

The influence of Putin and Trump on journalism



Scala College

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Preface

In the end, the discipline of verification is what separates journalism from entertainment, propaganda, fiction or art.

Bill Kovach

Finding a focus area of my interest for my Final Project was not at all complicated. It was, literally and figuratively, in front of me all the time. That was the case then, from the very moment that I had to begin choosing a subject. Months later, it still is, on today's very day. The newspapers were brimmed with it, it was the main topic of many television and radio broadcasts and it frequently made Twitter and other social media platforms explode with incoming messages.

Whether you wanted it or not, it was unfeasible to escape or avoid all the reports about the alleged Russian interference in the election, the potential ties between President Trump with Russia and all the discussions about fake news, fact checks, the role of the media and the influence of trolls during the run-up and the aftermath of the United States presidential elections of 2016. Precisely because the event is so universally discussed and examined, determining the exact subject of this Final Project was a challenging task, to say the least.

I succeeded after I had dived further and more thoroughly into the matter through an extensive exploratory research. That brought me to the realisation that it is evident that the actions of both presidents lead to many opportunities for various media, resulting in either *making* or *breaking* news. At the same time however, the way both presidents deal with the media raises sincere questions about whether their conduct is not in effect breaking the possibilities of making news in their countries. Exactly these questions caught my real curiosity and interest.

This report describes how I have carried out the research for this Final Project and the conclusions I have drawn. I truly hope that the reader will learn as much as I did by exploring my topic and carrying out the research.

Last but not least, I want to thank my mentor and teacher, Mrs. Klijmij, for guiding me in the right direction and for her honest and beneficial advice.

Sara Haverkamp,
January 2018

1. Introduction

“Russian Hacking and Influence in the US Election” – *The New York Times*.

“Why Russia is Interfering In The U.S. Presidential Elections” – *Huffington Post*.

“2016 Election Hacking Fast Facts” – *CNN News*.

These were some of the headlines on television, internet and in newspapers that appeared in the months after the United States Presidential Elections of 2016. Even Wikipedia has a complete reasoned and substantiated informative webpage about the enervating subject, called “Russian interference in the 2016 United States elections”. Why would the Russians interfere with the presidential elections of the United States? Why are media so devoted to report about it? How did all of this happen – and is it even true?

These were the kind of questions that I wondered about recently after President Trump was elected as the new president of the United States of America in November 2016. In this first chapter, I will first of all describe how my interest for the subject of my Final Project was triggered in more detail and what exploration I performed while doing so in section 1.1. This does not only indicate to which choice of subject that led, but it also immediately illustrates the context within which I have carried out the research to come to this topic.

Thereupon in section 1.2, I will describe the main research question and the associated sub-questions for this Final Project and the hypothesis that I am going to test in this investigation. Finally, in section 1.3, I will provide an overview of the research methods that I have used.

1.1 Exploration

1.1.1 Trump and the media

During the run-up to the presidential elections in the United States of America on the 8th of November 2016, the performances of presidential candidate Donald John Trump made it evident that he was not and would not become a friend of the media nor journalists. After his election as president, Trump figuratively declared true and complete war to the American ‘mainstream media’. From the moment of his inauguration up to the present day, he reproaches the media not to outline and present a truthful picture of reality.



Figure 1 – Tweet of President Trump. Source: @realDonaldTrump

With the exception of some conservative media, such as the New York Observer and the New York Post, the television channel Fox News and the internet website Breitbart, the media and journalists cannot do any good from Trump's point of view. And he definitely makes sure they know this, either through speeches, in interviews or in an incessant stream of tweets, in which he characterises the media as fake, phony and failing.



Figure 2 – Tweet of President Trump. Source: @realDonaldTrump

With that, Trump's 'war' versus the media trespasses a lot of boundaries. Journalists are frequently verbally attacked by his spokespersons, and in February 2017, journalists from the New York Times, CNN and Politico were denied access to a press briefing (Farhi, 2017). At the end of June 2017, the television stations were banned for a month from broadcasting the press briefings live. After the resignation from spokesman Sean Spicer, this disposition was reversed and therefore the television stations were permitted to broadcast press briefings again.

At the beginning of August 2017, Trump launched his own television broadcasts via his own Facebook page. In the broadcasts was told what Trump had achieved in the previous week. However, the programme was withdrawn. The authentic reason for this action is unknown and yet to be discovered. However, it did become clear that the programme could definitely count on a lot of criticism.

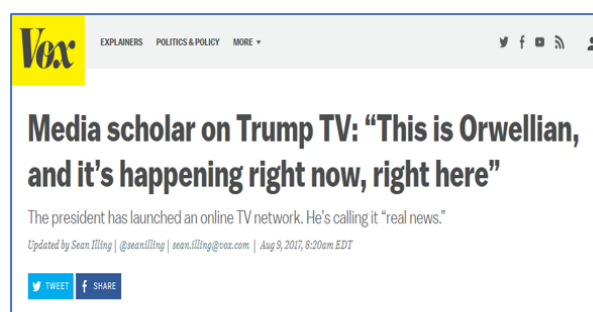


Figure 3 – Headline Vox. Source: Illing, 2017.

In early October 2017, Trump threatened with the withdrawal of the license of NBC, after a repugnant reportage. Apart from the fact that several parties pointed out to the president that he does not possess this power, the tweet on the right also illustrates the deeply disrupted relationships between Trump and the media.



Figure 4 – Tweet of President Trump. Source: @realDonaldTrump

American broadcasters, publishers and journalists obviously suffer from the ways in which Trump deals with the media, both during the performance of their work, but to a greater extent when it comes to the

visualisation that arises in that way and which influences their image. Journalists often call attention to the fact that Trump does not substantiate his claims, for instance about the media spreading fake news and being capricious (Steinberg, 2017).

Because of them suspecting Trump of disseminating fake news himself, the fact-checks of the media are still commonplace and internationally accepted. This intermittently leads to journalists catching Trump on spreading lies, which obviously does not do the mutual relationship any good.



Figure 5 – Headline CNN. Source: Merica, 2017.

1.1.2 Relations between Trump and Putin

In the plenteous amount of news about Trump, the name of the Russian President Putin also constantly emerges (Becker, 2017). That happened especially in relation to the suspicion that Russia allegedly has attempted to influence the United States presidential elections and the purported close ties between Trump and Putin. The suspicions about these Russian attempts to influence the American elections began in November 2015, with the discovery of the FBI that at least one computer of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) had been hacked by Russian hackers. IT-technicians of the DNC however failed to pass this message. In March 2016, John Podesta, chairman of the Clinton campaign, received a threatening e-mail. In June 2016, Julian Assange of WikiLeaks said that they had a batch of Hillary Clinton's e-mails and thereupon they announced that they would published. This happened in July 2016, with the publication of twenty thousand DNC e-mails. In September 2016, President Putin denied any ties between the hackers and himself, nor between him and the Russian government. Around the same time, in a presidential debate with Hillary Clinton, President Trump questioned the presumed role of Russia in his campaign.

In the following October and November, WikiLeaks published almost sixty thousand e-mails, emanated from John Podesta. Subsequently, United States security au-



Figure 6 – Headline The Guardian. Source: Gayle, 2016.

thorities claimed to know for certain that the Russian government is behind hacking the e-mails and that the efforts were aimed at favouring and supporting Trump's position in the elections and thereby damaging Clinton's.

At the end of December 2016, President Obama imposed sanctions on Russia (Becker, 2017). At the beginning of January 2017, Trump recognised that Russian hackers may have possibly been connected

to the hacking of the DNC, but that this did not affect the outcome of the elections, because the voting machines had not been hacked. In the meantime, Putin declared at various points in time that the hacking may have happened by patriotic Russians, but that the Russian government had not played a part in it. In June 2017, it becomes apparent through a leak by Reality Leigh Winner, a federal contractor at the NSA, that the Russian government had coordinated an attack on a company that delivers American voting machines and had at least hacked one e-mail account. Afterwards, Winner is immediately sued and arrested for transferring secret information.

In September 2017, Facebook reported that between June 2015 and May 2017, more than three thousand posted advertisements had a link to Russia. In October, CNN published an investigation into Russian trolls, which pretended to be activists of the Black Lives Matter movement and who used different platforms during the presidential campaigns to reach and influence American voters.

In the meantime, there had been an investigation going on into the possible political and financial ties between Trump and his associates and the Putin regime for quite some time (Becker, 2017). This research was first performed by FBI Director James Comey. After being discharged by Trump, the investigation was continued by the newly appointed FBI Director, Robert Mueller. Just before the completion of this Final Project, it became clear that Mueller was on the right track ascertaining a lot of secluded business. In relation to Paul Manafort, Trump's former campaign leader and his business associate Rick Gates, the investigations and charges that have meanwhile been announced denote so.



Figure 7 – Headline ABC News.
Source: ABC News, 2017.

1.1.3 Putin and the media

The fact that Putin consistently and almost systematically denied that the Russian government has attempted to influence the United States presidential elections raised my concern about whether and in what extent Russian journalists are actively engaged in this issue. When I was processing and inquiring information about the material, I quickly learned that it is difficult to find the answers.

Essentially, because I do not master the Russian language and there are only a limited number of direct English sources. I discovered that many Russian newspapers that once did have a website designed in the English language, have been closed since the financial crisis in 2008.

From a limited number of interviews with independent Russian journalists, the image emerges that the reporting about the United States presidential elections were dominantly anti-Clinton and anti-Obama.

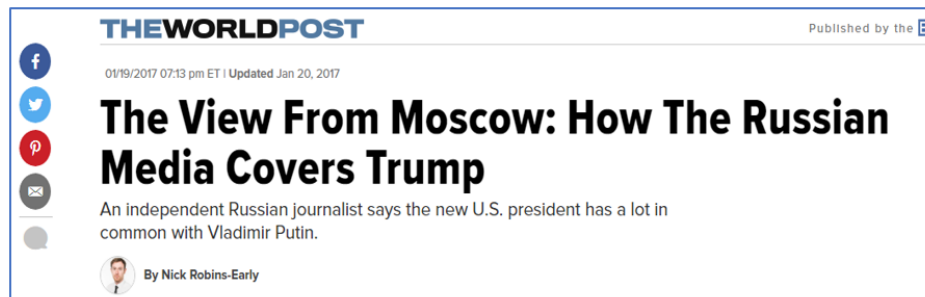


Figure 8 – Headline The World Post. Source: Robins-Early, 2017.

Beyond these sources, however, it is extremely complicated to get a complete and comprehensive picture of the news and notifications coming from Russia. When I intensified the level of my research and therefore dove further into the information, I discovered how fundamentally different the media landscape is in Russia, compared to the United States. It is striking, for example, that the media in Russia are largely controlled and regulated by the state, or by parties retaining direct ties with the Russian government and authorities. There are very few independent media sources and this noticeably also has implications for the way news and information are carried and framed in the country.



Figure 9 – Headline Newsweek. Source: Glum, 2017.

In my exploration I also recognised that Russian journalists are bound to scrupulous laws and regulations, which cause the work they have to carry out to impede. Although there is press freedom on paper, there seems to be little effectuation of it in daily practice. Finally, I also noticed how many Russian journalists have been assassinated in recent decades. Figures and statistics from the Committee to Project Journalists display that in the period between 2009 and 2015, 56 journalists have been murdered, of which 25 since 2000. The reports surrounding these murders suggest that the political climate in Russia is an important cause for this.



Figure 10 – Headline NRC. Source: Cukier, 2017.

1.1.4 Making or breaking the news, that's my question

It is clear that my exploration led to very interesting and many different questions. In the run-up to the choice of my final subject for this Final Project, a lot of ideas also passed the revue. These varied, among other things, for example the significance and effects on fake news, but also the operation and influence

of internet trolls and the impact of the relationship between Trump and Putin on the United States presidential elections.

These could have been good subjects, piece by piece. At the same time, I realised that I was mostly interested in the differences between the media in the United States and Russia, the differences in the way Trump and Putin deal with the media, and the question on what effects these ways have on the journalistic climate in both countries. Does it lead to making, or breaking the news?

1.2 Main research question, sub-questions and hypothesis

1.2.1 Main research question

The main research question for this Final Project is:

What are the effects of the way President Putin and President Trump handle the news media in their countries on the functioning of journalism in their countries?

In order to answer this main research question, it is important to first define the following:

- ‘The way President Trump and President Putin handle the news media in their countries’ is in the research defined as the manner in which they treat media and journalists within the organisational and legal-juridical structure of the media in their countries.
- To determine ‘the functioning of journalism’ the research will look into the three basic functions of journalism, known as: the information-function, the debate-function and the watchdog-function (Cuilenburg et al, 1992, in Rijnsemus, 2014).

1.2.2 Sub-questions

To answer this main research question, three sub research questions have been formulated:

1. *What are significant developments in the media landscapes in Russia and the United States since 2000?*

Changes in media landscapes are meaningful, because they will determine the way journalism developed in the United States and Russia. And the other way around: the history and practice of journalism in each of the countries will have its impact on the changes that take place in the media landscapes. The year 2000 is chosen as demarcation, because of the rise and spread of internet which will have effect on the media landscape in both countries.

2. *How do President Putin and President Trump deal with the media in their countries?*

The way both presidents handle the media is important to determine the effects upon the way journalism will be able to practice its basic functions in their countries.

3. Are the basic functions of journalism practiced in both countries and to what extent?

The answer to this sub-question is important to determine – given the media landscapes in both countries and the way both presidents deal with the news media – if journalism is able to exercise its basic functions.

The variables in these sub-questions are part of the main research question. The connection and the (reciprocal) relationships between the variables is presented in the conceptual model below:

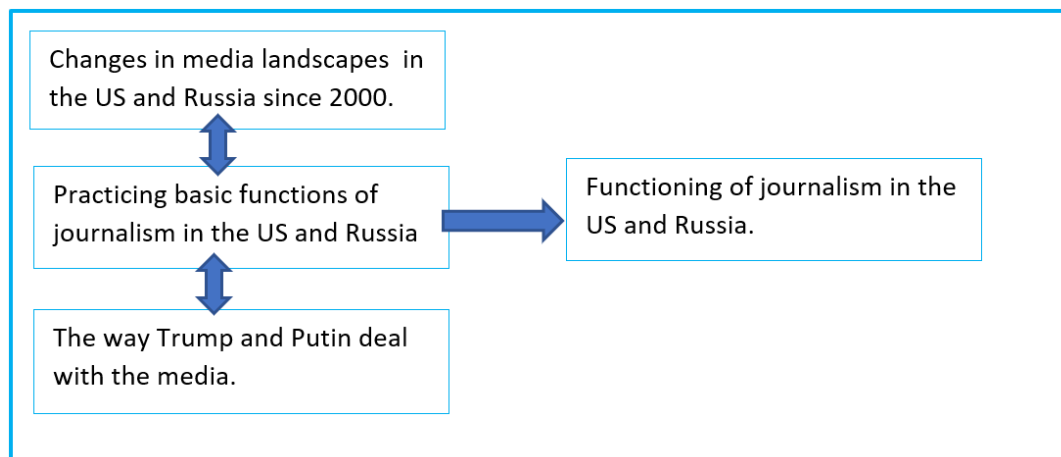


Figure 11 – Conceptual model developed for this Final Project.

1.2.2 Hypothesis

In regard to the main research question, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Despite the fact that President Trump is hostile towards the ‘mainstream news media’, journalism in Russia will be less able to perform its basic functions, because President Putin is an autocratic leader who will allow less freedom and space to media and journalists, compared to President Trump who is a leader in a democratic regime. However, with regard to the overt hostile attitude of President Trump to the news media, it can be expected that journalists in the United States will be confronted with more problems than before in exercising the basic functions of journalism, especially as it comes to their function ‘to inform the people’. I expect this outcome while the president avoids the intermittent function of the news media to inform people by his use of Twitter as his dominant medium to inform the people of the United States.

1.3 Type of research and research-methods

In order to answer the sub-questions, I have carried out qualitative descriptive research (Baarda et. al, 2013). To carry out my research and to answer the sub-questions, I have used the following qualitative research methods:

No.	Sub-questions	Research methods
1	<i>What are changes in the media landscapes in Russia and the United States since 2000?</i>	Literature research
2	<i>How do President Putin and President Trump deal with the news media in their countries?</i>	Literature research, combined with case studies and the four expert-interviews.
3	<i>Are the basic functions of journalism practiced in both countries and to what extent?</i>	Literature research, combined with two expert-interviews and two case studies.

In Chapter 2, I will provide a complete description of how the different research methods were applied and carried out.

1.4 Structure of this report

The report of this Final Project is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 comprises a complete description of how the different research methods were applied and carried out.
- In Chapter 3, 4 and 5 the answers to the three sub-questions are described, together with provisory conclusions of each of the sub-questions.
- Chapter 6 contains the conclusions to the main research question based on a summary of the most important outcomes and an evaluation of the research.
- The report closes with the list of references and the appendices in which the outcome and analyses of the case studies are included, as well as the outcome of the interviews and presentations of the experts.

2. Research approach

This chapter contains a description of the research approach and the way the various research methods were carried out during the process of constructing this Final Project.

