization would belong to a certain political camp. One of the main purposes of this study was to contribute to a standardized understanding of constructive journalism as a concept among researchers and media professionals.

After being provided with a definition of constructive journalism, all journalists claimed that they were already employing these techniques in their work, but some even intended to do significantly more after learning about the approach through the interview. Journalists' favorable attitudes towards constructive journalism point to the need for continued study of contextual reporting including constructive journalism. Indeed, explaining concrete examples of constructive news coverage that are already realized by the BBC in their 'BBC Hacks' project, the Guardian in their 'the glass half full' project or der Correspondent, a Dutch media outlet and one of the pioneers in constructive journalism, the interviewed journalists were very interested and wanted to know more about the approach.

²²⁷Cf. Deuze, M. (2005). What is journalism? Professional identity and ideology of journalists reconsidered. *Journalism*, 6(4), 442-464

²²⁸Cf. Catherine Gyldensted (Opt.cit)

One of the journalists at TASS said *'we would be interested in providing a workshop on this issue to our staff to broaden their view of what is newsworthy because I think many journalists don't know about this approach'*.²²⁹ According to a Washington-based correspondent working for the news agency TASS, constructive journalism *'is pretty interesting, and reports that are prepared using it will be in demand, but basically people don't look for neutral news - they are trying to find information that is close to their own point of view. For example, if you like rock music, then you won't try to find the information with opinion of both rock-lovers and rock haters - you will try to read some stuff that is more about rock loving. But your approach could be useful in the complicated topics, in which most of the people don't grasp'*.

A news editor working for Interfax said: *'I believe that this is possible. If there is anything constructive to offer, then criticism will not hurt and will not be misleading. With a reasonable approach, you can find a balance and follow the measure.'* He added: *'elements of constructive approach in journalism can be very useful. For example, when covering the topic of hacker interference in elections in the United States. In my opinion, the position of the American media is much more constructive than the reaction of the US administration and the Kremlin. They present only facts that are unpleasant to the authorities'*.

One major concern of constructive journalism advocates is the negative bias in the news. The Swedish statistician Hans Rosling argues that we can *'not trust the media to understand the world'* because it draws a too negative picture. According to him the media is *'ignorant and arrogant'* and failing to see the big picture regarding developments in a world which, he argues, is moving in a positive direction.²³⁰

²²⁹Personal conversation April 25, 2017

²³⁰Hans Rosling: *Don't use news media to understand the world (english subtitles)*. (2017). YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYnpJGaMiXo>

In fact, scholars like McIntyre (2015) or Gyldensted (2015) argue that this has harmful effects on media consumers and that especially young people turn their back to traditional news media focusing too much on negative news. Moreover Berger & Milkman (2012) argue in a study that positive content is more viral than negative content.

Despite the interviewed journalists' generally favorable view, they remain skeptical and find arguments against using a constructive journalism approach. A news reporter from Interfax puts it like this: *'yes, I think it is possible, although it deals more with news selection - which news you pick - and it is not possible with all news, I believe. And it looks not like strictly hard news for me'*. Another news reporter from Interfax was even more skeptical about constructive journalism and said *'from my point of view, constructive journalism approach is suitable only for certain types of stories - for example long reads. Some journalism formats, for example newswire, cannot adapt CJ approach'*.²³¹ A journalist from TASS news agency said s, *'it may help, but it depends on the kind of news. I think not political news'*.²³²

²³¹ Cf. Appendix 5: Interviews

²³² Cf. Appendix 5: Interviews

5. Conclusion

As journalism and society are constantly changing, emotions are becoming an increasingly important dynamic in how news are produced by media organizations and consumed by their audience. Modern-day journalism is interactive, interconnected, participatory, more open, more global, multi-platform, multilinear, producing a constant stream of data, analysis, and comment. There are studies that show the more positive the content, the more likely it is to go viral, and that the most shared stories are both positive and emotionally arousing ones. There is moreover research that shows that the excess of negative news can lead to harmful effects on the audience.

Hence, we argued that *emotion*, the positive and negative ones deserve attention, as they have always played a significant role in journalism and will continue to do so because it drives people's increasingly intimate relationships with technology and, fuels engagement with news and information, and it inspires professionals to pursue a career in an industry that offers anything but reliable for work well done.

The fact that conclusions of research studies on the negativity bias in the news from 60 years ago and from today are shared, we argue supports the notion that journalists focus predominantly on negative news. It is important to stress that the problem is not that journalists write negative-critical stories, in fact, we argue they should continue to do this and media should continue publishing them. However, we want to underline that the excess of writing and publishing negative news is problematic.

The literature review showed that most definitions state that a news frame is the verbal and visual information in an article that directly or implicitly suggests what the problem is about, how it can be addressed, and who is responsible for creating and solving it.

Frames originate with journalists and their beliefs about what constitute news topics and political reality, with the activities of people and groups who sponsor specific interpretations of issues, and with the events and cultural contexts within which they all work. Spotting frames is all about seeing the bigger picture; looking outside and beyond the frames that we find. And that can be inspiring: it can lead to larger, positive and appealing visions, which in the long term will be more effective. We find no constructive frames in the analyzed corpora and moreover some texts are arguably written in a factual, objective way but rather consist of carefully policed emotions and are a combination of political and conflict frame.

Through the lens of constructive journalism to news coverage, the editorial focus of news agencies is on both, on critical-positive and critical-negative news items. Constructive news story framing thus provides a more accurate portrayal of the world while still adhering to journalism's core functions like being a watchdog and providing information and context. Constructive journalism is a new approach that increasingly gains ground among scholars and media professionals and brings new perspectives to journalism research and practice, most significantly by applying evidence from behavioral science, including positive and moral psychology.

We defined constructive journalism as an *'emerging form of journalism that involves applying positive psychology techniques to news processes and production to create productive and engaging coverage, while holding true to journalism's core functions'* which can be used in future studies. An editor working for Interfax news agency said the following in the interview: *'elements of constructive approach in journalism can be very useful. For example, when covering the topic of hacker interference in elections in the United States.'*

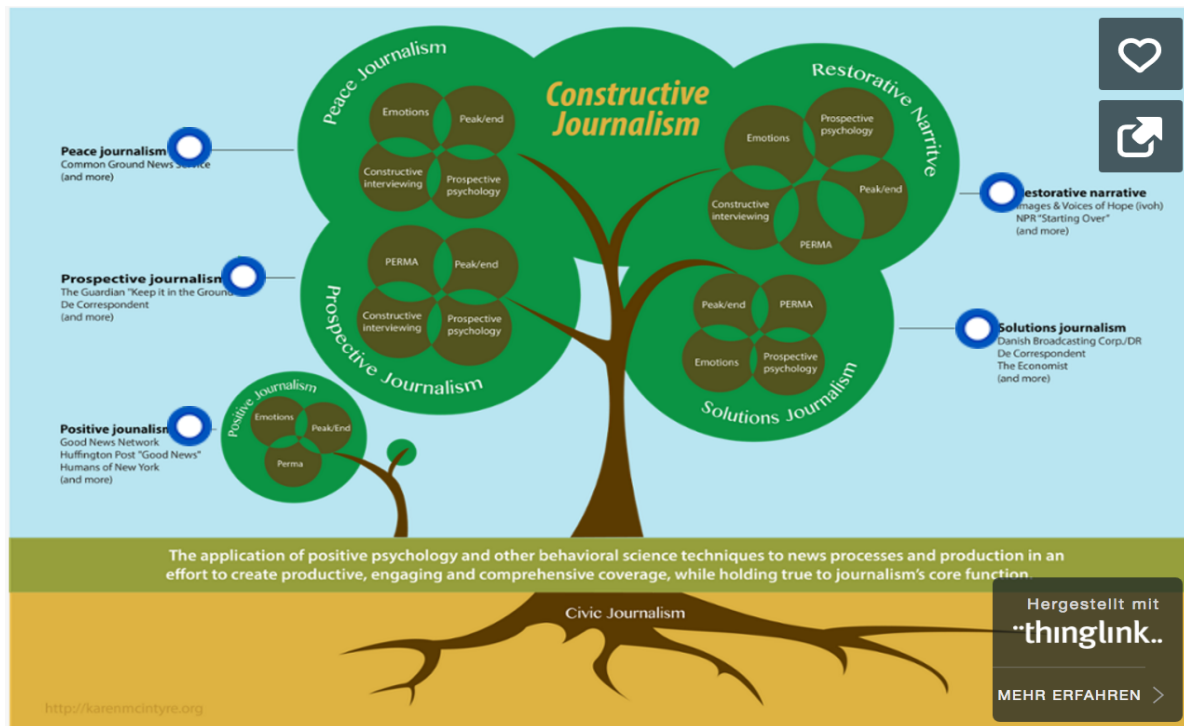
Our findings raise important questions for future research: if we look at each narrative frame alone for instance, how often did it stem from a trigger? In other words, how closely do journalists associate each frame depending on where the story originated? Moreover, in a constructive journalism approach not only evidence from positive psychology can be applied but also evidence from related fields in behavioral science for instance moral psychology.

Also in this study, we focused only on two major Russian news agencies, this study could be conducted in a way that includes more Russian news agencies, especially smaller ones. Most conducted research studies are focused on the big international news agencies including news agency giants such as AP, Reuters and AFP. Thus, as we identified this research gap it is a task of future research to further explore Russian news agencies. Moreover, given the limited resources our data sample is not representative. In future research a bigger number of articles for analysis could be taken, under a longer period of analysis including other methods, for instance a mixed-method approach using qualitative and quantitative methods for the data analysis. Furthermore, we focus on the coverage of accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. presidential election, there are however many other interesting cases like migrant workers or climate change.

For inspiration in future research also the theoretical framework of Catherine Gyldensted and Karen McIntyre (2017) could be tested. The authors conceptualized constructive journalism in their upcoming research paper, *'Constructive journalism: An introduction and practical guide for applying positive psychology techniques to news production,'* which is scheduled to be published in the Journal of Media Innovations in fall 2017.²³³ Figure 1 that follows illustrates their approach to conceptualize constructive journalism as an approach.

²³³Retrieved from <http://karenmcintyre.org/#>

Figure 1: Conceptualization of Constructive Journalism



Shortly after we interviewed journalists at TASS a new project²³⁴ was launched. The project #ДОБРОСТИ by the Russian news agency is an attempt to try out constructive news coverage the chief quality editor Andrei Lebedev explained in a personal talk and expressed interest in future research and practical consulting on constructive journalism.

However, yet, it remains to be seen if in the future, the project will be accepted by the audience, remain financially sustainable and result in constructive news and not *'fluffy feel-good news'*. The project will run under an own category on the website of TASS news agency and will be distributed in social networks like Twitter, VK and Facebook as well as messengers like Telegram, WhatsApp and Viber.

²³⁴ See the project here: <http://tass.ru/dobrosti/4218234>

In sum, we argue that this master thesis represents a contribution in the attempt to open our eyes to the central strategic role of emotions in journalism. There are various avenues for future research in this area which might offer a broader and more nuanced view of how emotion operates in journalism. This was an attempt to shed light on emotional expression in routine, everyday deadline reporting. Further, there may be significant differences between emotional story-telling regimes of ‘quality’ and ‘tabloid’ journalism, as well as across platforms, including television, radio and online. This article focused on a particular form of Russian journalism which is limited in its examination of one narrow context the news coverage of accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. presidential election, and does not do justice to the variety of professional cultures and issues around the world. The task of future research will be to address the research gaps.