2.1 Qualitative explorative research

To answer the sub-questions of this Final Project, qualitative explorative research was carried out. A characteristic of explorative research is that it actually explores a topic in order to get a better understanding of the research questions. Special attention is paid to important factors with regard to the research topic, possible relations between these factors and underlying motivations (Swanborn, 2004).

Qualitative research “allows for study of an explorative nature” (Campbell, p.3). In contrast to quantitative research, which is aimed at the collection of data which can be analysed statistically to objectify the data, qualitative research is focused on the exploration and discovery of data. This research approach suits the type of questions that are being dealt with in this Final Project.

Research methods to be able to perform qualitative research are desk/literature research, interviews and case studies. As explained in Chapter 1 (section 1.3), these three methods have been used and combined in carrying out the research for this Final Project.

2.2 Literature research

Extensive literature research has been carried out for all three sub-questions.

For the sub-questions 1 ‘*What are changes in Russia and the United States since 2000?*’ and 2 ‘*Are the basic functions of journalism practiced in both countries and to what extent?*’, this literature research has been predominantly carried out upon a variety of scientific sources.

For sub-question 3 ‘*How do President Putin and President Trump deal with the media in their countries?*’ the literature research was focused on gaining material for the case studies whereby a variety of sources from (online social) media have been used. All sources are acknowledged both in the various chapters as well as in the list of references.

During the literature research for all three sub-questions, special attention has been paid to describe different perspectives and – where applicable around certain issues – to describe the viewpoints of advocates as well as opponents. This is important in order to be sure that the outcome of the research depicts a balanced picture of reality.

2.3 Expert-interviews

In order to provide answers to sub-question 2 *‘Are the basic functions of journalism practiced in both countries and to what extent?’* and sub-question 3 *‘How do President Putin and President Trump deal with the media in their countries?’*, expert-interviews were carried out in addition to the literature research and the case studies.

Given the fact that the research was carried out through a combination of time-consuming methods (literature research, interviews and case studies) it was necessary to limit the number of interviews. However, this limitation is not inhibiting the investigations, since the interviews have been deployed in an additional capacity, with the function of getting an indication of the experiences and opinions of experts regarding the sub-questions 2 and 3. Given the scope of the research, the choice has been made to conduct two expert-interviews for Russia. For the United States these were supplemented by attending a public meeting with an American political analyst working for CNN and the record of a presentation of an investigative reporter at BuzzFeed News. In doing so, experts have been consulted for each country, of which all are in possession of relevant experience and expertise in relation to both sub-questions.

2.3.1 Selection of experts

The extensive literature research lead to a longlist of possible experts to interview for this Final Project. From this longlist I chose the following experts:

United States

- I have attended an afternoon meeting at De Balie in Amsterdam on November 5th 2017, titled: ‘One Year of Trump – An afternoon with journalist Ryan Lizza from The New Yorker and CNN on Trump and The White House’. During this meeting Ryan Lizza was interviewed by Eelco Bosch van Rosenthal, journalist at NOS/NTR Dutch public television. The record of this interview is recorded in Appendix E.
- On June 23rd 2017, the Dutch expertise centre for journalism (in Dutch: Het Expertisecentrum Journalistiek) organised the ‘Big expertise day new media’ (in Dutch: de Grote Expertisedag Nieuwe Media) for de 7th time. During this meeting, several pioneers of (online) journalism shared new insights. Among them was Chris Hamby, investigative reporter at BuzzFeed News and winner of the Pulitzer Price 2014. He gave a presentation about ‘Investigative journalism in the Trump era’. Because of the fact that I was not able to attend the meeting, I have watched and studied the entire video of the presentation online. I have made a record of the most relevant parts of the presentation for this Final Project. The presentation is recorded in Appendix F.

Russia

- *Marc Bennetts.*

He is a British journalist based in Moscow, where he has lived for the past fifteen years. He has reported from Russia, Iran, and North Korea for the Guardian, The Times, the Observer and the New York Times, among other publications. He spent eighteen months as a reporter for Russia's RIA Novosti news agency. With his wide-ranging experience as a journalist, in other autocratic-oriented countries as well, he is able to give a great image of the extent to which journalism in Russia can exercise its basic functions. His experience in the agency RIA Novosti (which was closed in 2013) is significant in the case study conducted for Russia (see section 2.4). The record of this interview is included as Appendix G.

- *Scott Gehlbach.*

He is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. As a political economist, his work deals with the contemporary and historical experience of Russia, Ukraine, and other post-communist states. He contributed amongst other things to the study of autocracy, economic reform and political connections. Moreover, he is the author of a scientific article about the extent to which, under the regime of Putin, the Kremlin consolidated power over the Russian media (Gehlbach, 2010b). With this experience and expertise, he can deliver good input for both sub-questions two and three. The record of this interview is included as Appendix H.

2.3.2 The interviews

Because it is about qualitative and explorative interviews, open questions are drawn up to guide the interview. These questions offer space for exceptions in the various interviews and possibilities for further questions. The interviews will be carried out face-to-face (via Skype) and/or written (via e-mail), since all of the experts mainly work internationally.

2.4 Case studies

In addition to the literature research and the interviews, I have conducted two case studies to answer the third sub-question. These case studies consisted of a description by desk/literature research of the following events:

Case study Putin

This case study is focused upon the intervention of Putin to close down Russia's state news agency in 2013 and further pressure-actions upon independent (social) media in the period until 2017. The case study consisted of an inventory and analysis of these actions by using different scientific and journalistic sources. The inventory and analysis are recorded in Appendices A and B.

Case study Trump

This case study was carried out by analysing how Trump dealt with (social) media in his first 100 days as a president. The case study consisted of an inventory and analysis of the tweets Trump sent via his own personal Twitter account. The inventory and analysis are recorded in Appendices C and D.

Both case studies were also topics in the interviews with experts (as described in paragraph 2.2). The case studies are described in further detail in Chapter 4.

3. Significant changes in the media landscapes in Russia and the United States since 2000

The first sub-question will be dealt with in this chapter, namely: *What are significant changes in the media landscape in Russia and the United States since the year 2000?* Developments in journalism are naturally largely determined by both the media landscape in which journalists work and by the laws and regulations that apply in the world of media. This is why the developments in the media landscape and the laws and regulations will be assessed first in this chapter about Russia and the United States.

3.1 The Russian media landscape: (in)direct state censorship

3.1.1 Developments in the Russian media landscape

In order to describe and understand the media landscape of Russia from the year 2000 and onwards, it is essential to look back further in time. Historically seen, the influence of the media has never been as profound as in the West. This has everything to do with the fact that the Russian history is characterised by more dictatorial regimes. In the West, people are accustomed to democratic state forms with a lot of space for freedom of speech and therefore, freedom of the press. The media thereby play an important role: “They offer the desired stage for the critical reflection that accompanies good citizenship” (Münninghof, 2016, in Pijnappels, 2016).

The Russian media landscape up until 2000

Censorship

During the communist periods between circa 1920 and 1990 in the previous century, the media in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or USSR, were basically serving the regime. This meant they were regulated and controlled under strict censorship. In fact, it was a case of “press run by the state, which prescribed people how to think and react” (Münninghof, 2016, in Pijnappels, 2016). Up until including the beginning of the 1980’s, the news in the Soviet Union mainly focused on ‘positive news’. “The publishing of such ‘good news’ was believed to have an important ‘demonstration effect’ on the workforce as a whole, encouraging socialist emulation and improved productivity” (McNair, 1991, p.22).

More media freedom

There is a substantial difference in the media landscapes of before and after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Advameg, 2017; Khvostunova, 2013). When Boris Yeltsin became president of the Russian Federation, a period that is also described as a ‘polycentric political model’ came into place. This was based on a power distribution between “oligarchs, industrial-financial groups and regional state administrations” (Khvostunova, 2013). “The period from 1988 to 1992 marked what many feel was the ‘Golden Age’ of the Russian press” (Advameg, 2017). Many new newspapers with different political

colours and preferences were founded, just like newspapers and tabloids that were not politically bound, but which instead profiled around various societal issues and interests (Advameg, 2017).

Effects on Russian journalism

However, this eventually did not lead to independent journalism. This had a couple of reasons.

- In the first place, there was practically no knowledge among journalists about approaches in which they could achieve independent journalism, as they were acquainted with working for clients coming from the Communist Party (Münninghof, 2016, in Pijnappels, 2016).
- Secondly, the fall of the communist regime also led to the end of state subsidies for the media. As a consequence, the media commercialised and ended up in the hands of valuable and affluent stakeholders in politics and business, also known as oligarchs (Münninghof, 2016, in Pijnappels, 2016; Laevskaya, 2015). In this context, Sparks concludes that in Russia, as far as the media is concerned, there is an “elite continuity system” (2008, p.18). This means that there is still a small elite controlling the media. Where it used to be the state itself, it is now the government and millionaires with extravagant economic power (Groves, 2007; Khvostunova, 2013).
- In the third place, corruption, mafia practices and a lot of violence were of frequent occurrence under the regime of President Boris Yeltsin. There were journalists who reported on and made revelations about these kind of scandals, often resulting in their deaths. This happened not only in war zones such as Chechnya and the Caucasus, but by liquidating critical journalists in the streets of Moscow and Saint Petersburg as well (Münninghof, 2016, in Pijnappels, 2016).

On the other hand, newspapers and other platforms of media were accused of corruption themselves. The wages for journalists were often so low, that journalists sometimes had to take several other jobs next to their journalistic duties. Some of them therefore also took bribes, in order to carry out commissioned journalism (Advameg, 2017). There were allegations that claimed journalists were letting themselves be hired for money in return to ensure good publicity for those who hired them (Advameg, 2017; Münninghof, 2016, in Pijnappels, 2016). These cases did not do the credibility of Russian journalism any good.

Developments in the Russian media landscape from 2000 onwards

Regaining political control

Developments taking place after his rise to power in 2000, President Vladimir Putin “transformed the country’s political system from ‘polycentric’ to ‘monocentric’” (Khvostunova, 2013). Focused on political stability for his new regime, Putin eliminated all other political forces and implemented omnipresent control of the government, the Parliament, the legislative power, justice and the media system in Russia (Vartanova 2010 in Khvostunova, 2013). With this, he restructured the entire system of checks and balances and gained almost ubiquitous and integral control. This was invigorated by Putin gathering influential businessmen and oligarchs around himself and his position and warning them to keep far

from the Russian politics, unless they adhered and conformed to his political lines or rules (Khvostunova, 2013).

Regaining control over the media

Simultaneously to politics, Putin designed ways in which he could administer the media in the country just as much. He first did so with television, mainly because the market share of television among the Russian public had become much larger than that of newspapers and because it is the main source of Russians for news and information (Münninghof, 2016 in Pijnappels, 2016; Walker & Orttung, 2014). The figure below illustrates this:

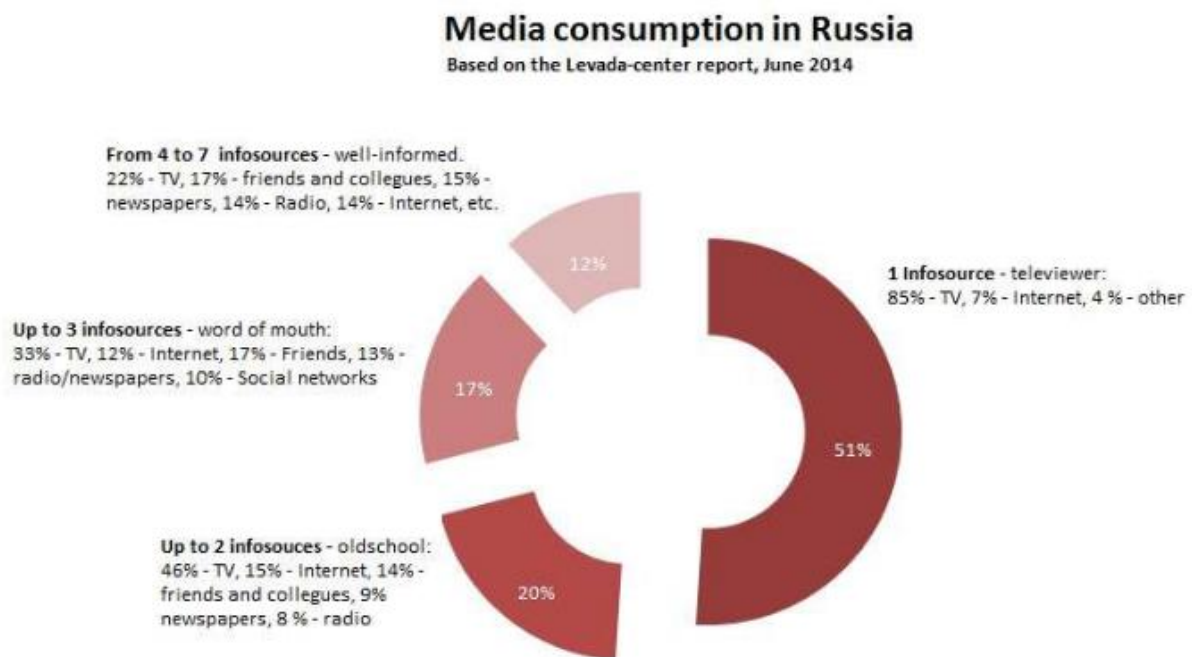


Figure 12 – Media consumption in Russia. Source: Levada Center report 2014, in Laevskaya, 2015.

Putin's reconquest of media control started with the end of popular television programmes in which satire was practised on Putin's regime. Afterwards, Putin settled that by far most television and radio stations came into the hands of the state. In 2001, 'Media Most' became a part of the Gazprom group, a Russian media holding, which is partly administered by the state. Media Most consisted of more than sixteen media companies, including a publisher, a television station and several radio stations. Subsequently, the state gained control over the important television station ORT and in 2006 the publisher Kommersant was bought up by a rich steel tycoon working closely with the state (Laevskaya, 2015). With this, Putin has quickly brought the mass media back to state media, "which spark and stimulate the nationalist momentum of Russia and the Russians" (Münninghof, 2016 in Pijnappels, 2016).

Three media models

Nowadays, the Russian media landscape roughly consists of three models (Lehtisaari, 2015):

- There are media that are strongly run by the state or local authorities.

- There are media more based on commercial models, such as glossy magazines, business newspapers and commercial radio stations that are focused on the selling of products and that serve to maintain pleasant contact between advertisers and consumers.
- There are media that are in the hands of wealthy businesspeople loyal to the state and who exploit the media for their own business and political interests.

Media as a political instrument

By means of this, the Russian media indeed seem to have been controlled by the state for the most part again. Walker & Orttung (2014) describe the importance of the media for authoritarian leaders. “With no guiding ideology such as communism, to lean on, regimes use media to fill the void, offering a mix of consumerism, nationalism, anti-Americanism, and other intellectual currents to keep the regime ‘above water’ in terms of popular support” (2014, p.72). Controlled state media are therefore also an important tool for Putin to keep his regime in power. Besides that, by means of controlling the media, he can also prevent opposition groups from earning a larger range in which they can spread their beliefs. The media strategy of Putin focuses particularly on the broad population and on its political opponents. The messages that are disseminated through the controlled state media aim at contributing respect for the regime to the population of the country, by posing the regime and its leaders in a positive way through terms and images and by trying to keep out as much opposition and negative connotations as possible. These messages are also meant to create fear: the Russian state television has a structural focus on foreign threats that could potentially be dangerous to Russia. In addition, the Russian media offers an increasing amount of entertainment and that can also be considered part of the media strategy, for it causes people to act passively and because it prevents political activism (Walker & Orttung, 2014). That strategy appears to be effective: according to Khvostunova (2013), the public interest of politics has shifted to entertainment, due to “the general disillusionment of the Russian citizens in politics and in their own abilities to bring about change” (2013, p.3). The commercialisation of the Russian media also contributes to the increasing supply of entertainment, which aims to stimulate more consumption and is driven by advertisement budgets. Khvostunova speaks, in this regard, of “tabloidization of the media” (2013, p.3). In an investigation of the Levada Center in June 2014, that picture is established. More than half of the respondents indicate that they are satisfied and contented with a single source of information and television by far appears to be the most important information source. (Laevskaya, 2015).

Limiting the freedom of internet and social media

The controlling of messages on television, newspapers and radio is easier for authoritarian regimes than through the internet, which has rapidly developed in Russia as well during recent years. The rise of internet is inextricably related to economic growth and development and the prohibition or total blocking of it is therefore not an option. Walker & Orttung (2014) describe that up until 2014, Russia wielded a strategy aimed at using subtle techniques that could determine when and how information could be received by internet users. However, they also indicate that the freedom in which the internet can be

used has deteriorated dramatically after 2014. This is apparent from a country report of Freedom House (2014). This report makes clear that the authorities often block content that is critical of the regime to prevent such ideas or opinions from spreading out over the population and perhaps influencing a larger scale of people in the process. Furthermore, anti-terrorism laws are applied as a pretext to block political content without a judge assessing it. Independent online media are often forced to remove politically sensitive content and websites owned by or supporting minority groups (such as the LGBTQ+ communities) and political opposition are often censored. Since 2015, long prison sentences have been imposed on users of social media who post or share information that goes against the official government statements and positions on controversial issues. Moreover, social media users who openly criticise the Russian regime can also encounter intimidation or violence by the state. Likewise, the Russian government has enacted laws limiting the privacy of internet users, providing greater freedom for authorities to collect personal data and an increasing amount of control over tech companies.