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Appendix 1 - Tables

Table 1: Literature News Framing Analysis

Author	Year	Publicationtitle	Published
Capella,J.N. & Jamieson,K.H.	1997	Spiral of cynicism:The press and the public good	New York: Oxford University Press
Cohen, B.C.	1963	The press, the public, and foreign policy	Princeton:Princeton University Press
D' Angelo, P. & Kuypers, J.A.	2010	Doing News Framing Analysis. Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives	New York: Routledge
De Vreese, C. H.	2005	News Framing: Theory and typology	Information Design Journal & Document Design(13) 1
Entmann, R.M.	1993	Framing:Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm	Journal of Communication 43: 51-58
Gamson, W.A. & Modigliani	1987	The changing culture of affirmative action	In Braungart, R.G. & Braungart, M. M. (eds.) Research in political sociology. San Diego, CA: Academic Press
Gamson, W.A. & Modigliani	1989	Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach	The American Journal of Sociology 95: 1-37
Gofmann, E.	1974	Frame Analysis: An essay on the organization of experience	Cambridge: Havard University Press
Reese, S.D., Gandy, O.H. & Grant A.E.	2003	Framing public life: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World	Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum
Reese,S.D.	2007	The Framing Project: A Briging Model for Media Research Revisted	Journal of Communication 57: 148-154
Scheufele, D. A.	1999	Framing as a theory of media effects	Journal of Communication Winter 1999: 103-122
Semtko, H.A. & Valkenburg, P.M.	2000	Framing European Politics: A content analysis of press and television news	Journal of Commucation 50 (2): 93-109
Tuchmann, G.	1978	Making news. A study of construction of reality	New York: Free Press
Van Gorp, B.	2007	The constructionist approach of framing:Bringing culture back in	Journal of Communication 57 (1)

Table 2: Definition of similar approaches

Approach	Definition	Sources
Constructive Journalism	an emerging style of journalism in which positive psychology and other behavioral science techniques are applied to news processes and production with the aim of engaging readers by creating more productive news stories, all while maintaining core journalistic functions like serving as a watchdog and remaining accountable'.	Cathrine Gyldensted (2015). From Mirrors to Movers: Five Elements of Positive Psychology in Constructive Journalism. Ggroup Publishing
Positive Journalism	of journalists and writers covering stories from a more positive side, often showcasing the highlights and good factors of a story or headline'	https://www.peopleof.london/blog/2016/5/16/jodie-jackson-presents-publish-the-positive
Solutions Journalism	rigorous and compelling reporting about responses to social problems	Curry, Alexander L., and Keith H. Hammonds. "The power of solutions journalism." Solutions Journalism Network 7 (2014)
Peace Journalism	tries to depolarize by showing the black and white of all sides, and to de-escalate by highlighting peace and conflict resolution as much as violence. How successfully has to be seen, but changing the discourse within which something is thought, spoken of and acted upon is a very powerful approach	Galtung, J., Fischer, D., & Fischer, D. (2013), p.99. Johan Galtung: Pioneer of peace research.Springer

Appendix 2 - Figures

Figure 1

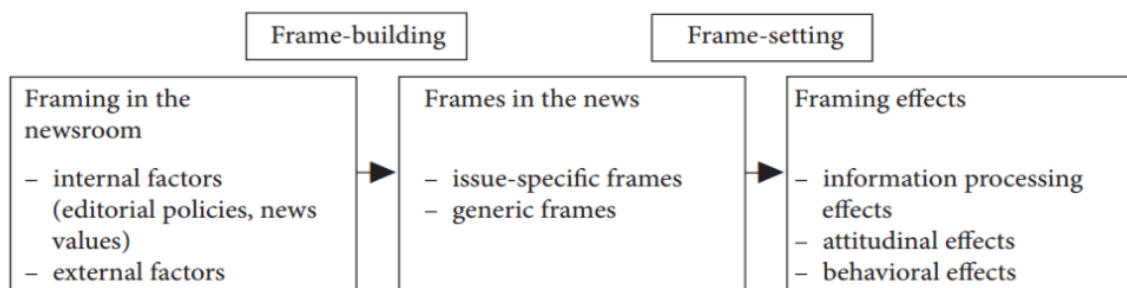
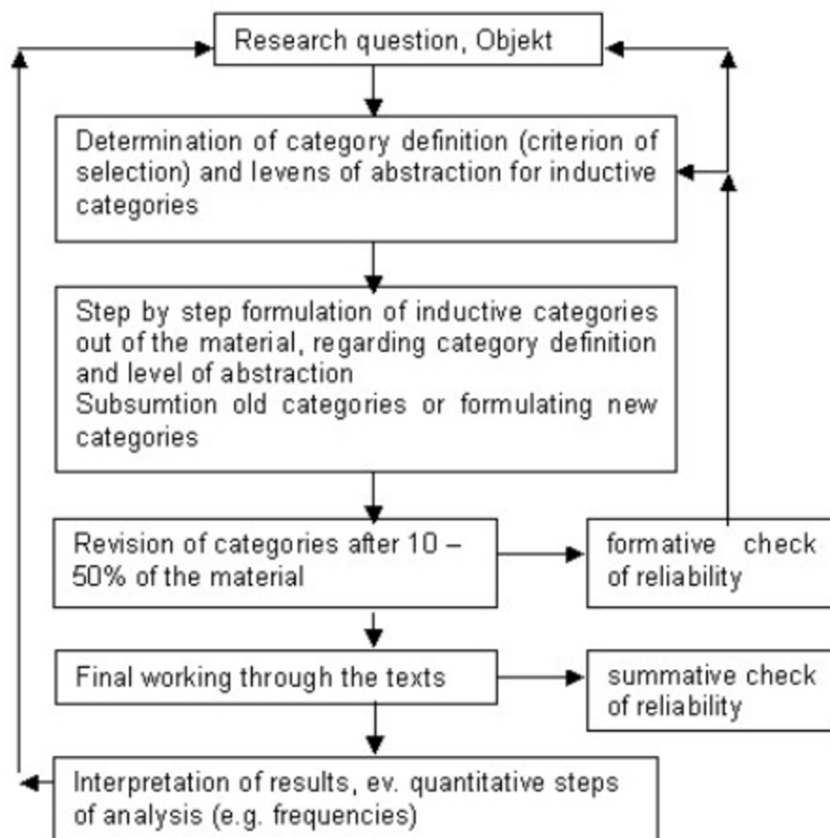


Figure 2



Appendix 3 – Case

A case is generally a *'bounded entity (a person, organization, behavior, condition, event, or other special phenomenon), but the boundary between the case and its contextual conditions—in both spatial and temporal dimensions—may be blurred'*.²³⁵ In this study, we focus on a particular event and how it is covered during a certain period of time by journalists working in two Russian news agencies: TASS and Interfax.

Hence, we will briefly have a closer look at the case which serves as the main unit of analysis: *'Hacking incidents during the 2016 US presidential campaign and allegations by the US that the Russian government meddled in the election'*. What follows is a timeline of key events relevant to the news framing analysis of online news about the Russian Hacking in the US election:

June 14, 2016 - The Washington Post reports hackers working for the Russian government accessed the Democratic National Committee's (DNC) computer system, stealing oppositional research on Donald Trump and viewing staffers' emails and chat exchanges. The Kremlin, however, denies that the government was linked to the hack.²³⁶

²³⁵Cf. Yin, R. K. (2012), p.6. *Applications of case study research*. New York: Sage Publications

²³⁶Cf. Ellen Nakashima. Russian government hackers penetrated DNC, stole opposition research on Trump. (2016, June 14). *Washington Post*, retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/russian-government-hackers-penetrated-dnc-stole-opposition-research-on-trump/2016/06/14/cf006cb4-316e-11e6-8ff7-7b6c1998b7a0_story.html?utm_term=.a5e30e8529a9

June 15, 2016 - A cybersecurity firm hired by the DNC posts a public notice on its website describing an attack on the political committee's computer network by two groups associated with Russian intelligence. According to the post, two Russian-backed groups called "Cozy Bear" and "Fancy Bear" tunneled into the committee's computer system. In response, a blogger called Guccifer 2.0 claims that he alone conducted the hack, not the Russians. As proof, he posts internal DNC memos and opposition research on Trump. Furthermore, Guccifer 2.0 claims to have passed along thousands of files to WikiLeaks. Trump offers his own theory on the origins of the attack: suggesting in a statement that the DNC hacked itself to distract from Hillary Clinton's email scandal.²³⁷

July 22, 2016 - Days before the Democratic National Convention, WikiLeaks posts nearly 20,000 emails hacked from the DNC server. The documents include notes in which DNC chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz insults staffers from the Bernie Sanders campaign and messages that suggest the organization was favoring Clinton rather than remaining neutral. Wasserman Schultz resigns in the aftermath of the leak.²³⁸

July 25, 2016 - The FBI announces it has launched an investigation into the DNC hack. Although the statement doesn't indicate that the agency has a suspect or suspects in mind, US officials tell CNN they think the cyberattack is linked to Russia.²³⁹

²³⁷ Cf. Dmitri Alperovitch. *Bears in the Midst: Intrusion into the Democratic National Committee* (2016, June 15). *Crowdstrike Blog*, retrieved from <https://www.crowdstrike.com/blog/bears-midst-intrusion-democratic-national-committee/>

²³⁸ WikiLeaks. Search the DNC email database. (2016, June 16). *Wikileaks Database*, retrieved <https://wikileaks.org/dnc-emails/>

²³⁹ Cf. Nick Gass. FBI probing DNC hack Retrieved (June 25, 2016). *Politico*, retrieved from <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/07/fbi-dnc-226123>

July 27, 2016 - During a press conference, Trump declares Russia may have hacked the State Department. He connects the suspected Russian cyberattack on the DNC to Clinton's use of a private email server while she was Secretary of State.²⁴⁰

August 12, 2016 - Hackers publish cell phone numbers and personal email addresses for Nancy Pelosi and other members of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.²⁴¹

September 1, 2016 - During an interview with Bloomberg News, President Vladimir Putin says that he and the Russian government have no ties to the hackers.²⁴² He says that the identity of the culprit or culprits is not as important as the content of the leaks, and ultimately the hackers revealed important information for voters.

September 22, 2016 - Democrats Dianne Feinstein and Adam Schiff, ranking members of the Senate and House Intelligence Committees, issue a joint statement declaring that based on information they received during congressional briefings, they believe that Russian intelligence agencies are carrying out a plan to interfere with the election. They call on Putin to order a halt to the activities.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Ashley Parker and David E. Sanger. Donald Trump Calls on Russia to Find Hillary Clinton's Missing Emails (July 26, 2016). *New York Times*, retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/28/us/politics/donald-trump-russia-clinton-emails.html?_r=0

²⁴¹ Khaleda Rahman. The Democrats are hacked AGAIN: Private phone number of EVERY House Democrat is posted online by 'Russian' hacker after leak of DNC emails and cyber-attack on Hillary. (August 13, 2016). *Daily Mail*, retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3738270/Hacker-gave-DNC-emails-WikiLeaks-publishes-phone-numbers-Democrat-House-Representatives.html>

²⁴² Jake Rudnitsky, John Micklethwait and Michael Riley. Putin Says DNC Hack Was a Public Service, Russia Didn't Do It. (September 2, 2016). *Bloomberg*, retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2016-09-02/putin-says-dnc-hack-was-a-public-good-but-russia-didn-t-do-it>

²⁴³ Greg Miller. Key lawmakers accuse Russia of campaign to disrupt U.S. election. (September 22, 2016). *Washington Post*, retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/key-lawmakers-accuse-russia-of-campaign-to-disrupt-us-election/2016/09/22/afc9fc80-810e-11e6-b002-307601806392_story.html?utm_term=.c710a4205dec

September 26, 2016 - During a presidential debate with Clinton, Trump questions whether the DNC cyberattack was carried out by a state-sponsored group or a lone hacker.²⁴⁴

October-November 2016 - Over the course of a month, WikiLeaks publishes more than 58,000 messages hacked from the account of John Podesta, Clinton's campaign chairman.²⁴⁵

October 6, 2016 - DCLeaks, a self-described collective of "hacktivists" seeking to expose the influence of special interests on elected officials, publishes a batch of documents stolen from Clinton ally Capricia Marshall.²⁴⁶

October 7, 2016 - The Department of Homeland Security and the Office of National Intelligence on Election Security issues a statement declaring that the intelligence community is '*confident that the Russian Government directed the recent compromises of emails from US persons and institutions*'.

According to the statement, document releases on websites WikiLeaks and DC Leaks mirror the methods and motivations of past Russian-directed cyberattacks.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴Cf. No Author. Trump says US cyber-attacks could have been committed by a 400-pound person "sitting on a bed". (September 26, 2016). Quartz, retrieved from <https://qz.com/792462/presidential-debate-donald-trump-says-cyber-attacks-on-the-us-could-have-been-committed-by-a-400-pound-person-sitting-on-a-bed/>

²⁴⁵Cf. Steve Eder. Julian Assange Releases More Emails and Defends WikiLeaks' Mission. (8 November 2016). *New York Times*, retrieved from, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/09/us/politics/julian-assange-wikileaks-emails.html>

²⁴⁶Cf. Sheera. Meet Fancy Bear. (October 15, 2016) *Buzzfeed*, retrieved from https://www.buzzfeed.com/sheerafrenkel/meet-fancy-bear-the-russian-group-hacking-the-us-election?utm_term=.yuGI3ZBBV#.bwnq54KKp

²⁴⁷Cf. No Author. Joint Statement from the Department of Homeland Security and Office of the Director of National Intelligence on Election Security. (October 6, 2016). *DHS*, retrieved from <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/10/07/joint-statement-department-homeland-security-and-office-director-national>

November 29, 2016 - A group of Democratic senators sends a letter to President Barack Obama calling on intelligence agencies to declassify information about "the Russian Government and the US election."²⁴⁸

December 9, 2016 - The Washington Post reports the CIA has determined that Russian hacking was conducted to boost Trump and hurt Clinton during the presidential campaign. President Obama asks intelligence agencies to review the hacking incidents in 2016 and other cyberattacks on political campaigns dating back to 2008. The agencies are asked to deliver their findings before Obama leaves office on January 20. A Russian foreign ministry spokesman expresses skepticism about the review and asks US investigators to share their evidence of government-sponsored cyber espionage. Meanwhile, media critics question the Post's reliance on anonymous sources for the CIA report and advise readers to be wary of claims in the article due to the lack of publicly available evidence to support the spy agency's conclusions.²⁴⁹

December 29, 2016 - President Obama issues an executive order with sanctions against Russia. The order names six Russian individuals who allegedly took part in the presidential campaign hacking. Additionally, 35 Russian diplomats are ordered to leave the US within 72 hours.

January 3, 2017 - Julian Assange of WikiLeaks says that the Russian government did not provide him with the hacked DNC emails the Guardian reports.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸Cf. Spencer Ackerman. Senators call for declassification of files on Russia's role in US election. (December 1, 2016). *The Guardian*, retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/30/senators-hint-russian-interference-us-presidential-election>

²⁴⁹Cf. Adam Entous, Ellen Nakashima and Greg Miller. Secret CIA assessment says Russia was trying to help Trump win White House. (December 9, 2016). *Washington Post*, retrieved from, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/obama-orders-review-of-russian-hacking-during-presidential-campaign/2016/12/09/31d6b300-be2a-11e6-94ac-3d324840106c_story.html

²⁵⁰Cf. Michelle Ye Hee Lee. Julian Assange's claim that there was no Russian involvement in WikiLeaks emails. (January 5, 2016). *Washington Post*, retrieved from

January 3-4, 2017 - In a series of tweets, Trump questions the US intelligence community's claims that the Russian government interfered with the election. He alleges that intelligence officials have delayed a scheduled meeting with him. Trump also cites Assange's interview to back his assertion that a rogue hacker, not the Russian government, may have meddled in the election.²⁵¹

January 5-6, 2017 - Intelligence officials meet separately with Obama and Trump to present the results of their probe into cyber espionage during the presidential campaign.

After the president and the president-elect are briefed, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence releases a declassified version of the report. According to the report, hackers did not breach voting machines or computers that tallied election results but Russians meddled in other ways.²⁵²

January 6-7, 2017 - Trump issues a statement after his meeting with intelligence officials. In the statement, he acknowledges that the Russian government may have been linked to the DNC hacking but declares that cyberattacks did not impact the outcome of the election because voting machines were not breached. In a series of tweets, he repeats that hacking did not affect election results and says that he wants to improve relations with Russia.²⁵³

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2017/01/05/julian-assanges-claim-that-there-was-no-russian-involvement-in-wikileaks-emails/?utm_term=.d21781e9e5b0

²⁵¹Cf. No Author. Kremlin Denies Putin 'Ordered' U.S. Election Interference. (January 3, 2017). *Rferl*, retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/a/russia-us-trump-again-denies-e-mail-hacking/28213558.html>

²⁵²Cf. Spencer Ackerman, Julian Borger and David Smith. Trump meets with intelligence leaders after calling Russia case 'witch-hunt'. (January 6, 2017). *The Guardian*, retrieved from, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/06/donald-trump-russia-hacking-meeting-intelligence-officials>

²⁵³Cf. *The Guardian* (Op. cit.)

January 20, 2017 - Donald J Trump has capped the day of his inauguration with dancing and celebrating, hours after being sworn in as the 45th President of America with a vow to rebuild the country using '*American hands*'.²⁵⁴

Appendix 4 - Coding Instructions

Coding Instructions

1. General Information

Case: Accusations of Russian Hacking in U.S. presidential election

News Frame Analysis Collection Sheet

This codebook contains the frames and instructions for open coding

It is used in conjunction with the Software MAXQDA on which the actual answers are recorded.

Articles that mention the Russian Hacking in the US election in passing—but are not specifically about it—should not be coded

2. Selecting which articles must be coded

All articles about Accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. presidential election published by TASS and Interfax in the period between June 14 2016 and January 20 2017.

²⁵⁴Cf. Barney Henderson and Chris Graham. Donald Trump inauguration: President returns Winston Churchill bust to Oval Office before dancing My Way at inaugural ball. (January 20, 2017). *Telegraph*, retrieved from, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/01/20/president-donald-trump-gets-work-immediately-inauguration-day/>

Table of Content

1. City, Country where the article was published
3. News Agency in which the article appeared
4. Date of the coverage
5. Genre (type of story)
6. Topic of the article (Headline)
6. Lead
8. Story impetus
9. Story source
10. Size of article (Number of Paragraphs)
11. Type of sources quoted
12. Specific sources quoted
13. What does the article indicate is the main fundamental root of the hacking? [Roots of the hacking]
14. Who does the article indicate should bear the main responsibility to solve the problem?
15. What does the article indicate should be the main specific mechanism for response to the crisis?
16. What does the article indicate should be the primary broader response needed to the hacking?
- 17a) What country or region is portrayed in the article?
- 17b) Who does the article indicate primarily suffers or will suffer (politically) from the the hacking?
- 19) What country or region is depicted as primarily suffering the identified consequences of the hacking?
20. Keywords (The order of the words in the list does not indicate a hierarchy)
 - a. Russia
 - b. Russian
 - c. Democratic
 - d. Democrats
 - e. Republican
 - f. Republicans
 - g. Trump
 - h. Putin
 - i. Obama
 - j. Lavrov
 - k. Zakharova
 - l. White House
 - m. Kreml
 - n. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
 - o. Democratic National Committee (DNS)
 - p. Hackers
 - q. Hacking
 - r. Email(s)
 - s. Server(s)
 - t. FBI
 - u. FSB

- v. (Cyber) crime
- w. (Cyber) attack

21. Vocabularies

21a. Conflict

- a. accusing
- b. smash
- c. non-sense
- d. absurd
- e. attack
- f. attacking
- g. crime

21b. Political

- a. statement
- b. president
- c. government
- d. officials
- e. Republican(s)
- f. Democratic(s)
- g. Congress
- h. State(Duma)
- i. Embassy
- j. Diplomat(s)
- k. Foreign Ministry
- l. Foreign minister
- m. Kremlin
- n. White House

21c. Technical

- a. cyber
- b. email(s)
- c. server
- d. hacking
- e. Hackers

21d. Constructive

- a. solving
- b. find a solution
- c. engaging
- d. discussing
- e. clear up
- f. explain
- g. clarify
- h. decide
- i. reason(s)
- j. perspective(s)

21. Identity the main frames of the article (primary and secondary) based on technological and rhetorical devices

- a. Conflict
- b. Political
- c. Technical
- d. Constructive

Appendix 5 - Interviews

Sample Letter of Consent

Consent to Participate in Research

Title of Study:

CONSTRUCTIVE JOURNALISM:

- THE EFFECTS OF USING POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY TO CREATE NARRATIVES IN
MODERN-DAY JOURNALISM IN RUSSIA

Introduction and Purpose:

My name is Andreas Rossbach. I am a student at the Freie Universität in Berlin and St Petersburg State University in the Double Master of Arts Programme Global Communication and International Journalism. I would like to invite you to take part in my research study, which aims to explore the attitudes of Russian journalists towards a constructive journalism approach.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in my research, I will conduct an interview with you at a time and location of your choice. It should last about one hour. With your permission, I will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide, and will be used for transcription purposes only. If you choose not to be audiotaped, I will take notes instead. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, I can turn off the recorder at your request. Or if you don't wish to continue, you can stop the interview at any time.

I expect to conduct only one interview; however, follow-ups may be needed for added clarification. If so, I will contact you by mail/phone to request this.

Benefits:

There is no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study. However, It is hoped that the research will contribute to journalism research and practice.

Risks/Discomforts:

Some of the research questions may make you uncomfortable or upset. You are free to decline to answer any questions you don't wish to, or to stop the interview at any time. As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, we are taking precautions to minimize this risk.

Confidentiality:

Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. If results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used unless you give explicit permission for this below. To minimize the risks to confidentiality, we will take data security, e.g., storage, coding, encryption, limited access to study records, etc. When the research is completed, I may save the tapes and notes for use in future research done by myself or others. I will retain these records for up to 5 months after the study is over. The same measures described above will be taken to protect confidentiality of this study data. Or if different, give accurate information about retention and use of study data in future, e.g. & quotes I will destroy the tapes and notes at the end of the study.

Compensation:

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Rights:

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to take part in the project. You can decline to answer any questions and are free to stop taking part in the project at any time. Whether you choose to participate in the research and whether you choose to answer a question or continue participating in the project, there will be no penalty to you or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Questions:

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at andreas.rossbach@live.de

CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your own records.

If you wish to participate in this study, please sign and date below.

Participant & Name (please print)

Participant & Signature Date

[Optional/ If applicable]

If you agree to allow your name or other identifying information to be included in all final reports, publications, and/or presentations resulting from this research, please sign and date below.

Sample Interview Guide for Journalists

FIELD NOTES

The research method is semi-structured interview, face-to face with editors. The interview with the journalist will be conducted privately via skype and only with the respondent's consent. There are various ways to ensure the anonymity of the respondent – not revealing the name and the social characteristics of the particular media outlet in the publication or the name of the region. The researcher will not use methods and procedures, which could damage the respondent in any way including his/her reputation. If a respondent refuse to be interviewed, the researcher should in no way penalize the respondent. The main goal of this interview to explore the attitudes of journalists towards constructive journalism. It will last at least one hour.

A1 Interview code:

interviewer code:

A2 Classify the respondent's rank according to the following categories:

Senior manager (e.g. editor in chief, managing editor)	1
Junior manager (e.g. desk head, department head, senior editor)	2
Non-management staff (e.g. reporter, news writer)	3
Other (e.g. freelance or foreign correspondent)	4

A3 Start date of interview:(format: dd.mm.yy)

A4 Start time of interview:(format: hh:mm, 24hrs)

A5 Respondent's location: Office 1
Home 2
Other 3

START OF INTERVIEW

1. Basic Information

1.1 Gender:

1.2 Name and surname (or, in case of preserving anonymity, pseudonym):

1.3 Date of birth: (Month/Day/Year)

1.4 What is now your education level now?

1.5 Year of entering journalism:

1.6 Your specialization in the media you currently work in:

1.7 In a very short way, could you please tell of your previous jobs and these editorial offices (starting from your early career)

1.8 In which form are you hired: are you on a full-time tenure-office position or on a contractual time-limited basis? If you have a contract, for how long? Do you work full time? Is your salary fixed or hour-per-hour?

2. Open Questions: Working conditions

2.1 Which technological changes have occurred in the recent years in your editorial office?

2.2 Did they influence the profession?

2.3 Do you use accountability instruments in your news organization? (e.g code of ethics)

3. Open Questions: Professionalism and Ethics

3.1 Who can in your opinion consider him- or herself a professional in journalist? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

3.2 Which most non-professional features may a journalist have?

3.3 Do you consider ethical principles as important?

3.4 What are the the three core functions that journalists should perform according to you?

4. Open Questions Political issues

4.1 Does the media outlet you work for belong to one certain political camp?

4.2 Do you agree that the political divisions on the Russian media market have intensified lately? If yes, when exactly? What factors fostered it?

4.3 Do your own political views complicate you work in any way? Or, maybe, vice versa?

4.4 Are you a member of a political party?

4.5 Are you a member of an NGO?

4.6 What is your attitude towards political protest in our city and in the country?

4.7 Have you ever felt political pressure cast upon you by the shared political opinion in the editorial office? How big is your freedom to express views, including the views that differ from those of the editorship?

4.8 Have you ever witnessed self-censorship in your media outlet? Self-censorship is when some journalistic piece is being altered or rejected for publication on political grounds, but without direct instructions from anyone outside the editorial staff

4.9 What is, for you personally, more valuable for you in politics – stability or the aspiration for change?

4.10 What is, for you personally, more important in politics – reaching consensus or having or competition of voices?

5. Open Questions News Selection

5.1 What makes a story newsworthy? Potential news stories must generally satisfy one and preferably more requirements. On a scale 1 (not important) 5 (very important) how important are the following news criteria? Explain also why you consider the criteria more or less important.

- (1) Surprise: Exclusivity:
- (2) Relevance to the audience:
- (3) Shareability:
- (4) Entertainment:
- (5) Negativity (conflicts, drama, scandals etc.):
- (6) Good News (solutions, success, etc.):
- (7) News Agency's own Agenda

5.2 Do you agree or disagree with this statement? and why?

There is a negativity bias in news selection. Negative news are more often selected than Positive News

5.3 Selecting both negative critical and positive critical news stories would result in a more accurate portrayal of the world?