3.1.2 Media consumption and its range in Russia

Internet and television are the most common media in Russia.

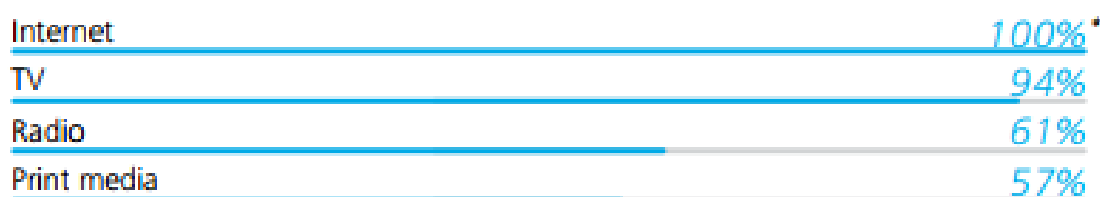


Figure 13 – Basic media usage by respondents (two-week period).
Source: Media consumption in Russia – key trends. Deloitte, 2016.

Especially the usage of internet has risen rapidly. To illustrate this, the market share of the internet increased by 10% between 2007 and 2012, while the share of newspapers decreased by 4% and that of radio by 3% (Khvostunova, 2013).

2007		2012	
TV	49	TV	48
Radio	7	Radio	4
Press	23	Press	19
Internet	3	Internet	13
Other	18	Other	16

Figure 14 – The use of various media in Russia in 2007 and 2012 (in %).
Source: Aegis Global Report, 2012, in Khvostunova, 2013.

To get news daily, most Russians turn to television and internet.

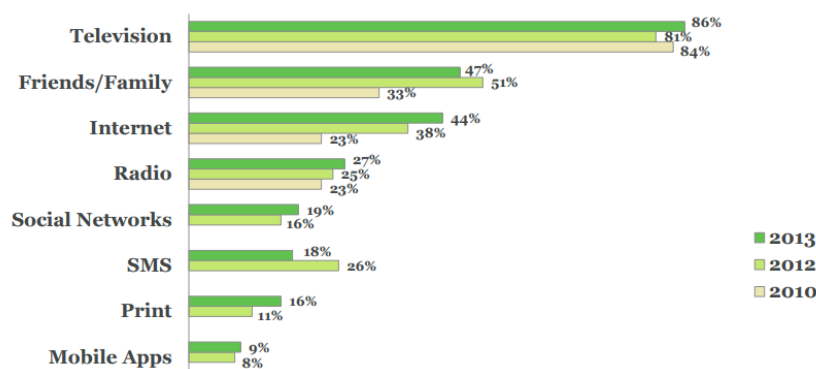


Figure 15 – Division of various media usage in Russia in 2010, 2012 and 2013.. Source: Contemporary media use

As in many other countries, in Russia there are generational differences in media usage. This accounts especially for the use of television (most popular amongst 35 and older) and the use of internet (most popular amongst youngsters).

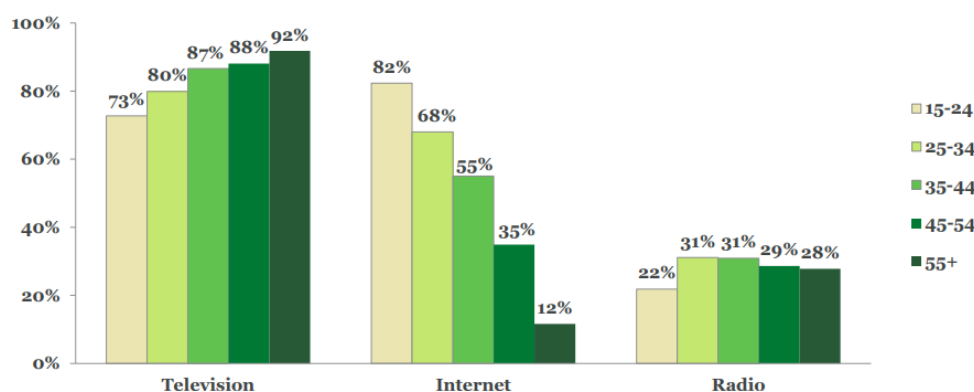


Figure 16: Usage of television, internet and radio in Russia in age groups (in %). Source: Contemporary media use in Russia. Gallup, 2013.

Trust in the media

It is complicated to find substantiated information about general Russian confidence in their media, unlike the situation in the United States. For the latter, a lot of information is accessible, often even over longer periods of time. It is certainly possible that more information can be found for Russia, however these sources are often written in Russian without available translation. This indicates that the confidence in the media of the Russian population is being researched less extensively and in-depth than that of the American people.

The information that has been found in the context of this research contains partly contradictory images and models. For instance, an investigation by Levada, a Russian polling centre, shows that in 2015 only 41% of the Russian population found the television a credible source. This is a strong decrease compared to 2009, when it was still 79%. Furthermore, this study also shows that in this period the credibility of newspapers decreased from 14% to 12%. That of radio decreased from 13% to 11% (Vennink, 2015).

At the same time, a survey by Gallup from 2014 demonstrated that Russians consider the state media to be the most reliable source regarding news about Ukraine, contrary to Western media (Ray & Espinova, 2014).

	Reliable	Not reliable	Do not use/Non applicable*	Don't know/Refused
Russian media	76%	14%	1%	8%
Russian non-state media	30%	27%	26%	17%
Western media	5%	48%	36%	12%
Family/Friends in Ukraine	34%	8%	47%	11%
Family/Friends in Russia	29%	8%	39%	24%

*Figure 17 – Among Russians who are following news about Ukraine.
Source: Russians rely on state media for news of Ukraine, Crimea. Ray & Espinova, 2014.*

Ray & Espinova (2014) conclude that these outcomes are comprehensible “given the high marks they give their own government, and the large role that state media has played in helping to create this new, positive, and powerful image for the country's leadership”. Thereby they point to the fact that at present, there are still few independent media left in Russia.

The previous research is a comparison between Russian and Western media and specifically deals with news and reporting about Ukraine. When the general confidence in Russian media is reviewed, it appears that the trust of Russian citizens is yet less well off. Pasti (2010) refers in an investigation (VICOM 2007) to the valuation of occupations in Russia from 2007. This proves that the least respected professions are those of businessmen and journalists. In doing so, she describes that a survey by Gallup in 2008 shows that the confidence of Russians in journalists (with 6%) is much lower than the average for the world (with 16%). She also points to a survey (Barometer of Trust) that the Russian elite does have confidence in the Russian authorities and businessmen, but not in the Russian media and its system.

The last report of this Barometer of Trust (2017) reveals through an international comparison that the confidence in Russia in the media in 2017 is very low, with 31%, and that it has decreased with 7% compared to 2017. It is striking that the assurance in the media in the United States did not decline between 2016 and 2017, according to this barometer. In section 3.2, more information on media confidence in the United States is provided.

Trust in Media Plunges to All-Time Lows

Percent trust in media, and change from 2016 to 2017

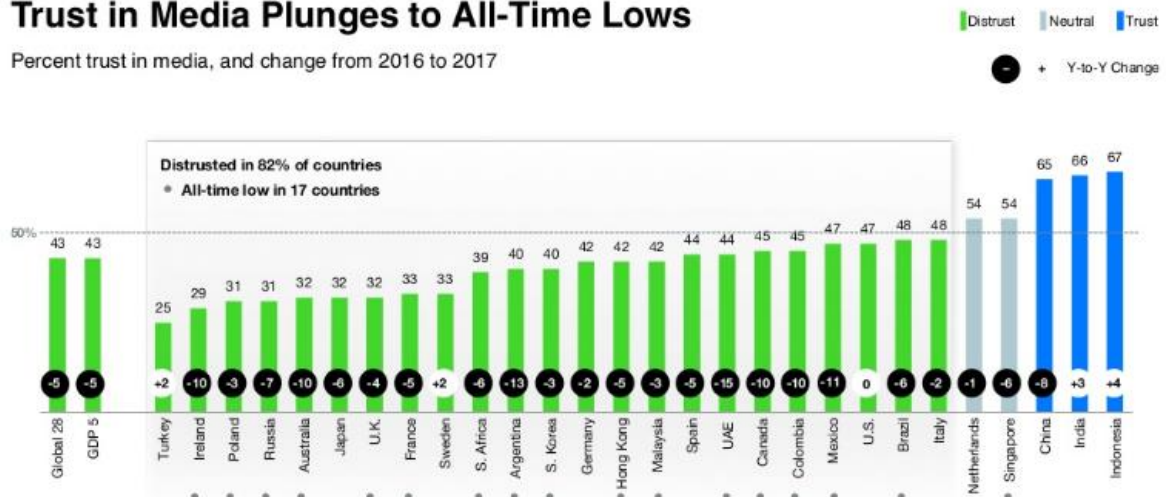


Figure 18: Trust in Media Plunges to All-Time Lows in Russia. Source: 2017 Edelman trust barometer. Edelman, 2017.

Television

99% of the Russian households are in possession of a television and 94% of the Russians daily watch it. The Russian television offers nineteen federal channels, which can be viewed by over 50% of the entire population. The top three channels are Perviy Kanal, Rossiya 1 and NTV, all mainly in control of the state. The Russian television is primarily financed by advertisement fees and sponsorships (Khvostunova, 2013).

Newspapers

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many newspapers went bankrupt at a rapid pace. “Compared to 1990, the total national circulation of newspapers by 1999 was reduced to one-fifth, while magazine circulation in the same period decreased to one-seventh” (Advameg, 2017). In less than ten years and much more agile than in the West, Russia changed from a country that was known for its many readers to a country of mostly television viewers, in that relatively short period of time. In 1999, the general public for print media was about 82%, while for television this number was 95%. In addition, 36% of all Russians found the news on television more reliable than the news presented in the papers (13%) (Advameg, 2017). The share of newspapers has been declining since 2008: in 2013, only 20% of the Russian population read a newspaper (Khvostunova 2013; Lehtisaari, 2015). The main causes for this development are the financial crisis of 2008, the growth of the share of internet media and the ban on advertising for alcoholic beverages since 2013, causing many newspapers to miss out on large advertisement revenue (Khvostunova, 2013).

At this moment, it applies to the Russian newspapers that there is a rough distinction between a small range of quality newspapers which are mostly aimed at the business public and that all have a relatively small readership, and popular tabloid newspapers with a broader public who, consequently, dominate the market. The top ten of Russian newspapers with the largest audience range contains only two quality

newspapers (Kommersant and Vedomosi), while the other newspapers cover the entertainment sector (Khvostunova, 2013). In the top ten of weekly magazines are solely entertainment magazines and tabloids. Weekly magazines that do provide serious analyses of political issues are sincerely scarce. Some examples are Kommersant-Vlast, Expert and the New Times. The first two are property of oligarchs who openly support Putin (Khvostunova, 2013).

There is some difference in public preferences for newspapers in the big cities of Russia. For instance, the Moskovsky Komsomolets (in private ownership) is the second popular newspaper in Moscow. Although the newspaper has a mass media appeal and is tabloid-like, the newspaper sometimes contains perspicacious political commentaries. Furthermore, the Novaya Gazeta holds the eighth place of popular newspapers in Moscow. It is one of the few newspapers carrying out investigative journalism, owned by Russian businessman Alexander Lebedev and (in the meantime deceased former president) Michael Gorbachev (Khvostunova, 2013).

Radio

The medium radio has a small share in the Russian media landscape. The majority of radio stations broadcasts both music and entertainment. Of the top fifteen most popular radio stations, there are only three of them broadcasting political talk shows: Mayak, Radio Rossiya and Ekho Moskvy. The first two are controlled by the state. The third occasionally allows members of the opposition to join, in order to include criticism on the political regime (Khvostunova, 2013).

Internet and social media

The use of internet has developed swiftly in Russia. Around the beginning of this century, it was calculated that the Runet (the Russian language internet) was lagging behind three to five years regarding developments that already appeared in Europe and North-America. In 2014, Russia counted an estimated amount of 84,4 million internet users and an investigation in 2015 demonstrated a result saying that 54% of the Russian population use the internet on a daily basis. This vigorous expansion is caused by a widespread availability of internet throughout Russia and the greatly increased use of mobile phones with internet connection (Lethisaari, 2015). The search engine Yandex dominates the market with a market share of 65%, in contrast to Google, which possesses 22% (2011).

The use of social network media is also widespread, as the illustration on the right shows.

In early 2014, there already existed a penetration rate of 50% (Kemp, 2014). The social media landscape in Russia is chiefly determined by (Bell, 2011):



Figure 19 – Russia: Social indicators. Source: Numbers - internet and social networks in Russia. Sikorska, 2014.

- VKontakte, the Russian alternative for Facebook. This platform is the most used social medium in Russia. At the same time, Russians with a more international orientation do use Facebook.
- Odnoklassniki, a social network meant for office workers.
- There are circa 7,4 million blogs written in the Russian language, with a total readership consisting of approximately 23 million people. Live journal, the most popular blogging service, roughly has five million registered accounts.



Figure 20: Social networks in Russia. Source: Social media in Russia and Ukraine. Bell, (2011).

3.1.3 Laws and regulations in Russian media

Within the scope of this Final Project, it is impossible to give a full and outright overview of all laws and regulations regarding the mass media in Russia. This is the reason why it suffices to provide a thorough description in this section concerning a number of important and significant laws and regulations and the trends in legislation and regulations in recent years.

Important legislation

On paper, the freedom of the press in Russia seems to have access to good protection. The Russian Constitution of 1933 explicitly provides: “The freedom of the mass media shall be guaranteed. Censorship shall be prohibited” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 1993). In fact, the practice of it is recalcitrant. The main law for mass media is the ‘Law concerning mass media’, which was signed in 1991 by the former president, Yeltsin, and various international laws, including ‘International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights’ (Advameg 2017; Lamzin et. al, 2015).

Although the ‘Law concerning mass media’ establishes freedoms for both journalists and citizens, regulates the freedom of mass information and prohibits censorship, there are many provisions that restrict these freedoms. At the same time, there are restrictions and bans when it comes to disseminating information, for example with regard to extremist activities. Likewise, it is regulated in the law that judges may prohibit publications or other functions of media if they abuse the freedom of a mass medium. In this way, such rules ensure that the government or state has a lot of power to limit the freedom of the press to its own discretion (Advameg 2017).

In 1992, the ‘Press Law’ was established, whereby censorship was banned again, but also involving that “certain kinds of speech are prohibited, especially those calling for changing the existing constitutional structure by force, arousing religious differences, social class and ethnic differences and disseminating war propaganda”. These provisions offer a lot of space and are vaguely drawn up on purpose, which causes ambiguity regarding something, for example, being seen as libel or slander. In addition, in 1995, via statute the subsidising of newspapers was provided, which was federalised by the Russian parliament through a new law. This law gives Moscow both financial and editorial power over the newspapers (Advameg 2017).

Trends since 2000

From 2000 onwards, a trend is visible in which legislation is deployed in order to further control the mass media and which consequently gives public authorities and government agencies a pervasive influence and far-reaching powers and functions. They “may block, without the need to obtain a court order, access to websites that refuse to take down certain information, or require a journalist or editorial office to disclose a source of information. Other notable developments are the introduction of the so-called ‘bloggers law’ and the ban on the use of explicit language (Lamzin et. al, 2015).

This trend is also conspicuous with regard to foreign ownership in Russian media. In October 2014, Putin signed a law that limits the ownership of foreigners in Russian media up to 20%. This will result in even more constraint on the content of the Russian media, since the shares that are bought will either come into the hands of the Russian government organisations, or in those of rich businessmen who have proven to be loyal to the regime (Hille, 2014).

Under the influence of these trends, the position of journalists and users of online (social) media is further abated. The new laws are regularly little detailed and dubious. As a result, it is very complicated for lawyers to give journalists correct and worthy advice as to how they can best operate within the legal boundaries. Lamzin et. al (2015) therefore states: “It is extremely important for the journalists in Russia to be very cautious in dealing with any sensitive subjects, either related to politics, economic or social agenda or practically any other matters.”

3.2 The United States’ media landscape and its many influences

3.2.1 Developments in the media landscape in the United States

Minimal state intervention

Contradictory to Russia, the United States have traditionally been acknowledged for their freedom of the press. In the United States, the dominant opinion is that press-freedom can only flourish with a minimum of state interventions. This seems to derive from a strict interpretation of the First Amendment, which can be read as a prohibition to any government involvement with the press (Benson 2016). Therefore, the ownership of news media in the United States is predominantly in private hands: the share of public broadcasting is only 2% in the United States (Hallin, 2005). Benson (2016) differentiates roughly three segments in the commercial news proposal:

- A segment with mass infotainment including media such as Yahoo, BuzzFeed, Huffington Post, Vice, Vox and local commercial news.
- A segment with partisan media, which is provided by Fox on the conservative side and MSNBC on the left liberal side, and by conservative talk radio and media in the political blogosphere.
- A segment with mainstream quality news, including national newspapers, like the New York Times and the Washington Post, national network news, general news magazines such as Time and leading regional newspapers.

The small segment of public broadcasting is provided by PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) and NPR (National Public Radio). In addition, there are many non-profit news organisations, amongst which ProPublica, Center for Investigative Reporting and the Center for Public Integrity.

Revenues of commercial and public broadcasting media

Commercial American media heavily rely on advertisement revenues. American newspapers received approximately 80% of their revenue from advertisements until 2005: the highest proportion in the world (WAN, 2007, in Benson, 2016). Until that same year, these news media had very profitable companies, with profit margins of 20% to 30% (Benson, 2016). Commercial newspapers were not able to generate advertisement revenues for their online activities, such as websites, without sacrificing journalistic independence. Some newspapers attempt to let their readers close subscriptions for online content, or by requesting a financial contribution for it. However, an effect of this choice is that people who possess more money gain access to news and it does not relate to the free yarning of information via the internet (Benson, 2016).

Public broadcasting by PBS and NPR is partly funded by the public (4 USD per capita). This is very little, compared to for instance France (50 USD per capita) or Germany, Denmark and Norway (130 USD per capita). Therefore, PBS and NPR receive the majority of their income from donations. In total the revenues are still meagre: less than 10 USD per capita (Benson, 2016). This is a cause of the media being strongly dependent on their donors, who often ask for a compensation or counter-performance in exchange for their donations. In recent years, a number of scandals have made it evident that these media sometimes produce news that only serves the particular interests of their sponsors (Benson, 2016).

The effect of financial crises

Due to the advent of digital media, the number of advertisements in print media fell after 2000. This pulled down the revenues and gains of these media. This aggravated with the financial crises of 2001 and 2008 (Benson, 2016). As stated before, newspapers are barely able to manage to draw revenues from advertising through their online activities, such as websites. However, the newspapers still achieved to make certain profits, since they have strongly cut back on staff. In recent decades, the number of journalists in the newspaper sector has largely been reduced, particularly after the financial crises (Pew Research Center, 2016), as shown in the figure below. Especially jobs for investigative journalism have disappeared (Benson, 2016).

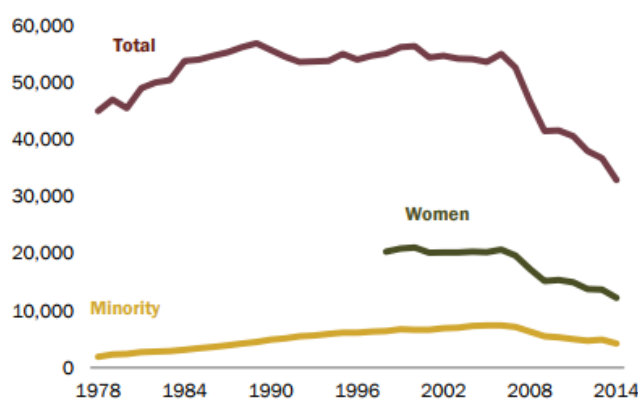


Figure 21 – Total numbers of newsroom employees at U.S. newspapers.
Source: State of the news media 2016, Pew Research Center 2016.

These jobs will not become available again in the labour market because of the advent of the digital media. Benson (2016) shows that even the most substantial online news media sources, such as Huffington Post and BuzzFeed, are unable to make considerable profit. This is because they are largely dependent on online advertising, which does easily not come off the ground. As a result, a choice that is often made is that for news that is fairly uncomplicated to produce: it is based on news that is already existing, often derived from other media sources. Subsequently, the costs can be kept under control and therefore be kept low: less staff is needed and the staff that does perform labour is often paid very badly. By comparison: Huffington Post, which has a monthly online audience of 100 million, has 260 full-time journalists, compared to New York Times with a monthly online audience of 57 million employs 1.300 full-time journalists (Benson, 2016).

Consolidation of media power

The media industry in the United States is ‘big business’, to say the least. The most important mass media are the property of large organisations. Most of the news comes from sources such as ABC, NBC, PBS, CNN, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, Time Magazine, Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI). Most local newspapers receive national news via AP and UPI (Oswald, 2009). The fact that the media landscape in the United States is dominated by commercial media has an effect upon the content of news. Public media “provide more in-depth, ideologically diverse, and critical news about public domestic and international affairs than commercial media” (Benson, 2013, in Benson, 2016). Furthermore, public media contribute to a greater trustworthiness of the news and therefore to more confidence of citizens in the news that they receive to read in their daily lives (Albæk et al., 2014, in Benson, 2016).

In recent decades, the ownership of the media in the United States has been highly concentrated, as the following infographics show:

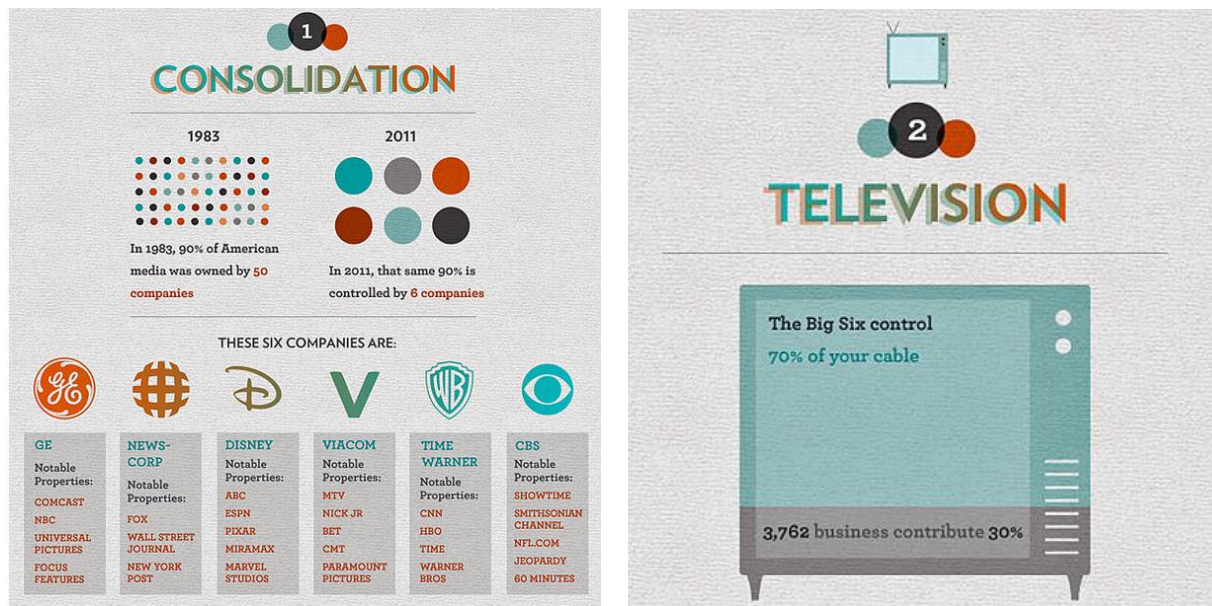


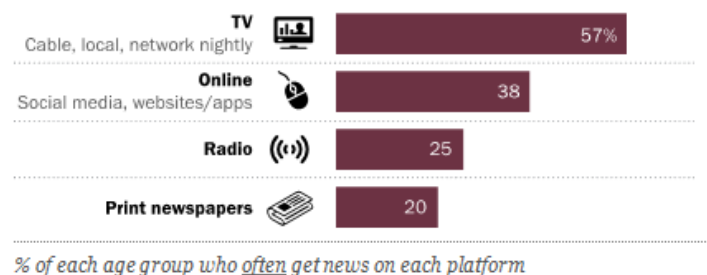
Figure 22 – Ownership of the media in the United States. Source: *Frugal Dad*, 2011, in Lutz, 2012.

This means that the power of advertisers is enormous. “In effect, broadcasters sell audiences to advertisers” (Oswald, 2009). Or in other words: Large media companies are rather focused on keeping advertisers contented, than on informing the public. This is also criticised, because it means that wealthy enterprises and powerful politicians determine the content of the mass media. “The present state of the mass media, consisting of a few large monopolies, makes it nearly impossible for unpopular views to be heard” (Oswald, 2009).

The question is to what extent the freedom of the press still exists in this way. Wright & Rogers (2009) argue that the free market press in the commercialised system is definitely not a guarantee for a free press that serves public interests. They note that the views and perspectives of the owners of the media are visible in the content of the media. “Owners hire, fire, set budgets and determine the overarching aims of the enterprise. Journalists, editors and media professionals who rise to the top of the hierarchy tend to internalise the values, both commercial and political, of media owners” (McChesney, 2004 in Wright & Rogers, 2009). Moreover, due to the increased consolidation of media ownership, there is less competition between the various media, reducing the diversity of the content of the media. In addition, the media strive to stay on the good side of their advertisers. Some speak of market censorship in this context: “Mainstream media do not want to run stories that will offend their advertisers and owners. In this way, the media end up censoring themselves and not reporting on many important issues, including corporate practices” (Terdiman, 2007).

3.2.2 Media consumption and its range in the United States

The average consumption of news media in the United States still predominantly takes place via television, as the figure below shows:



	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
TV	27%	45%	72%	85%
Online	50	49	29	20
Radio	14	27	29	24
Print newspapers	5	10	23	48

Figure 23 - % of U.S. adults who often get news on each platform.
Source: *The modern news consumer – pathways to news*. Mitchell et. al, 2016.

Still, this figure also indicates that there is a shift from television to online news consumption, especially amongst younger generations. Furthermore, the share of radio and print newspapers compared to all media declines in general and under younger generations. These trends have steadily been growing since 2001:

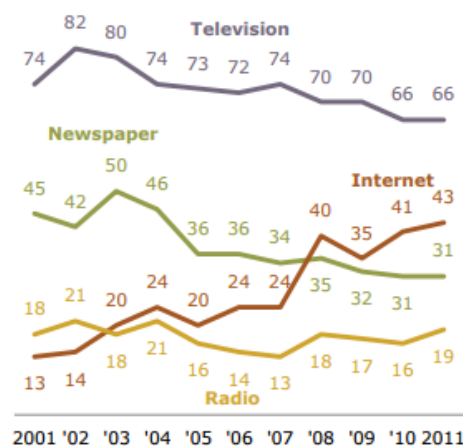


Figure 23 – Main Source of National and International News. Source: *Views of the news media: 1985 – 2011*.

Trust in news media

Although it seems as though the discussion about the lack of confidence in the news media in the United States has mainly ascended around the presidential elections in 2016, it has in fact been going on for a much longer period of time. In an investigation by Pew Research Center (2011), confidence in the news media between 1985 and 2011 has been mapped. This clarifies that the American citizens have

increasingly been negatively judging the various media. At the same time, the confidence in the news media appears higher than in other institutes.

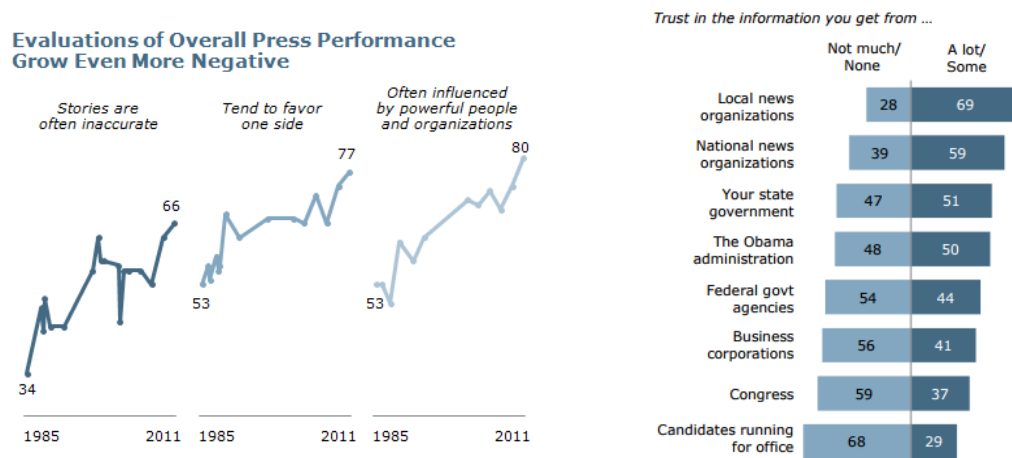


Figure 24 – Evaluations of Overall Press Performance Grow Even More Negative. Source: Views of the news media: 1985 – 2011. Pew Research Center, 2011.

An investigation by Reuters (2016) shows that the confidence of Americans in news is significantly lower compared to other countries. For example, 38% of Americans rely on the general news, with which the United States rank 28th in a ranking of 36 countries. The confidence of Americans in news media they use themselves is higher (53%) and thus they are positioned 13th on a ranking of 36 countries (Reuters, 2017). The fact that Americans trust the general news media a lot less than the news media used by themselves is also confirmed in an investigation by Pew Research Center (2011).

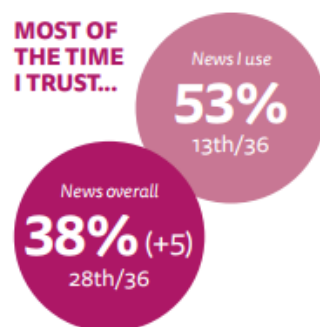


Figure 25 – Trustworthiness in overall news and news used most under Americans. Source: Digital news report 2017. Reuters, 2017.

In the United States, the distrust in the news media and the concern about political bias is greater under Republicans than under the left-liberals. The Republicans suspect that the mainstream media are based on ‘a liberal agenda’, meaning that they are mostly influenced by the ideas and assumptions of the left-liberals. As a comparison: the opposite is the case in the United Kingdom, as the next figure shows:

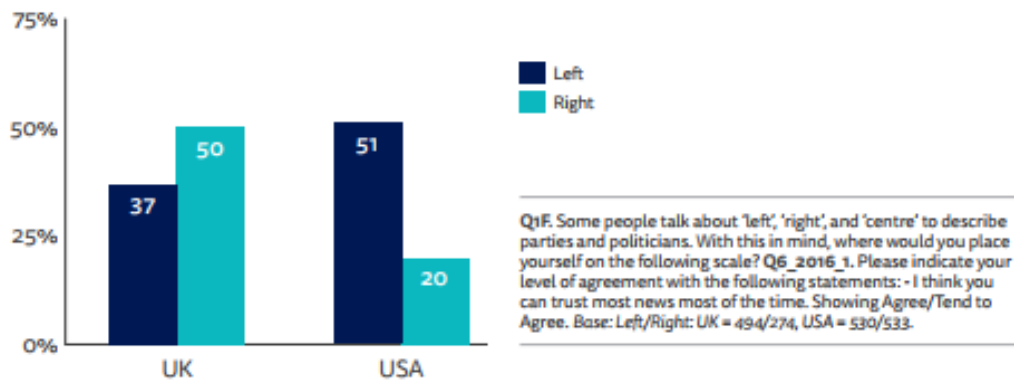


Figure 26 – Trust in the news by political allegiance – UK and US.

Source: Digital news report 2017. Reuters, 2017.

Television

The commercial television market in the United States consists of television networks, cable companies and television stations. Up to 1980, three privately-owned networks dominated the television market in the United States: National Broadcasting Company (NBC), (Columbia Broadcasting System) and the American Broadcasting Company (ABC). That changed with the rise of cable television in the 1980's. This new technology offered an opportunity for national and international distribution of products. Nowadays, the large television networks supply channels to television stations and cable companies. These networks are not only NBC, CBS and ABC, but also other the major networks such as FOX, Warner Bros (WB) and United Paramount Networks (UPN). Public television stations are linked through three national organisations: the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and the Association of Public Television Stations (APTS) (Carey & Elton, 2010).

Television is still the most popular medium for (political) news in the United States. This was also the case during the presidential elections of 2016:

	%
Television	78
Local TV news	57
Cable TV news	54
National nightly network TV news	49
Late night comedy shows	25
Digital	65
News websites or apps	48
Social networking site	44
Issue-based group websites, apps or emails	23
Candidate or campaign group websites, apps or emails	20
Radio	44
Print newspaper	36
Local daily newspaper in print	29
National newspapers in print	23

Figure 27 – % of U.S. adults who learned about the 2016 presidential election in the past week from various media. Source: The 2016 presidential campaign – a news event that's hard to miss. Gottfried et. al, 2016.

However, although television is still a popular news source and has financial strength, it is evident that the digital media have won the race of popularity. There are large differences between generations, whereby youngsters use social media a lot more and more often as their most substantial news source (Pew Research Center, 2016).

Radio

The number of Americans that listens to the radio has been steadily increasing over the past ten years.

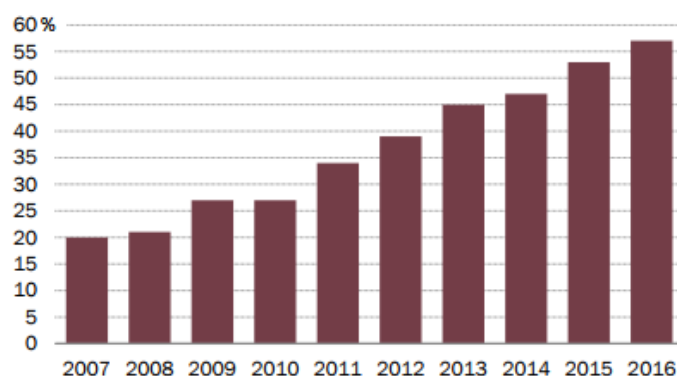


Figure 28 – % of Americans ages 12 or older who have listened to online radio in the past month. Source: *State of the news media 2016*. Pew Research Center, 2016.