5.4 Which sources do you use for selection of news? (e.g. Press releases, social media, databases etc.?)

6. Audience

6.1 How could you describe an average user of your media outlet? Maybe you know the mean age and gender of your audience?

6.2 What are, in general, political preferences of your audience? Can you tell they correspond with yours?

6.3 Do you think the emotions of your audience plays an significant role? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

7. Attitude towards constructive journalism

Short introduction:

Constructive journalism is an emerging domain within journalism that is gaining ground within academia. It is based around reporting solution-focused news, instead of revolving only around negative and conflict-based stories. The idea behind constructive journalism is to give stories more context and make the consumer of the news more intelligent. By giving more background and also reporting what is going good, so that people are more able to create a realistic view of the world.

7.1 Have you heard about this approach before?

7.2 What do you think, is it still possible to do critical news stories choosing a constructive frame? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

7.3 A constructive approach to journalism could help to portray the world more accurately. Do you agree?

7.4 Would you consider using a constructive approach in news coverage?

8. Outlook

8.1 Which are the three key roles that journalists should perform in the future?

8.3 What do you think, which roles will journalists perform in reality?

8.4 Will emotion play an important role in the future of journalism?

B1 End date of interview: (format: dd.mm. yy)

B2 End time of interview: (format: hh:mm, 24hrs)

Please note any obstacle during the interview.

END OF INTERVIEW

Follow Up Questions

1) Now that you learned about the approach of constructive journalism, could you in general imagine taking a constructive approach to news coverage?

2) When covering certain issues, for instances 'accusations of Russian hacking' it could be helpful to provide more context in a story, provide solutions (both elements of a constructive journalism approach) ? What do you think?

3) Do you feel that the news coverage about 'accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. election' is constructive? Or rather negative, lacking context, various perspectives and solutions?

Transcription 1 - TASS

A1 Interview code: 001

interviewer code: Andreas Rossbach

A2 Classify the respondent's rank according to the following categories:

Other: foreign correspondent London, UK

4

A3 Start date of interview: 20.4.2017

A4 Start time of interview: 20:11

A5 Respondent's location: **Home**

START OF INTERVIEW

1. Basic Information

1.1 Gender:

Male

1.2 Name and surname (or, in case of preserving anonymity, pseudonym):

Igor Brovarnik

1.3 Date of birth:

13.4.1987

1.4 What is now your education level now?

Higher scientific Diploma International Journalism, Moscow State University

1.5 Year of entering journalism:

In 2008, I entered journalism

1.6 Your specialization in the media you currently work in:

I am specialized in foreign news, but I cover general news and politics too

1.7 In a very short way, could you please tell of your previous jobs and these editorial offices (starting from your early career)

I have worked as an editor for Smart Money Magazine from 2008 to 2009, then the magazine unfortunately collapsed. In 2009, I started working for TASS news agency, first as trainee for three months, then I became an editor at the foreign news desk. Then a few years later I worked as a foreign correspondent in Bulgaria from 2011 to 2013. After my contract finished I came back to Moscow, worked there for some time at the foreign news desk again and then was sent to London to work as foreign correspondent in 2015. Since then I work as a foreign correspondent in London, UK.

1.8 In which form are you hired: are you on a full-time tenure-office position or on a contractual time-limited basis? If you have a contract, for how long? Do you work full time? Is your salary fixed or hour-per-hour?

I am not allowed to reveal specific details about my contract, but I work full-time on a contract basis with fixed salary.

2. Open Questions: Working conditions

2.1 Which technological changes have occurred in the recent years in your editorial office?

Yes, there have been technological changes during the recent years. We are using a Cross-Media approach, pictures, videos and text combined. We use messengers, for example Telegram, Whatsapp and Viber to spread news. And a lot of other innovative tools International news agencies use nowadays. There are people responsible for technology, I am not an expert.

2.2 Did they influence the profession?

Yes, sure with my colleagues we communicate via messenger, like Telegram, Viber and WhatsApp. We also use social media to distribute our news.

2.3 Do you use accountability instruments in your news organization? (e.g. code of ethics)

Before publishing information, we check it out. For example, when Reuters news agency published some news and I have some doubts then I need to first check it, wait for some official reaction, call some expert. So, I always should be critical about information. Especially if it's unofficial information. We never use 'according to sources', we name sources. I always name sources, that's my position. I think we should have something like standards for our work at TASS.

3. Open Questions: Professionalism and Ethics

3.1 Who can in your opinion consider him- or herself a professional in journalist? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

Someone who finished journalism faculty like me, I think it was very good education. I can tell you some words from my lectures, a profession journalist, is someone who can compare different point of views and who can use the information from this point of views and can make his own decision to write the story which reflects all sides. So, you get a comment from one side and then also from the other side. For example, I covered the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 when the previous government collapsed and was overthrown as you remember. Then the Ukrainian media changed a lot, I saw it because I liked Ukrainian media before this so-called revolution, but during these events they changed so drastically and they changed so fantastically, I mean the bad change and they started to cover first just one side, they covered government are bad, they are killing people, they are beating people and so on and nobody presented the other view. And I think the real situation was, that people were lost because they did not understand what was happening in their country. I think it was just manipulating, you know it is easy to manipulate, you don't have to have higher education to manipulate information, it's very easy. It's much more difficult to give the object information to people. The quality of journalism, and I mean around the world is very low now.

3.2 Which most non-professional features may a journalist have?

The most unprofessional characteristic it's when you can't guarantee the quality of the information, I think that is really, bad. What is this, it means, when you see something in the internet for example, many media how they do, they see the news for example from the media which is not good, or not trusted media and they don't want to double check the information and if you can't check the information you are a bad journalist. This is my opinion.

3.3 Do you consider ethical principles as important?

Yes sure, they are very important to hold journalists accountable. Truth and accuracy is important, information should be true and it should be trusted. We should always strive for accuracy, give all the relevant facts we have and ensure that they have been checked. A sure sign of professionalism and responsible journalism is the ability to hold ourselves accountable. When we commit errors, we must correct them. I learned in university that journalists should do no harm. What we publish or broadcast may be hurtful, but we should be aware of the impact of our words and images on the lives of others.

3.4 What are the three core functions that journalists should perform according to you?

To provide analysis of current affairs. Yes it's very good thing and it's part of journalism, if it's a good analysis, where you can include 2 sides for example or three sides or four sides, so analysis is very good and people like to read analytical stories with some sort of analysis because maybe they have their own views and they can compare their views with the views.

That the journalists present and could make maybe a new decision or generate new views, it's very good I think. Provide information people need to make political decisions that is important too, we provide information and based on that decisions are made. Monitor and scrutinize political leaders. If you work for a conservative newspaper and support conservative politicians it's ok but it's not journalism. Journalists should not support anybody. A journalist should criticize and he should have a critical view. There are no ideal people in the world, so you should have a critical view on people. To support political figures is not journalism, it's agitation, campaigning or something like this

4. Open Questions Political issues

4.1 Does the media outlet you work for belong to one certain political camp?

I personally don't feel that my news agency belongs to a political camp, I am working as a free journalist. I also feel that TASS news agency is independent, even if it belongs to the state.

4.2 Do you agree that the political divisions on the Russian media market have intensified lately? If yes, when exactly? What factors fostered it?

I cannot say anything about this, as I am working abroad

4.3 Do your own political views complicate your work in any way? Or, maybe, vice versa?

No, they don't. But if they would, one has always has a choice, if you don't agree with the editorial you can change your job. We are working so fast that you can't express any political views, you have no time to support any political view because you should write news.

4.4 Are you a member of a political party?

No I am not, a journalist should not be a member of a party

4.5 Are you a member of an NGO?

No, I am also not a member of an NGO

4.6 What is your attitude towards political protest in our city and in the country?

I don't live in Russia, I can not answer this question

4.7 Have you ever felt political pressure cast upon you by the shared political opinion in the editorial office? How big is your freedom to express views, including the views that differ from those of the editorship?

No. That's it.

4.8 Have you ever witnessed self-censorship in your media outlet? Self-censorship is when some journalistic piece is being altered or rejected for publication on political grounds, but without direct instructions from anyone outside the editorial staff

No.

4.9 What is, for you personally, more valuable for you in politics – stability or the aspiration for change?

Political stability is more important I think.

4.10 What is, for you personally, more important in politics – reaching consensus or having or competition of voices?

To reach consensus is a good thing.

5. Open Questions News Selection

5.1 What makes a story newsworthy? Potential news stories must generally satisfy one and preferably more requirements. On a scale 1 (not important) 5 (very important) how important are the following news criteria? Explain also why you consider the criteria important

- (1) Surprise: 4
- (2) Exclusivity: 5
- (3) Relevance to the audience: 4
- (4) Shareability: 3
- (5) Entertainment: 4
- (6) Negativity (conflicts, drama, scandals etc.): 4
- (7) Positiveness (solutions, success, etc.): 3
- (7) News organization's own agenda: 3

5.2 Do you agree or disagree with this statement? and why?

There is a negativity bias in news selection. Negative news is more often selected than Positive News

Unfortunately, yes, many people find negative news more interesting.

5.3 Selecting both negative critical and positive critical news stories would result in a more accurate portrayal of the world?

Yes, it may help, but it depends on the kind of news. I think not political news.

5.4 Which sources do you use for selection of news? (e.g. Press releases, social media, databases etc.?)

Reports by news agencies, like Reuters UK for example but also, I contact official resources, I go to events, yeah that are the most important.

6. Audience

6.1 How could you describe an average user of your media outlet? Maybe you know the mean age and gender of your audience?

I think men, 35-40 years old on average with university degree

6.2 What are, in general, political preferences of your audience? Can you tell they correspond with yours?

I don't have any information about this, so I can just guess, next question.

6.3 Do you think the emotions of your audience plays a significant role? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

I don't have time to consider the emotions of my audience because I am publishing the news. The news must be fast and accurate.

7. Attitude towards constructive journalism

Short introduction:

Constructive journalism is an emerging domain within journalism that is gaining ground within academia. It is based around reporting solution-focused news, instead of revolving only around negative and conflict-based stories. The idea behind constructive journalism is to give stories more context and make the consumer of the news more intelligent. By giving more background and also reporting what is going good, so that people are more able to create a realistic view of the world.

7.1 Have you heard about this approach before?

Yes, I have heard about it, it's about telling positive stories, right?

7.2 What do you think, is it still possible to do critical news stories choosing a constructive frame? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

I think it is possible, but it depends on the media and what you write about, it only works for media that works with a specific audience.

7.3 A constructive approach to journalism could help to portray the world more accurately. Do you agree?

Yes, I think one should accumulate the whole range of information and present it in a story, but it is important to remember that critical approach should be combined with objectivity as well.

7.4 Would you consider using a constructive approach in news coverage?

I could imagine using the approach, but it depends on the media, for example if you have a magazine for teenagers you should place there very specific news, if you have a magazine for traders or financial managers, you should place different range news and different information there. So, I think it very depends on the media, for example if you have a financial magazine, you can't think about positive or negative things, because your readers want to have a story with positive and negative aspects, so neutral coverage.

Overall all I think it is not news agency's work to make a story constructive but a journalist's work.

8. Outlook

8.1 Which are the three key roles that journalists should perform in the future?

People can compare media content, they have a big choice, journalists must provide quality information.

The old-school journalism should survive, so watchdog, disseminator of information and set public agenda.

8.3 What do you think, which roles will journalists perform in reality?

He will be gatekeeper.

8.4 Will emotion play an important role in the future of journalism?

It always has played and will.

B1 End date of interview: 20.4.2017

B2 End time of interview: 21:30

Please note any obstacle during the interview.

No obstacles could be identified during the interview

Follow Up Questions

1) Now that you learned about the approach of constructive journalism, could you in general imagine taking a constructive approach to news coverage?

I just give you a simple example. I covered Immortal regiment in London yesterday. I think you know about it. So, I tried to add to my coverage more reaction from the ordinary people who came to participate in that. I interviewed people from former USSR countries, Bulgaria, Greece etc. Meanwhile my colleague in Moscow focused on bad weather there and made it the main theme of the story. I think it is not quite right decision because you can find so many positive thing and write about them first because people knew that the weather was bad, just give them the information which could be useful for them. So, I welcome constructive approach within the modern journalism.

2) When covering certain issues, for instances 'accusations of Russian hacking' it could be helpful to provide more context in a story, provide solutions (both elements of a constructive journalism approach)? What do you think?

As concerns 'accusations of Russian hacking', my opinion is simple. Give the facts to your audience, if you can't, and if you are going to publish the story based on speculations and gossips, it means you just don't respect your readers.

3) Do you feel that the news coverage about 'accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. election' is constructive? Or rather negative, lacking context, various perspectives and solutions?

I can't say in detail how US media present these allegations to its audience because I look after the British media. But I see that more often people laugh when they hear about omnipresence Russian hackers. That's a good example how media can damage their own reputation.

END OF TRANSCRIPTION 1 – TASS

Transcription 2 - TASS

A1 Interview code: 002

interviewer code: Andreas Rossbach

A2 Classify the respondent's rank according to the following categories:

Other: freelance reporter

4

A3 Start date of interview: 26.4.2017

A4 Start time of interview: 16:00

A5 Respondent's location: **University**

START OF INTERVIEW

1. Basic Information

1.1 Gender:

Female

1.2 Name and surname (or, in case of preserving anonymity, pseudonym):

Sacha Borissova

1.3 Date of birth:

17.7 1986

1.4 What is now your education level now?

Scientific degree: PHD Physical Chemistry Academy of Sciences; Moscow

1.5 Year of entering journalism:

2008

1.6 Your specialization in the media you currently work in:

Science mainly but also general news.

1.7 In a very short way, could you please tell of your previous jobs and these editorial offices (starting from your early career)

Since 2008 at gazeta.ru. news reporter, then science journalist, then editor of news department, till 2014, then I lost my job and started at TASS

1.8 In which form are you hired: are you on a full-time tenure-office position or on a

contractual time-limited basis? If you have a contract, for how long? Do you work full time? Is your salary fixed or hour-per-hour?

I was an editor in chief because I worked as head of the science desk at TASS. However currently I work as part-time senior reporter for TASS with a contract and fixed salary. Part time because I am a visiting researcher at the Hochschule Rhein-Waal and a fellow of the German Chancellor scholarship at Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. But not long, since March, before I worked at TASS.

2. Working conditions

2.1 Which technological changes have occurred in the recent years in your editorial office?

So, definitely the integration of social media, this can be seen as major technological change. We use Facebook and Twitter a lot, but also VK, we also use more and more messengers like Telegram, Telegram channels.

2.2 Did they influence the profession? What has changed in your particular editorial patterns?

Yes, because now as actors of news media, the work of the journalist doesn't finish with submitting your article to your editor. Basically, you are partially responsible for its promotion too. So, journalists are encouraged to be more active in social media, to express some personal opinions, to post their pieces and now we not only see the number of clicks, the number of readers on the website, but also the number of reposts or we know how active users are in terms of comment. The cost of the respective piece is also seen as one of the, so to say KPI for a journalist. So basically, yes it influences the profession and changes editorial patterns. News is always kind of a 24/7 job and technology makes it this even more in some positions.

It definitely also brings you more stress and this is like a big difference to the past. Like in Russia, for some jobs, like in journalism it is even officially written in the contract that you have the responsibility to be online 24/7 if you are not on vacation.

For some other jobs, it is not written explicitly, but definitely your boss is expect you check the messengers or, calling journalist via phone basically stopped, recently I've read a strong opinion piece about the "era of mister bell is over" because Russian don't like to call, they see calling as unprofessional, also you can imagine how funny it is for Russians to use voice mail, but I am getting used to it, that is ok. So, we use messengers a lot, well it's not a call, so you have the opportunity not to answer, but if you check it, I mean you are kind of supposed not to miss the important things. So basically, if you want some promotion your boss will appreciate very much when you answer quickly, at least to the things that cannot wait; and this is a bad thing because officially it's not your responsibility, but as a matter of fact you better do it.

2.3 Do you use accountability instruments in your news organization? (e.g. code of ethics)

Yes, definitely we have instruments like that, we don't have a council, but we have a code of ethics, we have a code of ethics on like working standards and we have the code of ethics in like the behavior in the social media. Yeah that's it.

2.4 How do you fact-check? Do you have a fact-check department?

I think the newswire does have it, in our department we did not have it.

3. Professionalism and Ethics

3.1 Who is, in your opinion, a professional journalist? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

For me being a professional journalist is unbiasedly reporting the facts. This is the main point, anything else is secondary, I mean you must have good command, that you write normally and a good command of English that you get more information. It's impossible to be completely unbiased, but you must aim for it, of course you won't be always unbiased, but you must constantly challenge yourself. Like checking if you are biased or not, checking if you are presenting two opinion or more, so that you keep being a journalist and not an activist. Transparency is also very important for journalists. You have to be very eager to admit mistakes, if you made a mistake you have to admit it, you don't pretend it's your perspective, no mistake is mistake.

3.2 Do you consider yourself professional? Why?

Yes, I try my best, I try to be as unbiased and as transparent as possible.

3.3 Which most non-professional features may a journalist have?

When you alter facts. Or state wrong information as facts. Or when you are biased on very special attitudes and those attitudes were caused in a certain and direct way. So, some manager or politician is paying you for instance for things you write.

3.4 Do you consider ethical principles as important? Why and which of them?

Yes, in general very important. Truth and accuracy is very important, journalists cannot always guarantee 'truth', but getting the facts right is the cardinal principle of journalism. Independence for journalists is also important, we should not act, formally or informally, on behalf of special interests whether political, corporate or cultural. Last but not least accountability. So, when we commit errors we must correct them and our expressions of regret must be sincere not cynical.

3.5 What are the three core functions that journalists should perform according to you?

Provide context, people need to understand the information in a broader context.

Provide analysis of current affairs, yes that is your job as journalist and it's important that you analyze things and explain them

Monitor and scrutinize political leaders, yes that is important, no one is perfect, we need to keep an eye on our politicians.

4. Political issues

4.1 Does the media outlet where you work belong to one certain political camp?

Yes it does, it is officially state-owned.

4.2 Do you agree that the political divisions on the Russian media market have intensified lately? If yes, when exactly? What factors fostered it?

Media became less polarized because since 2014 we almost have no opposition outlets that matter, so Russian media landscape is really unipolar, it's basically all one corner, all pro-government.

4.3 Do your own political views complicate your work in any way? Or, maybe, vice versa?

Yeah, my own political views were complicating my work.

4.4 Are you a member of a political party?

No.

4.5 Are you a member of an NGO?

No.

4.6 What is your attitude towards political protest in our city, and in the country?

I am passively supporting it. I was only once participating in a rally, but then I donate money.

4.7 Have you ever felt political pressure cast upon you by the shared political opinion in the editorial office? How big is your freedom to express views, including the views that differ from those of the editorship?

I experienced pressure, but I kept expressing my views.

4.8 Have you ever witnessed self-censorship in your media outlet? Self-censorship is when some journalistic piece is being altered or rejected for publication on political grounds, but without direct instructions from anyone outside the editorial staff

No, I don't think that we have self-censorship.

4.9 What is, for you personally, more valuable for you in politics – stability or the aspiration for change?

I prefer political stability

4.10 What is, for you personally, more important in politics – reaching consensus or having or competition of voices?

There should be a competition of voices but in the end one needs to find consensus too.

5. News Selection

5.1 What makes a story newsworthy? Potential news stories must generally satisfy one and preferably more requirements. On a scale 1 (not important) 5 (very important) how important are the following news criteria? Explain also why you consider the criteria more or less important

- (1) Surprise: 4
- (2) Exclusivity: 3
- (3) Relevance to the audience: 5
- (4) Shareability: 3
- (5) Entertainment: 2
- (6) Negativity (conflicts, drama, scandals etc.): 2
- (7) Positiveness (solutions, success etc.): 3
- (8) News organization's own agenda: 2

5.2 Do you agree or disagree with this statement? and why?

There is a negativity bias in news selection. Negative news is more often selected than Positive News

Yes, they do because it's easier to get this kind of news, it's easier to produce them and they are more clickable. You can have positive news equally clickable, but you will need more time to produce it. Some good news can be positive statistics, that changed. Bad news might be negative but they may be framed constructive, for example extracted from statistics or if you want market information or some other sources, but it will be more difficult to produce because then you need to look into a big data set to find something newsworthy, but if someone killed someone it's really easy to produce that kind of piece of news, right?

5.3 Selecting both negative critical and positive critical news stories would result in a more

accurate portrayal of the world?

Well I think it is not so much about choosing the stories it's more about the way to report them, well choosing the stories also, but less, like you can say that some situation was not so tragic, just seemed so tragic or also you can choose the way who to report, so really putting the things into more context. So, this would make the coverage more balanced.

5.4 Which sources do you use for selection of news? (e.g. Press releases, social media, databases etc.)

Everything, it depends. In science journalism that is reports by other news agencies, scientific journals and sometimes blogs and social media because sometimes they bring really good information

6. Audience

6.1 How could you describe an average user of your media? Maybe you know the mean age of your consumers?

Our readers in the scientific department at TASS, would be 55% male readers, 45% female readers, they will be over 25, but younger than 40 probably, most would have a university degree

6.2 What are, in general, political preferences of your audience? Can you tell they correspond with yours?

I think in my case it does not matter if my political view corresponds with my readers or not.

6.2 Do you think the emotions of your audience plays a significant role? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

Yes, I think it is very important and has always been.

6.3 Do you think that an excess of negative news (=negativity bias) in the news coverage can result in harmful effects on the audience?

It is not a problem in reporting science because science is broadly considered a source of good news, so if you want it is a flagship of constructive journalism because science usually doesn't bring bad news. It's all about discovery, success, we need to cure the cancer, we are soon. It is different in other fields, for instance political reporting or environmental reporting. In these areas, there is a bias. In Science journalism, we do not put too much load on our audience. Our coverage is all about, doing the best, be constructive.

So basically, in our field, there are some bad news, but science usually frames it in a constructive way. So not like in some departments, where journalists sometimes like to be too tragic.

7. Attitude towards constructive journalism

Short introduction:

Constructive journalism is an emerging domain within journalism that is gaining ground within academia. It is based around reporting solution-focused news, instead of revolving only around negative and conflict-based stories. The idea behind constructive journalism is to give stories more context and make the consumer of the news more intelligent. By giving more background and also reporting what is going good, so that people are more able to create a realistic view of the world.

7.1 Have you heard about this approach before?

No not directly under this term, but I think some of the approach's aspects have been discussed in newsrooms before

7.2 What do you think, is it still possible to do critical news stories choosing a constructive frame? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

Yes of course, because it does not stop being critical, sometimes it will become even more critical when you put it in a constructive way like for example "plane crash", instead of telling just plain crash, planes are dangerous, you give the statistics that for some weird reason recently planes crash only in Russia. So, in this way you become very critical but on the other hand you become more positive because that means, I mean you are positive because it's unlikely that you will die in the plane crash, I mean we don't take the guy of Germanwings because he was crazy, a crazy person can kill you everywhere, but just a standard plane. So yeah you stay critical and you are positive in a way and are constructive. And I think with a constructive approach you also still keep to core functions of journalism

7.3 A constructive approach to journalism could help to portray the world more accurately. Do you agree?

Yes of course, I think so.

7.4 Would you consider using a constructive approach in news coverage?

To the best of my knowledge I was doing my best to do it since 2008

8. Outlook

8.1 Which are the three key roles that journalists should perform in the future?

Now forecasts about Russia are very tricky, they kind of really make no sense, because we really don't know how our country is gonna be in one year, two years or three years, so it's difficult to say. If we have a revolution that is one thing, if we have the same Wladimir Wladimirowitsch, then it's another thing, I would avoid answering that question.

8.2 What do you think, which roles will journalists perform in reality?

If now it was 2012 or 2014 my reality would be clearer, I would say, yeah, it's more like Chinese model and state propaganda, now I can't be sure about that, I really can't say about the reality.

8.3 Will emotion play an important role in the future of journalism?

I hope no, but I think yes.

B1 End date of interview: 26.4.2017

B2 End time of interview: 17:00

Please note any obstacle during the interview.

No obstacles could be identified

Follow Up Questions

1) Now that you learned about the approach of constructive journalism, could you in general imagine taking a constructive approach to news coverage?

As a science reporter, I was always taking constructive approach to news coverage, if I may say it this way. And as an editor of news department in gazeta.ru back in 2013-2014 I saw it as a strict necessity to put the news into the proper context and avoid unhealthy sensations. But, yes, I was happy to learn about constructive journalism movement, and it encourages me even more to keep my eye on the issue.

2) When covering certain issues, for instances 'accusations of Russian hacking' it could be helpful to provide more context in a story, provide solutions (both elements of a constructive journalism approach) ? What do you think?

Yes, of course. I do not see anything new in the necessity to provide more context. For me it's an essential part of journalist's job.

3) Do you feel that the news coverage about 'accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. election' is constructive? Or rather negative, lacking context, various perspectives and solutions?

It depends. You still can find some constructive coverage, but, yes, most of outlets just exploit the image of evil Russia that is a cause of all the problems that democratic governments experience now. It's good old "external enemy" populist strategy, very similar to the one used now in Russia. Journalists following it without digging deeper can not be called "constructive", in my opinion.