The growing popularity of radio can be explained by the fact that the ability to listen to radio stations through mobile devices has been improved and refined. In 2014, 73% of Americans listened to the radio on smartphones and 61% through desktops and laptops (Pew Research Center, 2016).

News channels with exclusively news broadcasts attract no more than 1% of Americans aged 12 and over. However, radio stations with news, talk and information are exceedingly popular with 11%. The only radio format that is more popular is country music (14%). Radio is also one of the more important sources for political news: research around the presidential elections of 2016 showed that radio, with its increasing market share (44%), was a more important news source than national newspapers (23%) and local newspapers (29%). The revenues of commercial radio come mainly from advertising, where 75% of the revenue is derived from advertorials during radio broadcasts and 10% from advertisements on radio websites (Pew Research Center, 2016).

Newspapers

From 2003 to 2007, there was already a downward trend in the press of newspapers in the United States, but during the Great Recession due to the financial crises in 2007 and 2008, the number of printout newspaper editions declined even more. From 2009 to 2013, the press increased again. From 2014 onwards, however, there is a drastic decrease in both the press of newspapers and the advertisements. This also affects the employment in the sector. In the last twenty years, a total of 20,000 jobs (40%) have disappeared in the newspaper industry and in 2014, this percentage fell by another 10%. This is also caused by newspaper companies merging and consolidating, reducing the number of newspaper

companies in the sector. And although the websites of newspapers show a growing number of visitors, overall the sector is shrinking (Pew Research Center, 2016).

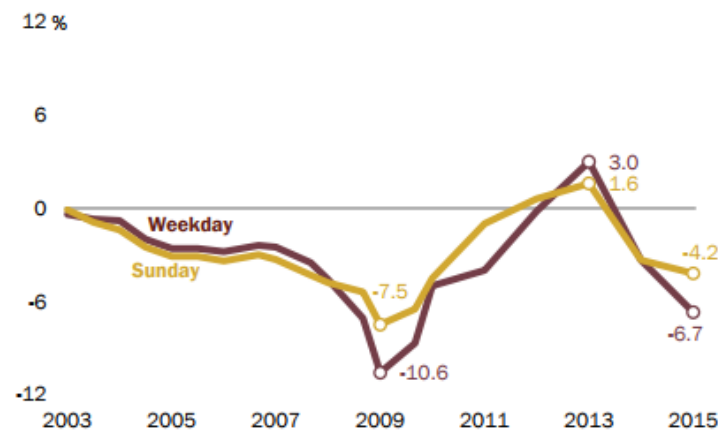


Figure 29 – % change in average weekday and Sunday circulation in the United States. Source: *State of the news media 2016*. Pew Research Center, 2016.

It is remarkable that newspapers are losing their share of the news supply. Only ten years ago, newspapers were the most important source of news for most Americans. A survey from Pew Research Center researching the way in which people received news about the American presidential elections of 2016 shows that newspapers are in the very lowest position with 36%, compared to television (78%), digital media (65%) and radio (44%) (Gottfried et al, 2016), which implies that they have been used the least by Americans in obtaining news about the elections.

The newspaper industry has not yet been able to respond well to the influence that online media have on people's media behaviour. In the industry, the emphasis is still strong on paper newspapers. For a large part of the traditional readership, paper newspapers are still the favourite medium. At the same time, there are many people who end up on websites on the internet when they are in search of information. The digital visit to the websites of newspapers is much higher than that of the traditional subscribers who (also) have an online subscription. The challenge for newspapers is therefore to make these occasional visitors into loyal readers of their news (Pew Research Center, 2016).

At the same time, a survey by Reuters (2017) in for countries (United States, United Kingdom, Finland and Spain) presents that there is generally no willingness amongst the public to pay for online news. Meanwhile, there certainly is an impact of the presidential elections of 2016 in the United States. Reuters (2017) in this context calls it a "Trump Bump", as the figure below makes clear:

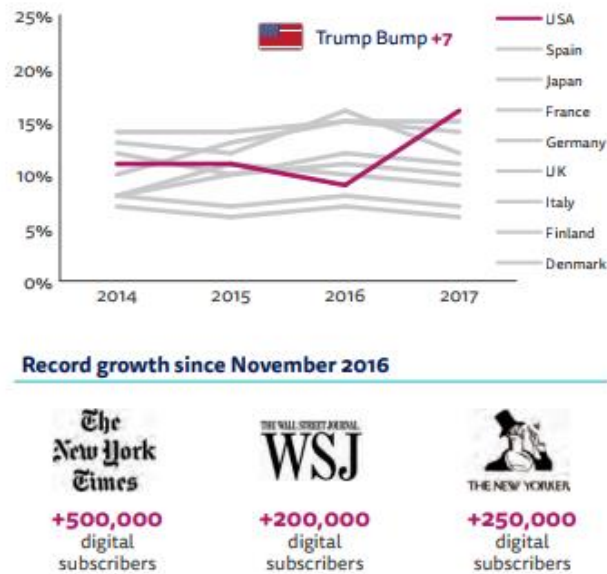


Figure 30 – Online news payment remains flat, but there has been an upsurge in the USA – selected countries. Source: Digital news report 2017. Reuters, 2017.

Online and social networking media

The use of online and social networking media for news has rapidly grown in the United States is becoming part of the media mix.

When searching for news via online and social networking media, the mobile smartphone or tablet is taking an increasing important position:

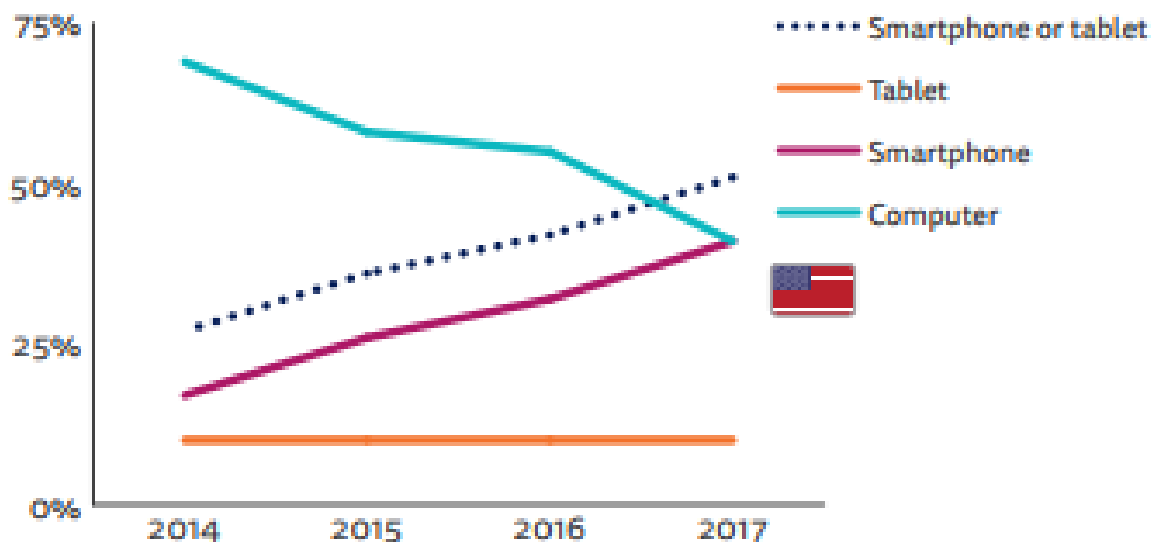


Figure 31 – Changing device use for news 2014-2017 – USA. Source: Digital news report 2017. Reuters, 2017.

When searching for news both in the United States and in other countries, the usage of news apps is increasing:

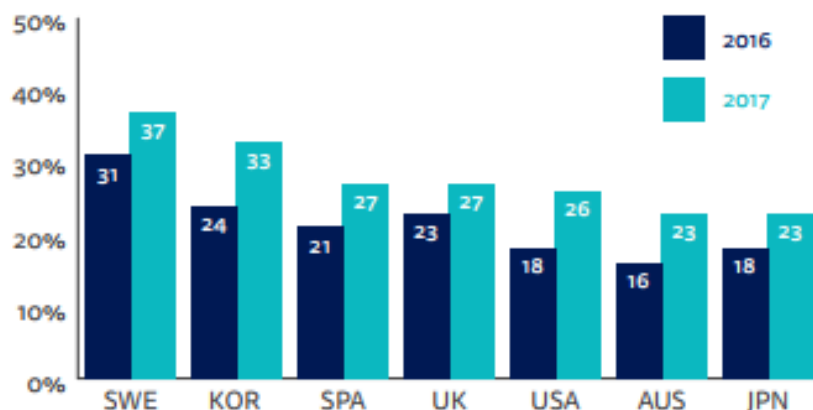


Figure 32 – Proportion using news apps weekly - 2016-2017 – Selected countries. Source: Digital news report 2017. Reuters, 2017.

When it comes to using online social networks, Facebook is the most popular in the United States, remotely followed by Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Twitter.

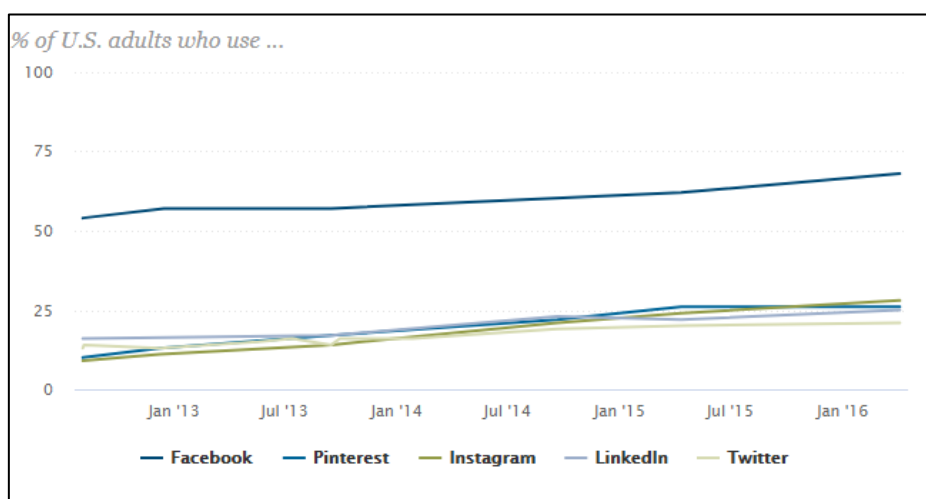


Figure 33 – % of U.S. adults who use various types of media. Source: Social media fact sheet, Pew Research Center, 2016.

When they were asked about their news sources for the United States presidential elections in 2016, 65% of Americans indicated that they had used digital sources. In doing so, 48% expressed that it concerned news sites or apps and 44% said to have used social networking websites. That number has been more than tripled since the presidential elections in 2012, when this share was only 12% (Pew Research Center, 2016). By that, primarily Twitter seems to have benefited. Because although only a small part of the Americans says to use Twitter for news in 2017 (15%), this was still 5% more than in 2016 (Reuters, 2017).

The role of social networking websites during the presidential elections of 2016 should not be overestimated according to Reuters (2016). In the first place, because by far most Americans receive their news

via television and online sources. Moreover, much of the news on social networking sites also comes from the traditional media. “Two-thirds of social media news users in the United States also watch television news (67%) and two-thirds also visit mainstream websites or apps (66%) – a bit more than the general population. Just 2% only uses social media for news in an average week.” (Reuters, 2017).

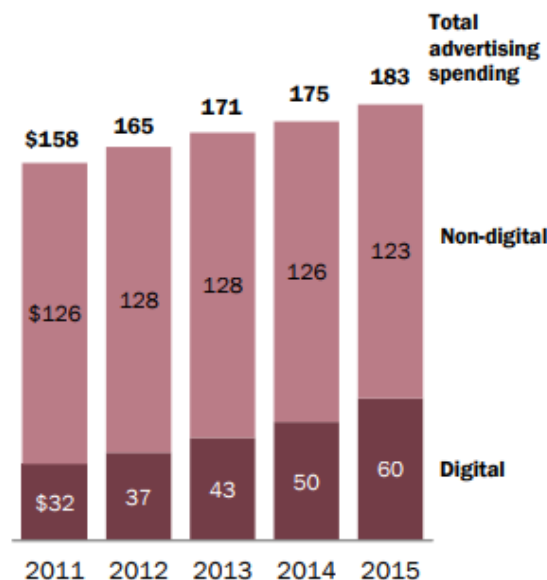


Figure 34 – Annual total advertising spending (in billions of U.S. dollars). Source: *State of the news media*. Pew Research Center, 2016.

Advertising on digital media keeps on burgeoning. In 2015 a total of \$59.6 billion was spent on advertising on digital media and it now accounts for 33% of total advertising spending (\$183 billion) (Pew Research Center, 2016). However, the companies that profit most from this increase are Google, Facebook, Yahoo, Microsoft and Twitter. Traditional media such as television stations and newspapers receive relatively little income from these revenues (Pew Research Center, 2016).

3.2.3 Laws and regulations in the United States’ media

Freedom of the press seems to be at the heart of media legislation of the United States. Press freedom and the freedom of speech is guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. These rights are protected by independent courts. Additionally, there are strict guidelines limiting the possibilities to monitor and eavesdrop on journalists or to use their recordings (Freedom House, 2017). These guidelines were further tightened up in 2013, after journalists of the Associated Press (AP) and the Washington Post were secretly bugged by the Justice Department (Calderone & Reilly, 2013).

Furthermore, in about forty states, certain laws apply which protect journalists from releasing their sources. However, there is no law yet that also provides this protection at the level of the Federal Government. In the past ten years, under the governments from both Bush and Obama, there have been several lawsuits to force journalists to release their resources. These lawsuits often concerned the leaking of information by civil servants to the media (Freedom House, 2017).

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) of 1966 regulates the access of journalists to official information. Although this access is administered by law, it frequently occurs that government officials do not wish to provide the information at all – or not completely. To improve that, former President Obama signed the FOIA Improvement Act in June 2016 (Freedom House, 2017).

There are virtually no laws or regulations regarding the content of the media. With regard to the internet, there are laws that prohibit, for example, the use of child abuse images and the dissemination of confidential information. They regulate the use of copyright material as well.

In 2015, the Congress adopted the American Freedom Act. This law forbids the National Security Agency among others to collect widespread phone data from Americans (Steinhauer & Weisman, 2015). This is also essential for journalists, since there is a danger of self-censorship at the moment there is the risk of their own phone data being monitored (Freedom House, 2017). The Act does not preclude the government from providing access to encrypted information at certain times. It is not always clear to what extent this should or should not be done (Freedom House, 2017).

Although journalists are relatively well-protected by laws and regulations, there have been incidents in recent years where journalists have been denied access when they, for instance, wanted to report demonstrations. Journalists have also been arrested while reporting around protests, such as in Ferguson's protests in 2014 (Stelter 2014) and the reporting on the Dakota Access pipeline (Ellerbeck, 2017).

On the average, the United States as a whole still is one of worlds' most press-friendly countries. However, concepts and elements are changing nevertheless. Even though previous presidents sometimes had difficult relations with the media, so far President Trump has definitely taken the biscuit. "No U.S. president in recent memory has shown greater contempt for the press than Trump in his first months in office. He has repeatedly ridiculed reporters as dishonest purveyors of fake news and corrupt betrayers of the national interest. Borrowing a term popularized by Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, Trump has labelled the news media as 'enemies of the people'. His senior White House adviser described journalists as the opposition party" (Abramowitz, 2017). Although Trump has left it at aggressive and offensive language until now, it is a question whether that will remain that way. One of his campaign promises was, for example, to tighten up the legislation on libel and slander, which can be used to curtail journalistic freedom.

3.3 Conclusions with regard to developments in the media landscapes in Russia and the United States

From the findings in this chapter, it can be concluded that developments in the Russian and the American media landscape exhibit striking and sometimes unexpected similarities, next to remarkable differences.

The first similarity relates to the role and the influence of large companies on the media. After Russian media had been under severe censorship during the communist regime for a long time and subsequently experienced a period of relatively more freedom in a polycentric model, President Putin transformed the Russian media landscape into a monocentric model. In this model, Russian media are predominantly owned by either the state or wealthy businessmen or oligarchs who are loyal to Putin's regime. Therefore, it is fair to state that even though actual censorship in the media is being denied by the Russian government, it is in fact the case, which results in 'indirect censorship'. In the United States, influence of the state is seen as a limitation of media freedom and therefore the ownership of the American media is almost entirely in commercial hands. The commercial media is full of advertising revenues. Moreover, the possession of the media is concentrated in the hands of just a small number of big corporations. This causes the content of the media to be largely determined by these companies, aiming to increase their own profits. It can be stated that, in either Russia as well as in the United States, the influence on the media of large, wealthy companies is massive.