END OF TRANSCRIPTION 2 - TASS

Transcription 3 –TASS

A1 Interview code: 003

interviewer code: Andreas Rossbach

A2 Classify the respondent's rank according to the following categories:

Other: foreign correspondent, freelancer 4

A3 Start date of interview: 4.5.2017

A4 Start time of interview: 17:00

A5 Respondent's location: Office

START OF INTERVIEW

1. Basic Information

1.1 Gender:

Male

1.2 Name and surname (or, in case of preserving anonymity, pseudonym):

sand1807

1.3 Date of birth:

24.11. 1990

1.4 What is now your education level now?

Bachelor in international affairs at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow

1.5 Year of entering journalism

2013

1.6 Your specialization in the media you currently work in:

Foreign news (U.S. politics), but I cover a variety of topics, from NASA operations to military operation in the Middle East and I've prepared a couple of reports about hacking based on speeches of US officials and opinions of Washington media.

1.7 In a very short way, could you please tell of your previous jobs and these editorial offices (starting from your early career)

Actually, I found myself in journalism as soon as I was employed in 2013 in the company (TASS), I am working right now. So, my way in this area is not so long.

1.8 In which form are you hired: are you on a full-time tenure-office position or on a contractual time-limited basis? If you have a contract, for how long? Do you work full time? Is your salary fixed or hour-per-hour?

Full-time, contract. Not going to discuss salary aspects.

2. Working conditions

2.1 Which technological changes have occurred in the recent years in your editorial office?

There are a lot of changes around, but not in our editorial office. Right in front of me things have been changing rapidly. And they are continuing to do so right now.

The most sufficient change in contemporary journalism is that it became very dependent on social media. I can talk a lot about this change and I think this is the point. If your news outlet does nothing in social media then people sometimes starting to forget it. If talking about our editorial office - the most horrible thing is that people are so conservative, that they don't want to change and still appear to cling to the past standards, that are no longer actual.

2.2 Did they influence the profession?

For sure. I started with very tough attitude to news, the most important thing for me was the standard and later I figured out, that this is not the right way to get things done today. Today we need to do the stuff, that people want to read/hear/watch and not to become obsessed with principles.

2.3 What has changed in your particular editorial patterns?

Look, I worked as an editor for few years and working as a reporter right now. So that I can say, that I am more editor than reporter. And I am perceiving news as an editor and as a subscriber.

And again, this is the change in my editorial pattern - during editorial process or during the writing I am trying to make report interesting and digestible for wide range of people.

2.4 Do you use accountability instruments in your news organization? (e.g. code of ethics)

Actually, we use such instruments. There is 1) basic understanding of what you can do and you what you cannot do 2) we have style guide, that contains some kind of algorithm of preparing news reports. but it's more about professionalism, than censorship.

2.5 How do you fact-check? Do you have a fact-check department?

We are responsible to do that by ourselves. Executive editors also have such responsibility as they publish the news.

3. Professionalism and Ethics

3.1 Who is, in your opinion, a professional in journalism? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

E.g. someone who is able to work accurately, has an excellent command of the language etc.) In my opinion professional journalist is someone, who can write about complicated things in form, which is easily understandable for everyone. And this is someone, who always has question for nearly every person. I don't like to name the names. And sincerely I can't pick out any particular journalists, that inspire me. But a few years ago, I was fond of reports by Andrey Kolesnikov from Kommersant because of his unique way to present news.

3.2 Do you consider yourself professional? Why?

This is not my responsibility to evaluate my work, I think that this is the thing that should be done by others. What I can say for sure, is that I know what to do, and I want to make the stuff for people. Especially the stuff, that make people feel themselves better, to smile and to think about life, not that much about politics.

3.3 Which most non-professional features may a journalist have?

Sense of humor, Mercy and «marketing» way of thinking.

3.4 Do you consider ethical principles as important? Why and which of them?

Absolutely, ethical principles is about respecting others' work. No matter if we are talking about competitors or allies. Like truth and accuracy, independence, fairness and impartiality are very important.

3.5 What are the the three core functions that journalists should perform according to you?

Provide solutions, because we need to solve problems. Provide context, because there are a lot of people not familiar with latest news. we must think about everyone. Provide analysis of current affairs because that is core.

4. Political issues

4.1 Does the media outlet where you work belong to one certain political camp?

Yes, we do.

4.2 Do you agree that the political divisions on the Russian media market have intensified lately? If yes, when exactly? What factors fostered it?

Yes, Russian media market is, if we can say so, very monopolized with one point of view. The political system cannot be changed, as well as attitude of the government - so we can have our own point of view, but not force ourselves to do the things, that won't bring results but ruin our lives and lives of our beloved ones.

4.3 Do your own political views complicate you work in any way? Or, maybe, vice versa?

I don't have any political views, I hold to neutral position.

4.4 Are you a member of a political party?

No, and don't want to.

4.5 Are you a member of an NGO?

No.

4.6 What is your attitude towards political protest in our city, and in the country?

I don't think, that it can change anything. Even if it's not very hopeful attitude.

4.7 Have you ever felt political pressure cast upon you by the shared political opinion in the editorial office? How big is your freedom to express views, including the views that differ from those of the editorship?

We are trying to report only facts, but we also have to deliver the news, that goes with the flow of Russian government policy.

4.8 Have you ever witnessed self-censorship in your media outlet? Self-censorship is when

some journalistic piece is being altered or rejected for publication on political grounds, but without direct instructions from anyone outside the editorial staff

No.

4.9 What is, for you personally, more valuable for you in politics – stability or the aspiration for change?

Aspiration for change.

4.10 What is, for you personally, more important in politics – reaching consensus or having or competition of voices?

Reaching consensus.

5. News Selection

5.1 What makes a story newsworthy? Potential news stories must generally satisfy one and preferably more requirements. On a scale 1 (not important) 5 (very important) how important are the following news criteria? Explain also why you consider the criteria more or less important

- (1) Surprise 5 - if news is not surprising, that why the f*** people would read it?
- (2) Exclusivity - 4 - this is important for image of news outlet
- (3) Relevance to the audience 5
- (4) Shareability - 5 because we live in the age of social media
- (5) Entertainment - 3 it depends on topic
- (6) Negativity (conflicts, drama, scandals etc.) 4 - unfortunately, people digest negative and surprisingly negative news better, than positive news.
- (7) Positive elements (solutions, success) 2, not so much, but we should cover more positive issues
- (8) News organization's own agenda - 3

5.2 Do you agree or disagree with these statements? and why?

Bad news (scandals, drama, conflict etc.) are more newsworthy than good news. -

Agree, that's the matter of human perception. Because if you learn only negative aspects of some particular subject, then you cannot make decisions by yourself and will stick only to negative point of view. If you have different opinions to choose from, it will help you better understand what is happening and help people provide better solutions.

There is a negativity bias in news selection. Negative news is more often selected than Positive News

I agree because the audience wants bad news.

5.3 Selecting both negative critical and positive critical news stories would result in a more accurate portrayal of the world?

Yes, definitely, we need to show both sides.

5.4 Which sources do you use for selection of news? (e.g. Press releases, social media, databases etc.)

Mainly social media, Rss and news ratings

6. Audience

6.1 How could you describe an average user of your media? Maybe you know the mean age of your consumers?

Average user of our media is of middle age or older than average. But I am not aware of details, sorry.

6.2 What are, in general, political preferences of your audience? Can you tell they correspond with yours?

In general, political preferences of our audience - pro-government, this is obvious. I don't have any particular political point of view.

6.3 Do you think the emotions of your audience plays an significant role? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

No, but I think that today our bosses do more to consider the demand of the audience - that's good news. We must do this to achieve success.

6.4 Do you think that an excess of negative news (=negativity bias) in the news coverage can result in harmful effects on the audience?

We should maintain balance in publishing of negative, neutral and positive news. But I don't think that basically it can have harmful results - people, who read news will read it, no matter if there is a lot of bad news or a whole bunch of positive ones.

7. Attitude towards constructive journalism

Short introduction:

Constructive journalism is an emerging domain within journalism that is gaining ground within academia. It is based around reporting solution-focused news, instead of revolving only around negative and conflict-based stories. The idea behind constructive journalism is to give stories more context and make the consumer of the news more intelligent. By giving more background and also reporting what is going good, so that people are more able to create a realistic view of the world.

7.1 Have you heard about this approach before?

No

7.2 What do you think, is it still possible to do critical news stories choosing a constructive frame? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

I think this approach is rather interesting, but some kind of it is already practicing in journalism. I mean that every reporter somehow is trying to give context to every story to make it digestible for every person.

7.3 A constructive approach to journalism could help to portray the world more accurately. Do you agree?

Absolutely, I think so. I think that this approach is pretty interesting and reports, that are prepared using it will be in demand, but basically people don't look for neutral news - they are trying to find information, that is close to their own point of view. For example, if you like rock music, then you won't try to find the information with opinion of both rock-lovers and rock-haters - you will try to read some stuff, that is more about rock loving. But your approach could be useful in the complicated topics, in which most of the people don't grasp.

7.4 Would you consider using a constructive approach in news coverage?

We are trying to use such approach in our work, especially if we are talking about news, that covers conflicts. I mean we mention the opinions of both sides and give background. Hope we will do more such reports.

8. Outlook

8.1 Which are the three key roles that journalists should perform in the future?

Impartiality, understanding the demand of audience and mercy.

8.2 What do you think, which roles will journalists perform in reality?

Understanding the demand, which will help news outlet achieve success. The other two characteristics are not that real.

8.3 Will emotion play an important role in the future of journalism?

No, I don't think so. People need to avoid it and employers should control it.

B1 End date of interview: 4.5.2017

B2 End time of interview: 18:00

Please note any obstacle during the interview.

No obstacles could be identified during the interview

Follow Up Questions

1) Now that you learned about the approach of constructive journalism, could you in general imagine taking a constructive approach to news coverage?

Yes, but I've already told you, that I'm trying to provide context in my reports for quite some time

2) When covering certain issues, for instances 'accusations of Russian hacking' it could be helpful to provide more context in a story, provide solutions (both elements of a constructive journalism approach) ? What do you think?

I don't think this is the topic to use such approach, because in my opinion this is very politicized matter. And moreover, I can tell you that I'm trying to avoid this subject when it's possible, because I think people got tired of it.

3) Do you feel that the news coverage about 'accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. election' is constructive? Or rather negative, lacking context, various perspectives and solutions?

It's absolutely not constructive from both sides.

END OF TRANSCRIPTION 3 - TASS

Transcription 1 - INTERFAX

A1 Interview code: 001

interviewer code: Andreas Rossbach

A2 Classify the respondent's rank according to the following categories:

Non-management staff (e.g reporter, news writer) 3

A3 Start date of interview: 23.4.2017

A4 Start time of interview: 19:30

A5 Respondent's location: **Home**

START OF INTERVIEW

1. Basic Information

1.1 Gender: Female

1.2 Name and surname (or, in case of preserving anonymity, pseudonym):
Anastasia Samoylova

1.3 Year of birth:
26.9.1990

1.4 What is now your education level now?

Higher scientific (graduate): International Journalism St Petersburg State University

1.5 Year of entering journalism:
2011

1.6 Your specialization in the media you currently work in:
economic and political news

1.7 In a very short way, could you please tell of your previous jobs and these editorial offices (starting from your early career)

I firstly worked from 2011-201 for Interfax as political reporter, then I worked as political reporter for the newspaper Lenobel News 2012-2014. Since 2014 I work as a news reporter at Interfax in Moscow, I cover political and economic news.

1.8 In which form are you hired: are you on a full-time tenure-office position or on a contractual time-limited basis? If you have a contract, for how long? Do you work full time? Is your salary fixed or hour-per-hour?

I work on a full-time tenure office position with a fixed salary. I get some extra money for trips because we travel a lot.

2. Open Questions Working conditions

2.1 Which technological changes have occurred in the recent years in your editorial office?

Yes, sure about a year ago for instance we started to use telegram as a system for publishing, we have a special software for telegram, so that you can write news in our publishing system. It makes the process of publishing news more quick and faster.

And as we have a big competitiveness between news agencies it's very important to be faster than others. Then we have a lot of digital instruments, question books, this is a database with questions for key speakers, e.g. if we know there is an Economic Forum in Sochi or Krasnoyarsk, we make a question book with key persons and questions.

2.2 Did they influence the profession? What has changed in your editorial patterns?

Yes, it did, the way I communicate with my colleagues and experts. The way I gather information.

2.3 Do you use accountability instruments in your news organization? (e.g. code of ethics)

Yes, we have instruments like that, we have an internal code of ethics, though I am not sure if we have a press council.

2.4 How do you fact-check? Do you have a fact-check department?

We fact-check the information ourselves, we don't have a special department for this

3. Open Questions Professionalism and Ethics

3.1 Who is, in your opinion, a professional journalist? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

For me this is someone who provides very accurate and reliable information. One must be accurate and one must be good in formulating words.

3.2 Do you consider yourself professional? Why?

Yeah, I try my best. I work accurately, because I always check information, even if I see some very important and newsworthy information, I first check it with press offices ministries or companies.

3.3 Which most non-professional features may a journalist have?

I would say inaccurate using of sources, in particular from other people. Speculation on some facts is also not professional.

3.4 Do you consider ethical principles as important? Why and which of them?

Yes, in general they are important, but it is not always easy to adhere always completely to them, I try though. Journalists should take responsibility for the accuracy of their work. Verify information before releasing it. Use original sources whenever possible. They should identify sources clearly. The public is entitled to as much information as possible to judge the reliability and motivations of sources. Finally, accountability. So, when we commit errors we must correct them and our expressions of regret must be sincere not cynical.

3.5 What are the the three core functions that journalists should perform according to you?

Provide context is important, because people need to understand, what it is about what you are writing about. I also think to provide information to decision makers is my job, they should receive accurate information from me. And last but not least we need to provide analysis of current affairs.

4. Political issues

4.1 Does the media outlet where you work belong to one certain political camp?

I don't think it does.

4.2 Do you agree that the political divisions on the Russian media market have intensified lately? If yes, when exactly? What factors fostered it?

I cannot answer this question, sorry.

4.3 Do your own political views complicate your work in any way? Or, maybe, vice versa?

My personal political views don't complicate my work.

4.4 Are you a member of a political party?

No

4.5 Are you a member of an NGO?

No

4.6 What is your attitude towards political protest in our city, and in the country?

I don't want to answer this question.

4.7 Have you ever felt political pressure cast upon you by the shared political opinion in the editorial office? How big is your freedom to express views, including the views that differ from those of the editorship?

I personally never felt such pressure. I can express my views.

4.8 Have you ever witnessed self-censorship in your media outlet? Self-censorship is when some journalistic piece is being altered or rejected for publication on political grounds, but without direct instructions from anyone outside the editorial staff

No, so far no.

4.9 What is, for you personally, more valuable for you in politics – stability or the aspiration for change?

It's difficult for me to answer, can we skip that question?

4.10 What is, for you personally, more important in politics – reaching consensus or having or competition of voices?

That question is also hard to answer for me, it depends.

5. News Selection

5.1 What makes a story newsworthy? Potential news stories must generally satisfy one and preferably more requirements. On a scale 1 (not important) 5 (very important) how important are the following news criteria? Explain also why you consider the criteria

more or less important

- (1) Surprise: 3
- (2) Exclusivity: 5
- (3) Relevance to the audience: 5
- (4) Shareability: 3
- (5) Entertainment: 2
- (6) Negativity (conflicts, drama, scandals etc.): 1
- (7) Positive elements (solutions, success, etc.): 3
- (8) News organization's own agenda: 3

5.2 Do you agree or disagree with these statements? and why?

There is a negativity bias in news selection. Negative news is more often selected than Positive News

I personally don't feel there is a negativity bias in the news I select and write, but I understand that bad news often have more traffic. I think the news I produce are neutral. But overall i feel there are more bad news in the media than positive ones.

5.3 Selecting both negative critical and positive critical news stories would result in a more accurate portrayal of the world?

Yes, I think that could help, but I am not sure if this would work out in news journalism.

5.4 Which sources do you use for selection of news? (e.g. Press releases, social media, databases etc.)

I use a lot of databases, there is a great variety of them, reports, press releases and presentations and subscriptions. Sometimes I also use social networks, as ministries use them increasingly to publish information.

6. Audience

6.1 How could you describe an average user of your media? Maybe you know the mean age of your consumers?

It's business people but also ordinary people between 25- 45. I can't tell you details

6.2 What are, in general, political preferences of your audience? Can you tell they correspond with yours?

It's hard to say that they have particular political preferences, we have so many different readers. Maybe some views, of some readers do correspond with my views

6.3 Do you think the emotions of your audience plays an significant role? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

I would not say emotions, but interests because if I will write something that is not interesting people will not write it.

7. Attitude towards constructive journalism

Short introduction:

Constructive journalism is an emerging domain within journalism that is gaining ground within academia. It is based around reporting solution-focused news, instead of revolving only around negative and conflict-based stories. The idea behind constructive journalism is to give stories more context and make the consumer of the news more intelligent. By giving more background and also reporting what is going good, so that people are more able to create a realistic view of the world.

7.1 Have you heard about this approach before?

I've read about constructive journalism on Wikipedia before you called me.

7.2 What do you think, is it still possible to do critical news stories choosing a constructive frame? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

Yes, I think they could, but to give a clear answer I would also need to know more about this approach

7.3 A constructive approach to journalism could help to portray the world more accurately. Do you agree? Why or why not

I think yes but it really depends on the kind of story

7.4 Would you consider using a constructive approach in news coverage?

Yes, I can imagine using it, but such an approach can work only if you have open-minded readers

8. Outlook

8.1 Which are the three key roles that journalists should perform in the future?

journalism as a provider of information

journalists should criticize the government (watchdog function)

8.2 What do you think, which roles will journalists perform in reality?

That question is difficult to answer, it is not clear to which direction Russia is shifting.

8.3 Will emotion play an important role in the future of journalism?

Yes of course we need to consider emotions, people have less and less free time and they can choose between different information. To keep our readers, we need to understand them and their emotion is a part of that.

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B1 End date of interview: 26.4.2017

B2 End time of interview: 20:43

Please note any obstacle during the interview.

No obstacles could be identified

Follow Up Questions

1) Now that you learned about the approach of constructive journalism, could you in general imagine taking a constructive approach to news coverage?

From my point of view, Constructive journalism approach is suitable only for certain types of stories - for example long reads. Some journalism formats, for example newswire, cannot adapt CJ approach

2) When covering certain issues, for instances 'accusations of Russian hacking' it could be helpful to provide more context in a story, provide solutions (both elements of a constructive journalism approach? What do you think?

I agree, but again - not in every format, but in most of them

3) Do you feel that the news coverage about 'accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. election' is constructive? Or rather negative, lacking context, various perspectives and solutions?

I think that both Russian and American coverage of "hacking" were politically motivated. I can't remember white light on this issue

END OF TRANSCRIPTION 1 - INTERFAX

Transcription 2 - INTERFAX

A1 Interview code: 002

interviewer code: Andreas Rossbach

A2 Classify the respondent's rank according to the following categories:

Non-management staff (e.g reporter, news writer) 3

A3 Start date of interview: 27.4.2017

A4 Start time of interview: 17:10

A5 Respondent's location: **Home**

START OF INTERVIEW

1. Basic Information

1.1 Gender:
Female

1.2 Name and surname (or, in case of preserving anonymity, **pseudonym**):
Kazagy

1.3 Date of birth:
19.11 1989

1.4 What is now your education level now?

Higher Scientific degree Journalism, Moscow State University

1.5 Year of entering journalism:
2011

1.6 Your specialization in the media you currently work in:

Any kind of news, economic and political, sometimes also culture.

1.7 In a very short way, could you please tell of your previous jobs and these editorial offices (starting from your early career)

Three main stations, Interfax where I am working for 2, 5 years, before I worked for eight months at Reuters news agency, before I worked also for Russia Today, but only for 2 month, I did not really like it and also Mir 24 website for one year.

1.8 In which form are you hired: are you on a full-time tenure-office position or on a contractual time-limited basis? If you have a contract, for how long? Do you work full time? Is your salary fixed or hour-per-hour?

I am working as an news reporter at Interfax full-time, on a contract and my salary is fixed hour-per-hour

2. Working conditions

2.1 Which technological changes have occurred in the recent years in your editorial office?

Yes, our website changed completely, the whole design, the way it looks like, the functions, it really changed. I do some stuff with social media, The Facebook and Twitter stuff and we also modified our strategy here. That were the main changes I guess.

2.1 Did they influence the profession? What has changed in your particular editorial patterns?

Actually, I would say, sorry, because it was more you know design, the way it looks like, but the content, the ideas, they were probably much of the same.

The only thing we've got, well Interfax is an old news agency, quite with a long history, I think it is 27 years old now, and it was always known mainly for economic news, very official with poker face, no personal approach, and nothing and when we launched Twitter, it's called Interfax Cosmos, I think it is kind of small with like 4000-5000 followers, it's not like really big. In Russian it has like two meanings the first one is like space and the second something weird and like surrealistic, you see? And all the strange and weird news, I mean some news that are really strange and they are really funny and they all go there and people started to write we did not expect that from you and so probably that is kind of new. I'm kind of managing that, it's my project.

2.3 Do you use accountability instruments in your news organization? (e.g. code of ethics)

Yes, definitely we have instruments like that, we have our own code of ethics, including different values and norms.

2.4 How do you fact-check? Do you have a fact-check department?

We take often news from other news agencies like AP, BBC as a source and we assume they fact checked. We then translate their news and add information. I think it's a lot about fake news, for example some info about multiple explosions on social media and some guys immediately start writing, but you can check it and not just write and sources say as some media does it, we don't do it, we try to wait for some official statement. So, we don't produce fake news as others do. We don't have a fact-checking department, the journalists are responsible for this.

3. Professionalism and Ethics

3.1 Who is, in your opinion, a professional in journalism? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

I think this is kind of a philosophical question, it is a long question to think about it. But well, you see if you want to be accepted in media with long history, like Interfax, gazeta.ru or so you must be a professional journalist. If you work for a weblog you are maybe not, but it depends, there are good blogs as well. But even if you are a professional journalist, it's very hard to be one.

So, I'd say if some checks his/her facts accurately and in case you make mistakes you should claim this, you should say we made this mistake, we know it was a mistake, we are sorry, not like say whatever everybody makes, but to make it clear it was your fault as people rely on you. Actually, the most professional characteristic is like to verify information you get and show both sides of it and to be accountant and serious about your mistakes.

3.2 Do you consider yourself professional? Why?

I would say yes, I try to be unbiased and if make mistakes I would talk openly about it.

3.3 Which most non-professional features may a journalist have?

When you alter facts. Or state wrong information as facts. Or when you are biased on very special attitudes and those attitudes were caused in a certain and direct way. So some manager or politician is paying you for instance for things you write.

3.4 Do you consider ethical principles as important? Why and which of them?

Yes, in general they are important, but it is not always easy to adhere always completely to them. Well, yeah for instance I think truth and accuracy is very important in journalism I

cannot always guarantee truth and accuracy, but I try. Then I personally believe humanity is very important. You should at least try as journalist to keep your human face.

Last but not least accountability. So, when we commit errors we must correct them and our expressions of regret must be sincere not cynical.

3.5 What are the three core functions that journalists should perform according to you?

Provide context is important, because people need to understand, what it is about what you are writing about. But not solutions, I think it is not part of news it is more part of some kind of long form journalism formats. The watchdog function is very important, so to monitor and scrutinize political leaders, yes that is important, no one is perfect, we need to keep an eye on politicians. Provide analysis of current affairs, yes that is your job as journalist and it's important that you analyze things and explain them

4. Political issues

4.1 Does the media outlet where you work belong to one certain political camp?

I don't think it is in any political camp, we just try to be balanced and that's it.

4.2 Do you agree that the political divisions on the Russian media market have intensified lately? If yes, when exactly? What factors fostered it?

I cannot answer this question, sorry.

4.3 Do your own political views complicate your work in any way? Or, maybe, vice versa?

My personal political views don't complicate my work.

4.4 Are you a member of a political party?

No

4.5 Are you a member of an NGO?

No

4.6 What is your attitude towards political protest in our city, and in the country?

I don't want to answer this question, it takes me a lot. But I want to say, that in every normal working people have their working constitution that gives them the right to go to the street and say things are bad, but at the same time I am against violent protests. I am against clashing with the police, I am against demanding to make some violent and not legal changes, so I do believe that people have their right given by law to express their opinion and their position, but I am not for revolution.

4.7 Have you ever felt political pressure cast upon you by the shared political opinion in the editorial office? How big is your freedom to express views, including the views that differ from those of the editorship?

Well every news organization has its political agenda and it's place, but I would say that I don't feel much pressure, I feel right and it corresponds with my political views.

I can express my views I feel, it's limited anyway, I write news not long stories.

4.8 Have you ever witnessed self-censorship in your media outlet? Self-censorship is when some journalistic piece is being altered or rejected for publication on political grounds, but without direct instructions from anyone outside the editorial staff

No, I don't think that we have self-censorship

4.9 What is, for you personally, more valuable for you in politics – stability or the aspiration for change?

I don't know, I am unsure myself about this

4.10 What is, for you personally, more important in politics – reaching consensus or having or competition of voices?

That question is also hard to answer for me, it depends.