When it comes to political influence on the media, that of Russia is considerably clearer and more direct than that of the United States. Russian media primarily serve a political interest and the state influence is extensive, either directly through the Kremlin or indirectly via large companies loyal to Putin. At the same time, there is also a certain interdependence in the United States between the interests of large companies and politics, which indirectly influences the media as well. This is also reflected in the fact that some people speak of 'market censorship' in the United States, when it comes to keeping the owners and advertisers satisfied, as compared to 'state censorship' in Russia.

Another similarity is the large part of mass entertainment in Russian and American media. As described, this can be identified in Russia as an effective component of Putin's media strategy, with which Russians are held passive and 'voluntarily' refrain from political activism. On the other hand, the large share of entertainment in Russia also serves the interests of wealthy businessmen who own a specific part of the Russian media, not least because it leads to higher viewing figures and more advertising revenues. The latter is also the explanation for a strong focus on mass entertainment in the United States. Commercial American media are responsible for keeping their owners and advertisers contented, because they are crucial for their survival. As indicated, this leads to the commercialisation of news in the United States and it is at the expense of the production of more in depth, ideological diverse and critical news.

Similarities between Russia and the United States are also related to the development of media consumption. In both countries, the share of television is still large, even though the influence of the internet and social network media is becoming increasingly significant. Furthermore, there is a sharply decreasing share of newspapers in the news supply in both countries. It is striking that the causes of this are similar to one another: in both countries, it is mainly the case that newspapers do not find a good response to the growing share of online media in the news facility, neither to the concomitant decreasing

advertisement revenues. The share of radio in the news provision is relatively small, although this share in the United States has been a slowly rising trend for years. An important difference is that in Russia, there are far fewer radio stations than in the United States. Besides that, the emphasis is on entertainment media in Russia, while in the United States certain radio formats with news, information and talk are particularly popular. Finally, in both countries the share of internet and social network media is increasing.

In terms of laws and regulations regarding freedom of the press, there are major differences between Russia and the United States. Although in both countries cases of media and press freedom are enshrined in their constitutions, these principles are by far better respected in the United States than in Russia. In addition, it is compelling that there are less restrictive additional laws and regulations on the media in the United States than in Russia. Where there is regulation in the United States which regulates access to official information and protects journalists from having to release their sources, Russia has been enforcing legislation which imposes further restriction on the freedom of mass information, disseminating information and prohibiting censorship since 1991. Moreover, further laws and rules have become effective, restricting certain kinds of speech, limiting online freedom and obliging journalists to reveal their sources. Finally, the state influence on the Russian newspapers has been further enhanced by the decision in 1995 to subsidise newspapers, increasing the state's financial and editorial power over newspapers. All in all, it can be concluded that American journalists can carry out their work in much greater freedom than their Russian counterparts, even in an era when the current president has declared them to be his enemies. To what extent journalists in both countries are able to execute the basic functions of journalism will be explored in Chapter 5.

4. The way President Putin and President Trump deal with the media in their countries

The extent to which news media and their reporters are able to function, depends also on the way they are treated by the most powerful men in their countries, namely the presidents. In this chapter, a description is provided of two case studies that have been carried out as a part of the research for this Final Project.

4.1 How President Putin deals with the media

The case study in this paragraph describes the way President Putin deals with the Russian news media and focuses on the period since his re-election in 2011 until 2017. As described in Chapter 2, the focus will be on the (in)direct state control that has been exercised on the news media during this period.

In contrast to the case study about the way President Trump deals with the media in the United States (see paragraph 5.2), it was more difficult to find direct and applicable sources to research and build ‘the Putin case study’. In the case of Trump there is a huge amount of direct sources from the president himself; in the case of Putin, these are inadequate for the most part.

This has, however, been settled by combining different sources to get a real and as complete as possible case. The following sources are used are:

- a description of how Putin deals with Russian media since his first election, built upon publications from different scientific and journalistic sources;
- an inventory has been made of the way Putin has taken actions since his re-election in 2011 to stimulate direct and indirect state control of the off- and online news media, by the use of publications of different sources (see Appendix C) and by a further analysis of this inventory (see Appendix D);
- two interviews, which have been carried out with regard to Putin’s actions to bring the media under direct and indirect state-control: one with Marc Bennetts, who is a British journalist, working and living in Moscow (see Appendix G) and one with Scott Gehlbach, professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin–Madison (see Appendix H).

4.1.1 Outcomes of the case study on President Putin’s dealing with the media

To understand the way Putin dealt with Russian news media during the period 2011 – 2017, it is necessary to have a look at his dealings with the media from the moment he came into power. An extensive and detailed description of this period is given by Lipman (2016). She describes that when Putin was elected president in 2000, his primary and most important goal was to secure the power of the state. As Dougherty (2015) states: “For him [Putin], it’s a simple transactional equation: Whoever owns the media controls what it says”.

Concerning the media, Putin's first steps were to bring the three national television stations under state control. Scott Gehlbach, professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, who was interviewed for this Final Project, describes this as follows (see Appendix H). From the beginning, Putin has put great emphasis on controlling what is reported in the news on national television. Government control of the media can be either direct or indirect. In the 1990's, Russian national television was financially heavily supported by the state, which also led to state influence. At the beginning of the new century, this diminished and the advertising market started to grow. This could have led to more independent national television. However, Putin took control over NTV and over the two other national television networks. Indirect control by the state was thus replaced by direct state control.

In fact, Putin did not strive for complete control over the media. Gehlbach explains this in this manner (see Appendix H). An important characteristic is the increased control that Putin executes over the media. However, despite what many people think, nowadays the system in Russia is authoritarian, not totalitarian. And it is capitalist, not socialist. Putin wants to hold power, but has no ambition to change Russian society fundamentally.

However, part of Putin's strategy was to bring more media under indirect state control, by stimulating wealthy business owners to invest in media assets, so that more media outlets became the property of businessmen loyal to Putin and the Kremlin. Early in his presidency Putin told Alexey Venedikov, editor in chief of Echo of Moscow, Russia's only remaining independent radio station, how he expects the press to work. "Putin said: Here's an owner, they have their own politics, and for them it's an instrument. The government also is an owner and the media that belong to the government must carry out our instructions. And media that belong to private businessmen, they follow their orders. Look at [Rupert] Murdoch. Whatever he says, will be" (Dougherty, 2015). This strategy bloomed in Putin's favour and some of these media owners are now personal friends of Putin, belonging to his inner circle (Lipman, 2016).

Indirect control via commercial ownership was for instance acquired by oligarch Kovalchic, who built a media empire which includes NMG, has control over the eleven biggest television channels, has a share of 60% of the television audience and 80% of advertisement revenue. And billionaire Usmanov, who is seen as the richest man in Russia, owns Kommersant Publishing House and has a large share of internet holdings.

After two consecutive terms as president, Putin was not allowed to run for the presidency again in 2008. In 2007, he therefore invented the 'tandem rule', which meant that Medvedev would become president and Putin prime-minister. In 2008, this was factualized, of course also with the help of national state television in the election period. However, tandem rule or not, as was clear to everyone, Putin would remain the most powerful man in Russia (Lipman, 2016).

Lipman (2016) also describes how it became evident around 2008 that a more critical part of the media-audience, started to criticise the amount of propaganda on national television. They started to turn away from the national news, using other media outlets with less state intervention. These information sources were then still available, for instance in daily newspapers such as Kommersant, Vedemosti and the Novaya Gazeta, in weekly papers such as The New Times and Kommersant Vlast, on radio at Ekho Moskvy and on different websites that offered news, analyses and opinions. These media outlets offered covering, opinion columns and blogs, some also with investigative journalism into – and criticism upon – the government. While Putin had secured his political power, these media were politically irrelevant to him.

When the presidential elections for presidency in 2012 approached, it became clear that Medvedev would not run. Medvedev made public that Putin and he agreed for him to step back in order to make room for Putin's presidency. This led to public anger, also because of fraud during the election campaign of 2011. In Moscow and other cities, there occurred public protest against manipulation and anti-Putin demonstrations were organised. Media and journalists played a considerable role in the centre of this activism. Internet and social media also contributed by reporting and mobilizing people to participate in the protest (Lipman, 2016).

In this period, the tone on the national television news changed drastically. Opponents of Putin were bashed and named as “national traitors” and “the fifth column” (Lipman, 2016). From that moment on, a “crackdown on non-government media” started.

The inventory of (in)directed state influence on Russian media outlets in the period 2011 until 2017 that has been made for this research (see Appendix A) substantiates this point. The inventory shows a long list of incidents where state influence has been executed on different media, including the reasons and reactions CQ follow-up. A further analysis of the inventory brings a picture of the number of times different media outlets were confronted with specific measures of (in)direct state influence (see Appendix B):

Media	Times (in)direct state influence was exercised	Years
Website	4	2014 (3), 2017
Newspaper	3	2011 (2), 2013
Radio	3	2012, 2013, 2014
Television station	3	2014 (2), 2015
Magazine	2	2012
News company/media group	1 (and 1 under the threat of being sold to the state)	2016 (and 1 under threat since 2015)
App	1	2017
News agency	1	2013

Figure 35 – Outcome case study on Putin conducted for this Final Project: the number of times different media outlets were confronted with specific measures of (in)direct state influence (2011 – 2017).

This table shows that incidents of (in)direct state influence on Russian media outlets has been executed eighteen times in the seven-year period between 2011 and 2017, especially on websites, newspapers, radio- and television stations, magazines and to a lesser extent via news companies and social media apps. However, in a certain sense this table is somewhat concealing, because it does not show the character and the impact of the state interventions.

Klishin, chief editor of Dozhd TV, a station that was repressed after posting Kremlin-unfriendly content on its website, describes the impact as follows: “What’s happened in Russia would be like Fox News taking over the airwaves in the US, booting MSNBC from cable television, and reducing liberals to broadcasting online from a small apartment in Brooklyn” (Dougherty, 2015).

Another example is the closing of RIA Novosti. This was a network that covered more than 45 countries and reported in fourteen different languages. It worked with influential journalists and the website carried live reports from anti-Putin protests in Moscow during the winter of 2012 (Dougherty 2015). Marc Bennetts, a British journalist, based in Moscow, was interviewed for this Final Project (see Appendix G). He describes why the news agency was closed down: “RIA Novosti was providing (especially in English language) reports and was an objective voice, as well as giving an opportunity for Putin's critics to state their opinions in state media. There were differences of opinion within the Kremlin administration as to whether this was a good thing or not. On the one hand, it was good for Russia's international image and allowed the Kremlin to point to the existence of certain media freedom. On the other hand, for the Kremlin hardliners, who eventually won the argument, it was a travesty that westerners were being employed by a Kremlin-funded news agency to write articles that did not follow the ‘party line’. Dmitry Kiselyov, who eventually took over as state media boss, told journalists that they should be ‘weapons’ in the ‘information war’” against the West in his first week on the job. Many people were discontented with this and quit. I had left RIA Novosti around a year before it was closed down in its original form.”

To shed further light on the incidents and the impact, Appendix A comprises a detailed description of the incidents and the impact. In Appendix B, the kind of state intervention is analysed and categorised. This leads to the following outcome:

Categorisation of reasons for increased (in)direct state influence	No. of times
Repression of oppositional views and content.	11
Increasing Kremlin-friendly control over media outlets.	2
Increasing media ownership in Russian hands.	2
Diminishing independent media outlets.	1
Threat to confidentiality of journalistic sources.	1
Personal reasons?	1
Unclear.	1

Figure 36 – Outcome case study on Putin conducted for this Final Project: categorisation of reasons for increased (in)direct state influence (2011 – 2017).

This analysis makes clear that the (in)direct state influence served in far out the most cases to repress oppositional views and content. The coercion of Kremlin-friendly control over media outlets is scored two times. However, this might conceal that the fact that the (in)direct state influence will very likely also have led to self-censorship. In a climate where (in)direct state intervention is to be feared, it can be expected that editors and reporters work more cautiously than in a climate where this fear is (predominantly) absent. This is, however, not measurable in the inventory.

The number of times websites and social media were confronted with (in)direct state influence and the effects on the repression of oppositional views and content and confidentiality of journalistic sources, is in practice higher than the inventory shows. This has to do with the fact that after the blocking of the first websites, others were blocked, but this is not entirely documented, so it could not have been taken into account in the inventory.

4.1.2 A closer look at the way Putin deals with the media

The fact that Putin has enlarged his ambition to control the media, either with direct or indirect state interventions, becomes clear from what he said about media freedom at two different points in time. In 2006, Putin defended Russia's record on media freedom with the argument "that with more than 3.500 radio and television companies and in excess of 40.000 print outlets, the Kremlin 'could not control them all, even if we wanted to'" (Gehlbach, 2010b). However, during his 2013 annual news conference he said: "There should be patriotically minded people at the head of state information resources, people who uphold the interests of the Russian Federation. These are state resources. That is the way it is going to be" (Dougherty, 2015).

In an interview with Dougherty (2015), Alexey Venediktov, editor in chief of Echo of Moscow, Russia's only remaining independent radio station, stated that the war in Ukraine solidified Putin's view of the media. "It's not an institution of civil society, it's propaganda. [The Russian broadcasters] First Channel, Second Channel, NTV, Russia Today internationally—these are all instruments for reaching a goal inside the country, and abroad".

At the same time, the strategy seems to be working. A poll from Gallup shows that Russians have a high level of trust in Putin, although they seem less confident about the question whether the leaders are taking the country in the right direction (Ray & Espinova, 2017):

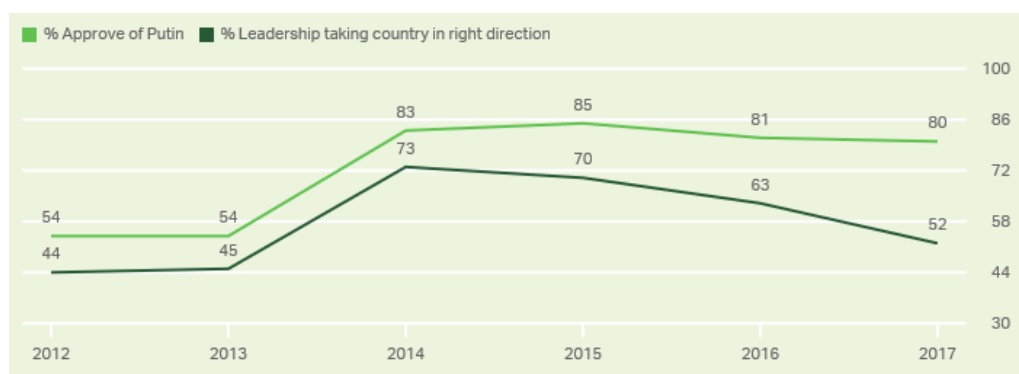


Figure 37 – Russians Approve of Putin, Less Sure of Country’s Leadership. Source: *Russians Happier With Putin Than With Country’s Direction* (Ray & Espinova, 2017).

Scott Gehlbach (see Appendix H) states that Putin has had success with his strategy to control the media in Russia, but remarks that people do not believe everything that they see in the television news. Research shows that Russian viewers have the expectation that the news is shaped, both by the government and by commercial parties. They find that they themselves are responsible to find out what is significant and what is biased. However, research has shown that bias can be effective in shaping the beliefs of viewers, as long as there is some informational content to the news. That is also why Kremlin controlled media mix fact and fiction: they provide enough real information to keep people guessing.

Yet some Russian journalists question whether that mood can last. “The level of propaganda is so disgusting that people who earlier believed in it now are beginning to doubt it” (Dougherty, 2015). This is also an observation of Gehlbach. He points to the fact that too much media bias can have an opposite effect. That happened with NTV in 2001 when it was taken over by state-controlled Gazprom. It got a different management, many of their best reporters were replaced and the news became predominantly pro-Kremlin. The effect was that many viewers backed away from the station. On the other hand, there are still also different, though few, examples. For instance, Ekho Moskvyy, owned by Gazprom but still assertive (see Appendix H).

It is clear that within Russia, Putin’s focus is dominantly on television, but also on newspapers, radio stations and the internet. “State-aligned news outlets are flooded with the Kremlin’s messages and independent outlets are pushed – subtly but decisively – just to the edge of insignificance and extinction. At the same time, Putin positions himself as a renegade abroad, deploying the hyper-modern, reflexively contrarian RT – an international news agency formerly known as Russia Today – to shatter the West’s monopoly on ‘truth’. The Kremlin appears to be betting that information is the premier weapon of the 21st century, and that it can wield that weapon more effectively than its rivals” (Dougherty, 2015).

By the launch of RT's Spanish-language broadcasting in Argentina, Putin proclaimed: "The right to information is one of the most important and inalienable human rights. But he also said he saw a dark side to the growth of electronic media: it had turned news reporting into a formidable weapon that enables public-opinion manipulations. Certain nations, Putin argued, were attempting to monopolize the truth and bend it to their own interests. Under these conditions, he said, alternative information sources become especially needed and RT is that alternative" (Dougherty, 2015). Estimates are that "the Russian government now spends close to \$1 billion on international broadcasting, much of it on RT. Peskov, Putin's press secretary, called that figure an exaggeration, but added: as a matter of fact, we would be happy to spend more, and we would be happy to spend billions of dollars, because the whole world is a hostage to information" (Dougherty, 2015).

In November 2017, Putin signed amendments that force foreign media in Russia to register as 'foreign agents'. These amendments are Putin's response to an earlier decision of the government of the United States that Russian television network RT had to register its American outlet as a foreign agent. "RT was singled out in an intelligence community report in January on Russia's attempts to influence the 2016 US election" (Brocchetto et. al, 2017).

Other international effects of Russian media-legislation will surely follow deriving from the law under which websites linked to 'undesirable foreign organisations' which is recently adopted. "This law makes blocking of websites possible without reference to court" (Reporters without borders, 2017). In December 2017, the telecommunication surveillance agency Roskomnadzor already "called on Twitter, YouTube and others to delete Open Russia's accounts or risk having their services blocked within Russia. The Russian social network Odnoklassniki immediately complied" (Reporters without borders, 2017).

4.2 How President Trump deals with the media

To find out how exactly President Trump deals with the media, a case study has been conducted with regard to the tweets Trump posted online during his first 100 days in office. The design and execution of the case study is described in Chapter 2.

Although Twitter is only medium through which Trump communicates with the American people, is it the one that Trump prefers most. Trump has been criticised for his abundant and seemingly impulsive use of Twitter, which some people label to be 'non-presidential'. The reason for this is that the Trump tweets often appear impulsive, are many times offensive and often deal with important policy matters. It is, however, clear that Trump is not willing to alter his Twitter behaviour, as illustrated by his superfluous and effervescent use of Twitter during his presidency up until now and regarding this tweet of July 2017:



Figure 38 – Tweet of President Trump. Source: @realDonaldTrump on Twitter.

The most important reason for Trump’s predominant use of Twitter is that it gives him the opportunity to work around traditional mainstream media, to avoid what he considers as their ‘inaccurate’ and often ‘dishonest’ reporting. Or in Trump’s vocabulary: “When somebody says something about me, I am able to go bing, bing, bing and I take care of it. The other way, I would never get the word out” (Baynes, 2017). Using Twitter is also a longstanding habit of Trump: he already started on the platform in 2009 (Smith, 2017).

However, Trump is not new in portraying himself as the sole reliable source of information. Apart from examples in more autocratic societies, it was already occurring to some extent in the presidential election campaign of Barack Obama. Chris Hamby, investigative reporter at BuzzFeed News and winner of the Pulitzer Prize 2014: “In this campaign information was tightly controlled. The administration used social media to bypass the traditional media gate keepers and take the message directly to the population. Trump also tweeted recently that something very much to that effect, but he was much more overt about it. It came down to ‘We don’t need the media, I can go around them’, which was the same idea that Obama had, but the latter just was not quite so blunt on how he stated it” (see Appendix F).

On Twitter, Trump is now the world leader with the most online followers. On January 5th in 2018, he already has 45.989.993 followers. However, former president of the United States Obama exceeds this status with 98.592.850 followers at the same date and – as a comparison – popstars like Justin Bieber and Katy Perry also exceed the number of Trump followers by far (Twitter Counter, 2018). In the third quarter of 2017, the United States has 69 million active monthly Twitter-users (Statista, 2017), which is 21% of the Americans based on 326 million people living in the US at that time (United States Census Bureau, 2017).

Although this percentage seemingly limits the amount of people Trump is able to reach with his use of Twitter, this is not the case. The Trump-tweets are followed by national and international media, every moment of the day, especially because Trump has a habit to announce important policy matters via Twitter, where previous presidents would far more often do this via press briefings or interviews. Almost every Trump-tweet is being acquired by the media, even if the tweets do not administer or handle with policy matters. Instead, these tweets are for instance often directed at the media, at other institutions or

personally at other people. Therefore, Trump is able to reach an enormous population via his use of Twitter: “each Trump-tweet is news, rocketing from Washington to every corner of the planet at the speed of digital light” (Weir, 2017).

In the following sub-paragraphs, the results of the case study will be described. Firstly, by the outcome of the analysis of the tweets Trump directed at the media during his first 100 days in office. Secondly, by detailed examination of the most striking results in the way Trump deals with the media, based on the outcome of the Twitter analysis and supplemented with an interview with Ryan Lizza, political analyst for CNN and reporter for The New Yorker (see Appendix E), the presentation of Chris Hamby (see Appendix F) and further literature research.

4.2.1 Outcomes of the analysis of the Trump-tweets

From the analysis of the tweets of President Trump during his first 100 days in office emerges the fact that Trump posted 51 tweets concerning the (news) media in general (see Appendix A). This is 10% of all the tweets (516) Trump sent during his first 100 days in office as has been archived in the Trump Twitter Archive (The Atlantic, 2017).

Some of the tweets were directed to more than one medium. In total, the 51 tweets were directed 66 times at media in general and at specific media outlets. Of these 66 times, 95% of the Trump-tweets contained negative connotations, except for three times where his tweets were targeted directly at Fox News, or where Fox News is mentioned in tweets (5%).

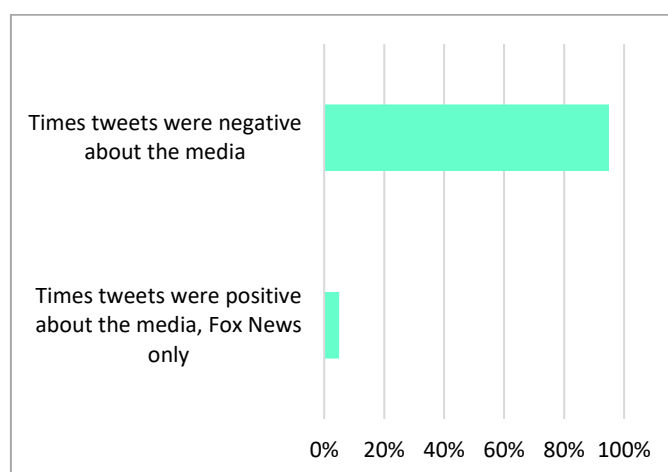


Figure 39 – Outcome case study on Trump conducted for this Final Project: times tweets of Trump were directed at media in general and at specific media outlets in his first 100 days as president.

The relationship between Trump and Fox News has come a long way in time. Already before Trump’s “campaign in June 2015, Trump was a frequent guest on Fox News. The broadcaster gave significant support to Trump’s birther campaign (...). When Trump declared he was running for the Republican nomination, the tributes came rushing in from Fox News journalists. Hannity compared the business mogul to former U.S. president Ronald Reagan, while correspondent Geraldo Rivera tweeted

that Trump was “more competent, creative, tough, experienced and bold” than most of the other candidates” (Gaffy, 2017).

In 27 of the 66 times (41%) the tweets of Trump were targeted at (specific) media. This is visible in the number of time the nouns ‘(news)media’ and ‘fake news media’ in general (no specific media outlets mentioned) were used in the tweets. 11 of these 27 times tweets are targeted at news media in general (41%) and 16 tweets are targeted at what Trumps refers to as ‘fake news media’ (59%).

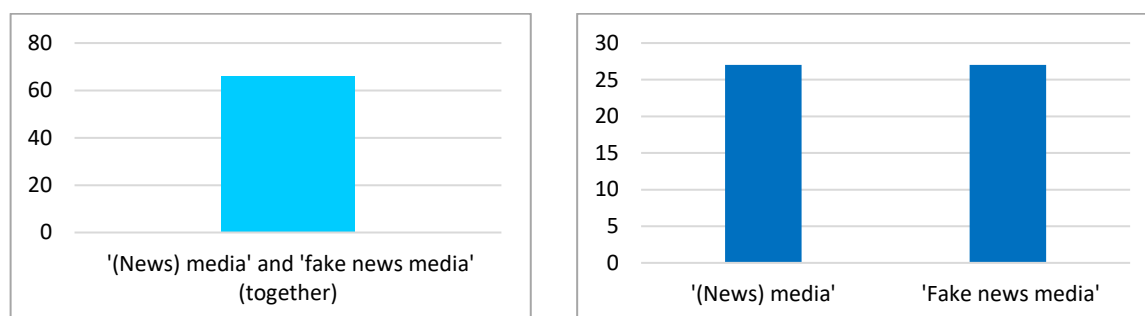


Figure 40 – Outcome case study on Trump conducted for this Final Project: times tweets of Trump were targeted at news media in general and at what Trump refers to as ‘fake news media’ during his first 100 days as president.

These outcomes illustrate the fact that Trump has a very low confidence in the traditional mainstream media, which is also an explanation for his preference for Twitter as the medium to express himself through.

Within the category Trump refers to as ‘fake news media’, most of tweets were targeted at specific media. A striking outcome is that the most targeted media are the New York Times, followed by CNN. Other, but less frequent, targeted media outlets were ABC, NBC, Washington Post and CBS.

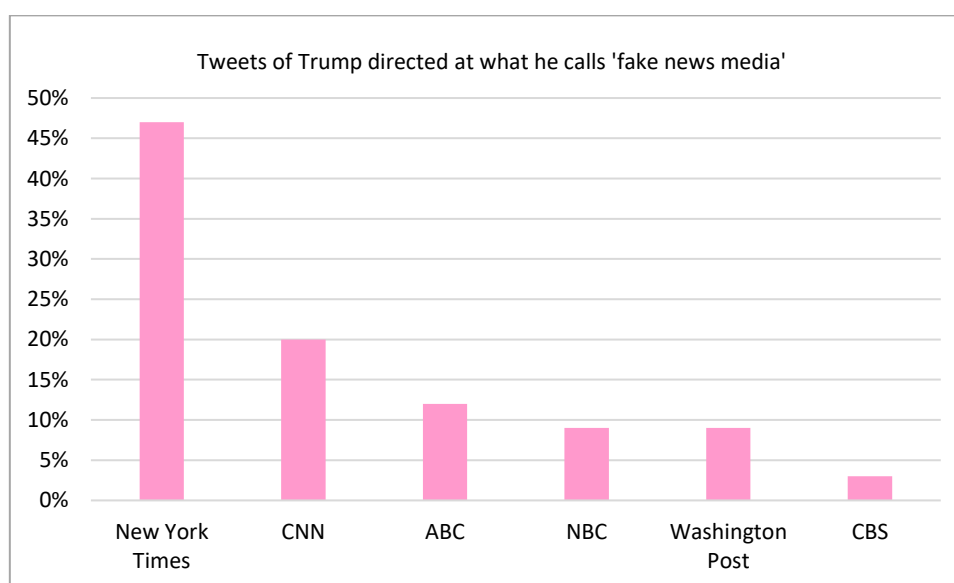


Figure 41 – Outcome case study on Trump conducted for this Final Project: tweets of Trump directed at what he calls ‘fake news media’ during his first 100 days as president.

Brian Stelter, a CNN-journalist, explains the hostile attitude of Trump towards The New York Times as follows: “As a native New Yorker, Trump has been reading the paper for decades. When I worked at the Times in the late 2000’s, Trump sometimes sent me and my colleagues copies of our stories from the print edition with a compliment or a complaint scrawled in black sharpie pen” (Stelter, 2017b). Stelter also describes that Trump bashes The New York Times on Twitter, but talks a lot to journalists of the New York Times and also granted them some of his frugal interviews with the media. He cites Maggie Haberman, a political analyst of CNN and reporter for the New York Times, by saying that Trump “craves the paper’s approval” (Stelter, 2017b).

From an analysis of the descriptions in the tweets in absolute numbers (see Appendix B), it becomes clear that with regard to The New York Times and CNN, Trump attacks these media during his first 100 days in office, especially for the following reasons:

Medium	No. of times tweets targeted	Descriptions used	No. of times descriptions are used
<i>The New York Times</i>	16	Failing	11
		Wrong	5
		Apology to readers	4
		Fake news	4
<i>CNN</i>	7	Fake news	4
		Failing	2

Figure 42 – Outcome case study on Trump conducted for this Final Project: analysis of the descriptions in the tweets of Trump directed at news media in his first 100 days as president, in absolute numbers.

The description of ‘failing’ with regard to the New York Times has been publicly answered by the medium itself to the president, in stating that the opposite is true: the amount of subscribers has only increased. In addition, there seems to be a broader effect of Trump on the appeal of the media. Chris Hamby: “Since the election, outlets including the New York Times, the Washington Post, the New Yorker and the Atlantic, have all set subscription records. The Times added half a million new digital subscribers in just a six-month period. Some outlets are hiring, for example the Post with sixteen new journalists and a rapid-response investigative team. There are a number of outlets doing great investigative journalism, not just these legacy publications.”

The fact that ‘apology to readers’ shows up four times in Trump’s tweets, has to do with his contention with The New York Times. Trump has sent various tweets in which he stated that The New York Times had written a letter to apologise to its readers for its bad coverage of Trump. Despite the fact that the New York Times sent a letter to its readership, it really had nothing to do with an apology (Qiu, 2017; The New York Times, 2017). Furthermore, The New York Times seems to have profited by the election of Trump, while they got many more subscribers (Provenzano, 2017).

A further analysis of all the descriptions in the tweets in absolute numbers, makes clear that President Trump is especially bothered by what he identifies as [1] the failing of the ('fake' news) media, [2] fake news and [3] inaccurate reporting. Remarkable is also that Trump described the media six times as 'the enemy of the American people', six times as 'dishonest', five times as 'a (false/big) lie' and five times simply as 'wrong'. Figure 43 shows the outcome of the analysis. The descriptions that are coloured in green illustrate the positive descriptions.

Descriptions of media in tweets of Donald Trump during his first 100 days in office	No. of times descriptions are used
Failing (19)/Failing reputation (1)	19
Fake (2)/Fake news/play up fake news (12)/Pushing phony stories (1)	15
Bad and inaccurate coverage/not reporting accurately/viciously reporting (1)	13
Danger to our country (1)/Enemy of the American people (6)	7
Dishonest	6
False (2)/Big lie (1)/Lied (2)	5
Wrong	5
Apology to readers	4
News poll not accurately (3)/poll not accurately (1)	4
Sick	4
Worse	3
Angry	2
Became a joke	2
Congratulations on/positive about inauguration ratings	2
Make up stories and sources	2
Poor reporting on election win	2
Sad	2
Unwatchable	2
Abused and treated Ivanka Trump badly	1
Almost always negative	1
Change libel laws	1
Conspiracy theories and blind hatred	1
Disgraced the media world	1
Dwindling subscribers	1
Election polls were disaster	1
Great	1
Less truthful than Trump administration	1
Marginalise	1
Opposition party	1
Recipient of leaks	1
Rude to government representatives	1

Scam	1
Witch hunt	1
Writes total fiction	1

Figure 43 – Outcome case study on Trump conducted for this Final Project: analysis of all the descriptions in the tweets of Trump during his first 100 days in office, in absolute numbers.

In the analysis for the case study, an inventory has been made of the times the tweets by Trump about the media were ‘fact-checked’. This inventory shows that 26 of the 51 tweets were fact-checked (51%) and that 23 tweets (45%) were not checked at all. For two of the tweets (4%), the facts will still have to be checked. These tweets about the media concern the connection between the Trump administration and the Russian interventions during the presidential election, for which assorted investigations are still ongoing.

Inventory of fact-checks of the tweets of Trump about the media		
Fact-checked	51%	26
Not fact-checked	45%	23
Not yet fact-checked	4%	2
Total of tweets	100%	51

Figure 44 – Outcome case study on Trump conducted for this Final Project: inventory of fact-checks of the tweets of Trump about the media during his first 100 days in office.

45% of the tweets are therefore not individually fact-checked. In many cases, this is in fact not possible, because these tweets contain personal opinions of Trump rather than facts and it is sometimes unclear what incident or earlier media reports triggered these Trump tweets (see Appendix A). However, the inventory and analysis of the Trump tweets about the media made clear that different media outlets (such as The New York Times, CNN and the Washington Post) have lots of work to do when fact-checking Trump’s tweets (see for instance Osborne, 2017b, Qiu, 2017 and Ye Hee Lee, 2017). Besides this, there are organisations such as Politifact, which also spend much time and effort in checking the tweets of Trump (Politifact, 2017). Media outlets also use the work by such institutions (see for instance Leach, 2017).

In the analysis of the Trump tweets an inventory also has been made whether the fact-checks of the tweets of Trump about the media were proven as (partly) true, false or not yet proven. The outcome shows that of the 26 tweets that have (already) been fact-checked, 22 (85%) proved to be false, two (8%) proved to be partly true, one (4%) proved to be true but exaggerated and only one (4%) fact-checked tweet proved to be true.

Number of times fact-checks of the tweets of Trump about the media turned out to be (partly) true (but exaggerated) or false		
False	85%	22
Partly true	8%	2
True but exaggerated	4%	1
True	4%	1

Figure 45 – Outcome case study on Trump conducted for this Final Project: number of times fact-checks of the tweets of Trump about the media turned out to be (partly) true (but exaggerated) or false during his first 100 days in office.

The one fact-checked tweet that proved to be true concerned an article by The New York Times about a visit of the New England Patriots team to the White House. In the article, it was stated (based on a photo) that the crowd attending was bigger at the time when the New England Patriots visited former President Obama. However, the apparent difference in the size of the crowd was caused by a difference in the way the team's seats were positioned this time. "The New York Times acknowledged the error and removed the photo from their website" (Jackson, 2017c).