5. News Selection

5.1 What makes a story newsworthy? Potential news stories must generally satisfy one and preferably more requirements. On a scale 1 (not important) 5 (very important) how important are the following news criteria? Explain also why you consider the criteria more or less important

- (1) Surprise: 3
- (2) Exclusivity: 3
- (3) Relevance to the audience: 4
- (4) Shareability: 4
- (5) Entertainment: 3
- (6) Negativity (conflicts, drama, scandals etc.): 4
- (7) Positive elements (solutions, success, etc.): 3
- (8) News organization's own agenda: 3

5.2 Do you agree or disagree with these statements? and why?

There is a negativity bias in news selection. Negative news is more often selected than Positive News

The thing is in most case news coverage in news agencies is neutral. Without some kind expressed tone.

Well, but in general, it's true, almost all the news is negative, when you go on many websites it's like, you go on a website and out of 200 news, 10 will be positive, so yeah news are almost all the time negative. I think it's less the fault of the news media, but how the news market works, so negative news sell.

We sometimes call that professional deformation, I don't know if that is the same. But I think it's just what interests people, it's almost all the time negative, so yap.

5.3 Selecting both negative critical and positive critical news stories would result in a more accurate portrayal of the world?

Wow, that is actually a good and very interesting point, I was not thinking so much about this issue, But now that I think about it, yeah probably yeah there should be more positive critical news and more positive analysis to have a balance, you see.

I sometimes read the NYT and they've got stories like that and I think there are people determined to find that kind of stories.

5.4 Which sources do you use for selection of news? (e.g. Press releases, social media, databases etc.)

In many cases, we use reports by other news agencies abroad, like AP AFP or Reuters and we also use press releases

6. Audience

6.1 How could you describe an average user of your media? Maybe you know the mean age of your consumers?

I have some ideas, but I would rather skip the question because I am not that sure.

6.2 What are, in general, political preferences of your audience? Can you tell they correspond with yours?

I just don't know

6.3 Do you think the emotions of your audience plays a significant role? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

I don't think we think about it, sorry. I mean we are professional, but we cover news, we cannot think about it. But we cover things in the most accurate way

7. Attitude towards constructive journalism

Short introduction:

Constructive journalism is an emerging domain within journalism that is gaining ground within academia. It is based around reporting solution-focused news, instead of revolving only around negative and conflict-based stories. The idea behind constructive journalism is to give stories more context and make the consumer of the news more intelligent. By giving more background and reporting what is going good, so that people are more able to create a realistic view of the world.

7.1 Have you heard about this approach before?

No, I would say no.

7.2 What do you think, is it still possible to do critical news stories choosing a constructive frame? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

I'm not familiar with constructive journalism on the deep level, but I think that these critics confuse terms. And i have some concerns about even possibility of objectivity so this approach could not be a threat to it.

7.3 A constructive approach to journalism could help to portray the world more accurately. Do you agree? Why or why not

I think yes but it really depends on the kind of story.

7.4 Would you consider using a constructive approach in news coverage?

I would consider to partly implement it.

8. Outlook

8.1 Which are the three key roles that journalists should perform in the future?

provide information and analysis, educate and a third one I don't know

8.2 What do you think, which roles will journalists perform in reality?

Maybe inform and provide analysis, I don't want to speculate, it's an philosophical question.

8.3 Will emotion play an important role in the future of journalism?

I think so, maybe not so much in news journalism.

B1 End date of interview: 26.4.2017

B2 End time of interview: 18:23

Please note any obstacle during the interview.

No obstacles could be identified

Follow Up Questions:

1) Now that you learned about the approach of constructive journalism, could you in general imagine taking a constructive approach to news coverage?

Yes, I think it is possible, although it deals more with news selection - which news you pick - and is not possible with all news, I believe. And it looks not like strictly hard news for me

2) When covering certain issues, for instances 'accusations of Russian hacking' it could be helpful to provide more context in a story, provide solutions (both elements of a constructive journalism approach) ? What do you think?

Yes, that's a good idea, but I think it is a bit another type of news than good old reporting

3) Do you feel that the news coverage about 'accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. election' is constructive? Or rather negative, lacking context, various perspectives and solutions?

Yes, I do. I think coverage in American media is not constructive at all - rather it is biased and even paranoid.

END OF TRANSCRIPTION 2 - INTERFAX

Transcription 3 - INTERFAX

A1 Interview code: 003

interviewer code: Andreas Rossbach

A2 Classify the respondent's rank according to the following categories:

Other: news editor

3

A3 Start date of interview: 14.5.2017

A4 Start time of interview: 21:00

A5 Respondent's location: **Home**

START OF INTERVIEW

1. Basic Information

1.1 Gender:

Male

1.2 Name and surname (or, in case of preserving anonymity, pseudonym):

Maksim Martyshkin

1.3 Date of birth: (Month/Day/Year)

4.15.1983

1.4 What is now your education level now?

higher education

1.5 Year of entering journalism:

2011

1.6 Your specialization in the media you currently work in:

editor

1.7 In a very short way, could you please tell of your previous jobs and these editorial offices (starting from your early career)

At first I have started as correspondent on TV. I have been working for 1 year. Then I was an editor with specialization in economics, now I am working as editor in scientific area for Interfax.

1.8 In which form are you hired: are you on a full-time tenure-office position or on a contractual time-limited basis? If you have a contract, for how long? Do you work full time? Is your salary fixed or hour-per-hour?

I am hired on a full-time tenure-office position, working full time-9 hours from Monday till Friday. The salary is fixed.

2. Open Questions: Working conditions

2.1 Which technological changes have occurred in the recent years in your editorial office?

I have got a modern computer with large screen and good definition. Internet is good.

2.2 Did they influence the profession?

it makes work more comfortable and helps to concentrate on job, without being distracted.

2.3 Do you use accountability instruments in your news organization? (e.g. code of ethics)

yes, I try to observe the rules of journalist ethics

3. Open Questions: Professionalism and Ethics

3.1 Who can in your opinion consider him- or herself a professional in journalist? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

The task of the journalist is to convey information to the reader, check the facts and adhere to ethical norms in obtaining information. Manipulation of the reader's opinion is unacceptable for a journalist. A journalist can be only one who objectively submits proven facts. Responsibility and adherence adorn the profession of a journalist

3.2 Which most non-professional features may a journalist have?

Neglect of the rules of working with information, lack of verification of data due to laziness or other reasons and publication of false information, manipulation of public opinion, propaganda, customized advertising or campaigning

3.3 Do you consider ethical principles as important?

Yes, they are very important, but unfortunately not all journalists and not always observe them, preferring to receive any promised benefits

3.4 What are the three core functions that journalists should perform according to you?

Responsibility of a journalist, objectivity, serving the interests of society, not power

4. Open Questions Political issues

4.1 Does the media outlet you work for belong to one certain political camp?

I work in an information agency, we broadcast information in the form in which it is, the editor can have his own political views, but he has a limited range of opportunities to reflect his views in the news. Principles of objectivity do not allow demonstrating political sympathies or antipathies, although sometimes you really want to.

4.2 Do you agree that the political divisions on the Russian media market have intensified lately? If yes, when exactly? What factors fostered it?

The Russian media space consists mainly of three segments: the first, the most numerous, the one that manipulates public opinion in the interests of power in the country. These are state-owned media or private ones, pursuing purely commercial benefits and not shying away from working for power and propaganda. The second category is the media, which try to be in opposition to the existing political system. The third is those media that do not show clearly any opposition or pro-government sentiments

4.3 Do your own political views complicate you work in any way? Or, maybe, vice versa?

No, my political views do not interfere with my work and do not adversely affect the work process

4.4 Are you a member of a political party?

No

4.5 Are you a member of an NGO?

No

4.6 What is your attitude towards political protest in our city and in the country?

I have a positive attitude towards those who protest, sympathetically. Inwardly I express my support and solidarity to them.

4.7 Have you ever felt political pressure cast upon you by the shared political opinion in the editorial office? How big is your freedom to express views, including the views that differ from those of the editorship?

No, I never felt political pressure cast upon me by the shared political opinion in the editorial office. We can free express views, including the views that differ from those of the editorship.

4.8 Have you ever witnessed self-censorship in your media outlet? Self-censorship is when some journalistic piece is being altered or rejected for publication on political grounds, but without direct instructions from anyone outside the editorial staff

Yes, there have been such cases. We were asked not to put any news related to protest actions.

4.9 What is, for you personally, more valuable for you in politics – stability or the aspiration for change?

Aspiration for change

4.10 What is, for you personally, more important in politics – reaching consensus or having or competition of voices?

It seems to me that both are important in their time

5. Open Questions News Selection

5.1 What makes a story newsworthy? Potential news stories must generally satisfy one and preferably more requirements. On a scale 1 (not important) 5 (very important) how important are the following news criteria? Explain also why you consider the criteria more or less important

- (1) Surprise: 4
- (2) Exclusivity: 4
- (3) Relevance to the audience: 5
- (4) Shareability: 3
- (5) Entertainment: 3
- (6) Negativity (conflicts, drama, scandals etc.): 4
- (7) Good News (solutions, success, etc.): 5
- (8) News Agency's own Agenda: 3

5.2 Do you agree or disagree with these statements? and why?

There is a negativity bias in news selection. Negative news is more often selected than Positive News
Yes, I agree. This is explained by the nature of man. Success is often someone else's success, it is not very interesting to read about it, whereas negative attracts more attention, because a person is abstracted from it and does not perceive it as personal.

With the exception of tragic large-scale tragedies, for example terrorist attacks - there can be more people sympathizing with this

5.3 Selecting both negative critical and positive critical news stories would result in a more accurate portrayal of the world?

Yes, probably it is necessary. This will allow you to maintain a balance

5.4 Which sources do you use for selection of news? (e.g. Press releases, social media, databases etc.?)

Foreign and Russian media, reports of correspondents, reports of foreign news agencies - partners of our news agency

6. Audience

6.1 How could you describe an average user of your media outlet? Maybe you know the mean age and gender of your audience?

Our main audience is men from 20 to 50 years old

6.2 What are, in general, political preferences of your audience? Can you tell they correspond with yours?

I think that the main political preferences of our audience are both conservative and conservative views, and liberal ones. Readers are actively interested in the economic and political situation in the country

6.3 Do you think the emotions of your audience plays a significant role? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

Interesting news highlighting the current events in the country, awaken emotions and feelings in the readers, evoke a response. However, we do not have a comment function, there is no direct feedback. You can judge their reaction by the number of news views

7. Attitude towards constructive journalism

Short introduction:

Constructive journalism is an emerging domain within journalism that is gaining ground within academia. It is based around reporting solution-focused news, instead of revolving only around negative and conflict-based stories. The idea behind constructive journalism is to give stories more context and make the consumer of the news more intelligent.

By giving more background and also reporting what is going good, so that people are more able to create a realistic view of the world.

7.1 Have you heard about this approach before?

No, I have not heard about it before

7.2 What do you think, is it still possible to do critical news stories choosing a constructive frame? Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

I believe that this is possible. If there is anything constructive to offer, then criticism will not hurt and will not be misleading. With a reasonable approach, you can find a balance and follow the measure

7.3 A constructive approach to journalism could help to portray the world more accurately. Do you agree?

Yes, it would help to create a bigger picture!

7.4 Would you consider using a constructive approach in news coverage?

Yes, it seems to me that this should be considered

8. Outlook

8.1 Which are the three key roles that journalists should perform in the future?

The three key roles that journalists should play are, in my opinion, objectivity, honesty, responsibility

8.3 What do you think, which roles will journalists perform in reality?

In reality, there comes to the forefront - efficiency, political subjectivity and emotionality

8.4 Will emotion play an important role in the future of journalism?

The emotional component is important in the entertaining form of giving news or in the genre of journalism. In the information genre, it does not play a key role - it is more important than the event itself, its essence. However, a great role is played by the talent of a journalist and the presentation of material

Elements of constructive approach in journalism can be very useful. For example, when covering the topic of hacker interference in elections in the United States. In my opinion, the position of the American media is much more constructive than the reaction of the US administration and the Kremlin. They present only facts that are unpleasant to the authorities.

B1 End date of interview: 26.4.2017

B2 End time of interview: 22:11

Please note any obstacle during the interview.

No obstacles could be identified

Follow Up Questions:

1) Now that you learned about the approach of constructive journalism, could you in general imagine taking a constructive approach to news coverage?

No answer

2) When covering certain issues, for instances 'accusations of Russian hacking it could be helpful to provide more context in a story, provide solutions (both elements of a constructive journalism approach) ? What do you think?

No answer

3) Do you feel that the news coverage about 'accusations of Russian Hacking in the U.S. election' is constructive? Or rather negative, lacking context, various perspectives and solutions?

No answer