Although 45% of the Trump-tweets about the media has not been fact-checked, 51% has. The outcome of 85% falsely proven checks is remarkably concerning the fact that Trump blames the media of fake news and inaccurate reporting, while the fact-fulfil checks point to the fact that he is guilty of false statements of the media in many cases.

4.2.2 A closer look at the way Trump deals with the media

With regard to the question how Trump deals with the media, the most striking result of the analysis of the tweets Trump directed at the media during his first 100 days in office, is the low trust of Trump in the mainstream media. He justifies this by claiming that the media produce fake news and do not report accurately about neither him, his family, nor about his administration. To the perception of Chris Hamby, investigative reporter at BuzzFeed News and winner of the Pulitzer Prize 2014, this is not 'new'. Hamby states that a disillusionment with a vast sea of online information that was questionable, unreliable and fake news already started before Trump's reign (see appendix F).

It seems, however, that President Trump and the media have different perceptions and definitions of what 'fake news' actually is. When journalists speak about fake news, they mean "fabricated content that intentionally masquerades as news coverage of actual events (...) Trump uses the term to describe news coverage that is unsympathetic to his administration and his performance, even when the news reports are accurate" (Drobnic Holan, 2017). This is also the point of view of Frida Ghitis, a contributor to CNN Opinion and a world affairs columnist for the Miami Herald and World Politics Review. "Trump's real nemesis is the truth. By attacking the media, he opens up a new line of attack against facts, his true target (...) What he wants is to manufacture his own pseudo-truth; to create a reality where he always wins. Where the only polls that count are the ones where he's doing great. Where the only

comments about him are compliments, and where anything negative is false, the work of an out-of-control media” (Ghitis, 2017).

Chris Hamby underscores that Trump has redefined the term ‘fake news’ to use it as a weapon to discredit critical reporting. Actual fake news consists of entirely made up information made look credible. Hamby states that Trump basically uses the term for anything he does not like. He ironically mentions: “There is the infamous phrase by Kellyanne Conway, the Trump-advisor and spokesperson, that when a reporter pointed out at the White House press secretary that the Trump inauguration was in fact not the largest ever, she replied to the press secretary with ‘alternative facts’ which, at least, led to no shortage of cartoons in the media” (see Appendix F).

The analysis of the Trump-tweets about the media during his first 100 days in office substantiates these viewpoints. Many of the tweets express (see Appendix A) Trump’s frustration about the fact that the media do not report more sympathetically about him, his family and his administration.

An important question is how Trump’s attitude towards the media, including his portrayal of the media as the enemy of the American people and as a danger to the country, affects the trust of American people in the media and the way journalists respond to the attitude of Trump. In order to find the answer, the question needs to be answered as if Trump’s low trust in the media is justified. Trump’s claim that the mainstream news media produce fake news and do not accurately report about him and his administration, can however not be answered within the scope of this Final Project, because the focus of this research solely deals with the way in which Trump handles the media. But a study by the Harvard Kennedy School does shed some light on this question (Patterson, 2017). This research into the news coverage of the first 100 days of President Trump presents that the coverage was negative, more than the coverage of his predecessors.

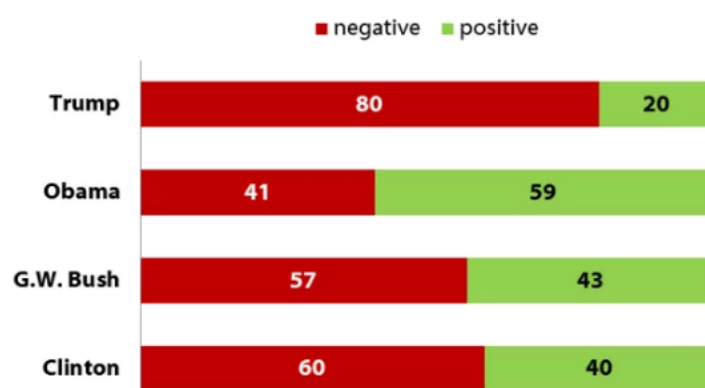


Figure 46 – Tone of coverage. Source: News coverage of Donald Trump’s first 100 days (Patterson, 2017).

However, this study also states that it cannot answer the question whether Trump was covered by the media in an accurate and fair manner. This would only be possible if the “preference of the media for the negative” would be weighed, “a tendency in place long before Trump became president” (Patterson, 2017, p.14).

The fact that Trump received more negative publicity than previous presidents of the United States does not surprise Patterson at all. A reason for this is that Trump's first 100 days in office on many aspects did not go as smoothly as was planned beforehand. Additionally, Trump often found himself in a defensive position as he had to defend his policies. Furthermore, Trump himself is often the source of most news, especially through his tweets, and his own tone is negative in nature most of the time.

It is clear that Trump's behaviour does not make journalists' jobs any easier. Not only because he communicates primarily and dominantly via Twitter, but also because he provides less interviews and keeps less press briefings than his predecessors. At the same time, Trump brings out a lot of news. So states Ryan Lizza, political analyst for CNN and reporter for The New Yorker: "My work has become more difficult in the sense that the volume of the news coming out of the White House is much higher than under Bush, Clinton and Obama (...) I am writing more than ever before in my career" (see Appendix E). Meanwhile, many journalists feel like they are not in 'the lead' when it comes to reporting about Trump and his policies. They "complain that their media narrative is negative, because they're not given a chance to speak for themselves" (Patterson, 2017, p.14).

The tendency of many media platforms and journalists to refute the accusations by Trump about the production of fake news is understandable. Patterson points out, however, that this could also work counterproductive. "Research has found that familiarity with a claim increases the likelihood people will believe it, whether it is true or not. The more they hear of something, the more likely they are to believe it" (2017, p.15).

Nonetheless, this does not seem to be occurring yet. A survey by Guess et. al (2017) shows namely that the confidence of the American public in the media is not abating, but instead rising again since a long time.

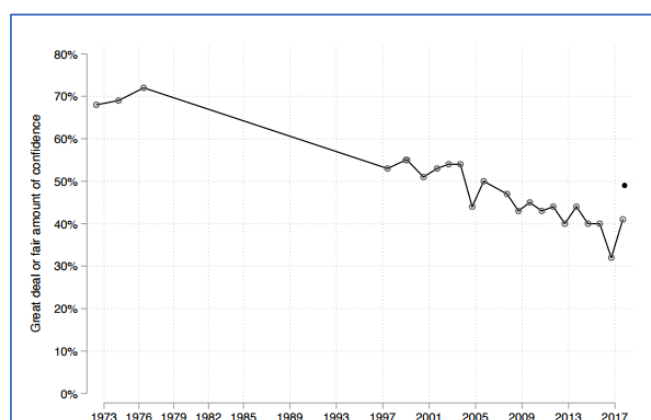


Figure 47 – Confidence of the American public in the media. Source: *You're Fake News! The 2017 Poynter Media Trust Survey*. Guess et. al, 2017

At the same time, however, research shows that the attitude towards the media is highly polarised. The outcomes make clear that “Republicans and Trump supporters have far more negative attitudes toward the press than Democrats and Trump opponents, especially among respondents with high levels of political knowledge. Republicans and Trump supporters are also far more likely to endorse extreme claims about media fabrication, to describe journalists as an enemy of the people, and to support restrictions on press freedom” (Guess et. al, 2017, p. 2).

According to Ryan Lizza, this works amongst Trump-voters. He describes that they do not believe that established facts are facts, because they have listened to Trump. “If something comes from The New York Times or the Washington Post, they just dismiss it. That is even the case with Sarah Sanders, the press secretary of Trump. When one of the reporters mentioned something from The Washington Post during a press briefing the other day, she just said: ‘Who believes The Washington Post?’ That is just immediate discounting information you don’t want to grapple with” (see Appendix E).

The fact that Trump called the media ‘the enemy of the American people’ and ‘a danger for the country’, reflects his mistrust in the mainstream media. These statements lead to national and international coverage by the news media and indignant reactions from many sides. Chris Hamby (see Appendix F) confirms that the criticism of the media as an establishment institution has also reached new heights.

In addition, there seems to be a link between the fact that Trump would like to strongly control the media and his need to discredit the press. Ryan Lizza responds to this in the following manner: “If you are the leader of a country without a strong history of press freedom and without protections in the Constitution, it is very easy to take on the press. If you are a Putin or an Erdogan you can jail journalists, you can take away their licenses, you can kill journalists (see Appendix E).”

Lizza finds the most alarming aspects of the remarks Trump makes about the media that Trump wants to make it simpler to sue journalists and that Trump never talks about the First Amendment in a positive way. “In reality however, he has made no efforts whatsoever to change press freedom, to open up a debate about the First Amendment or to pursue any legislation or regulation.” (...) “That makes it a lot less scary. Also because we know there is no support, at least among Republicans, to change the press laws (see Appendix E).” Lizza explains the way Trump deals with the media in this respect. “So what do you do when you have no autocratic control over the media? You attack their credibility. You run a campaign to discredit independent sources of information. So that your own media, both your Twitter-feed and the pro-Trump media, become the only sources of information for your voters. So you can discredit independent sources. And that is exactly what he has done with the press” (see Appendix E).

This might however change in the long run, especially if Trump might consider measures to limit the freedom of the press. Although Trump acknowledged a change of libel laws just shortly on Twitter on March 30th 2017, he told journalists earlier during his presidential campaign: “I’m going to open up our libel laws so when they write purposely negative and horrible and false articles, we can sue them and

win lots of money. We're going to open up those libel laws. So when The New York Times writes a hit piece which is a total disgrace or when The Washington Post, which is there for other reasons, writes a hit piece, we can sue them and win money instead of having no chance of winning because they're totally protected" (Liptak, 2017). Changing libel laws is however difficult, but technically not impossible. Libel is [in the United States] currently a matter of state law - limited by the First Amendment - with a president unable to change state law. However, he could potentially change the principles of the First Amendment, either through the Supreme Court or through changing the Constitution itself. Both routes would be extremely difficult, with a number of other rulings or obstacles that would need to be overturned" (The Independent, 2017).

4.3 Conclusions with regard to the way Putin and Trump deal with the media in their countries

The main conclusion of this chapter is largely straightforward, namely that both President Putin and President Trump desperately want to control the media in their countries. Within the context of the differences between their countries, concerning the contrasting political and legal systems, the distinctive media systems and the amount of press freedom, they do seem to operate in very different manners in obtaining this goal.

This is logical, since these differences are consequences of the differences between the democratic system in the United States and the autocratic system in Russia. Regarding the media, huge differences are obvious when it concerns the development of the press, press freedom and control over the media. As stated in Chapter 2 of this Final Project, press freedom is guaranteed in the First Amendment of the constitution and is strongly safeguarded in practice in the United States. In the same chapter it has been pointed out that this is definitely not the case in Russia, where the rights of the press are not so well protected and have even been further limited with diverse laws and regulations in recent decennia. Moreover, the case study on Putin in this chapter shows that in the past seven years, his power over the media has been increased to a great extent. The minority of independent media outlets have been further diminished by more direct and indirect state influence over the media outlets.

However, a further comparison between the outcome of both case studies shows that there are many striking similarities between the way Putin and Trump try to control the media than would be expected at first sight:

- *Both leaders understand the importance of television news on their voters very well.*

In the presidential elections, Trump saved a lot of advertisement bills by saying 'yes' to every opportunity to come on air. As a former television host, he is familiar with the working of television exposure and he obviously knows the rules of the game, which gave him a big advantage over his competitors. As the case study on Putin pointed out, one of the first things Putin did when he came

to power in 2000 was to regain control over national television. Putin understood the fact that most Russians – then and now – turn to national television for news consumption.

- *Putin and Trump want to have direct access to their audiences.*

The case study on Putin shows that he has not only been successful in regaining direct state power of national television and in organising indirect influence on media outlets via commercial ownership of rich and befriended business owners, as he also effectively intensified his power over media in Russia in the past seven years by further reducing independent media outlets. Trump, on the other hand, although lacking these direct ‘intervention weapons’, has to find another means to fight the battle. His main answer is simply called ‘Twitter’. By using Twitter, he has found his own medium, bypassing the traditional mainstream media he likes to call the ‘fake media’ (with the exception of Fox News). The fact that mainstream media pick up – and react to – almost every single Trump-tweet, bringing him a wide national and international audience, exemplifies the success of this strategy.

- *Both leaders see themselves as the sole reliable source of information and loathe it when their power is challenged by countervailing parties via the media.*

In the case of Putin, it is clear that he – as an autocratic leader - has more and direct ‘weapons’ to fight the media on this. The case study showed that in the past seven years, the Kremlin effectively repressed oppositional views in media content by an intensification of direct and indirect control over media outlets in Russia. Trump, on the other hand, lacking these weapons, has to maintain a different strategy. Although Trump has called the media the enemy of the American people and suggested that libel laws should be changed, it is not yet foreseeable that he can count on political or legal support to arrange this. Not able to control the media he has chosen to discredit their credibility. The case study shows that he does this by bashing the media for what he sees as their inaccurate and unfair reporting on him, his family and his policies. However, the case study also pointed out that many of the claims Trump made about fake news, once fact-checked, were actually proven to be false. On the other hand, the research also showed that Trump was prone to more negative reporting in his first 100 days as president than some of his predecessors. However, the case study also clarifies that this is caused by the fact that various matters in his first 100 days in office factually did not go very smoothly during this period.

- *Putin and Trump are both masters in framing.*

The case study on Putin exemplifies his art in mastering pro-Russian propaganda, especially domestically. Although concerns have been raised about the amount of propaganda in Russian media, especially on national television, fact is that the majority of the Russians still has faith in Putin and in Russian television. The case study on Trump shows how he is able to frame the media as ‘fake’, even when his definition of fake news (‘everything that is unsympathetic to him or his administration’) is different than the media’s definition on fake news (‘masqueraded content intentionally fabricated as news’). And although the faith of Americans in the media has recently risen since a long time, the

case study clarifies that this is not the case when it comes to Republicans and Trump-voters. Trump's message of 'fake media' seems still powerful enough and when this is repeated time over time, which is very likely to happen, the long-term effects might have a lasting effect on the reputation of the media.

Apart from these similarities, the conclusion is also that there are some points that deserve special attention with regard to the way both presidents deal with the media in their countries in their own and different manner:

- *The booby-trap-effect of fact-checking by media in the United States.*

In the case study of Trump it became clear that fact-checking Trump is seen as a necessity by many media and almost leads to a new industry of fact-checking. Despite the fact that this is an asset of media freedom in the United States (which will not be possible in Russia in most cases), media should be careful not to step into the booby-trap of counter-framing. This booby-trap means that when one defends him or herself within the countervailing frame of one's opponent, one strengthens it. Media should be cautious for this effect, because it could only reinforce Trump's claim of 'fake media' in the long run.

- *The strategy of foreign ownership in Russia.*

The case study on Putin shows that he has further discouraged foreign ownership of media in Russia by legislation. This shows a forecast to more concentration of Russian media in Russian hands only, whether owned by the state, or commercially. The effects on the further lessening of press freedom are predictable and should be narrowly followed.

- *The increasing censorship of Russia on internet and social media, with international effect.*

The case study on Putin shows that recent Russian legislation makes the blocking of websites linked to 'undesirable foreign organisations' easier without reference to court. This seems to be a forebode to serious risks for international social media networks like Twitter, YouTube and others in having their services blocked within Russia. In this context, Reporters without borders (2017) quoted the words of Jonathan Bihr, head of RSF's Eastern Europe and Central Asia desk: "the Russian authorities have been constantly tightening their Internet legislation in recent years and this is the result – an unprecedented level of censorship".

5. The practice of basic functions of journalism in Russia and the United States

In the introduction to this Final Project, three basic functions of journalism are mentioned, namely:

- the information-function: to provide a representation of events that is complete and realistic and enables audiences to make a personal judgment.
- the debate function: to provide comment on contemporary affairs.
- the watchdog-function: to expose dishonesty in politics and reveal abuse of power.

One thing that this research has proven so far is however that media do not operate in a vacuum. They are part of the society in which they operate, just as much as the reporters are. It is to be expected that the role and function of journalism differs according to the society in which journalists operate. In the further research for this Final Project, a search has been done into categorisations of basic journalistic functions in more autocratic and more democratic societies. It is remarkable, however, that the predominant definition of journalistic functions seems to be the role as they are defined for democratic societies, known as the information-function, the debate-function and the watchdog-function. It might therefore be a right time for scientific journalistic research to be executed, in order to determine the essential differences.

In the meantime however, the categorisation into the information-function, the debate-function and the watchdog-function has been chosen in this Final Project as the most suitable categorisation to describe the practice of journalism in Russia and in the United States. This categorisation will therefore be explained in this chapter, regarding both the Russian and the American media landscape. According to Khvostunova (2013), this does not pose a problem. She remarks that Russia is not a ‘closed’ society anymore, that Russian media have access to free information and that Russian journalists are acquainted with the journalistic functions in the free world. She therefore condemns media who “serve as propaganda tools to receive benefits from the state, by abandoning their public duty to report the truth (...) and voluntarily chose to engage in corrupt practices” (Khvostunova, 2013, p.3).

An indicator that has been used in this research for the possibility to execute the three basic journalistic functions, is press freedom. However, press freedom is also culturally determined (Tran et. al, 2011). Press freedom in the Western world is seen as the freedom to be able to say and write everything as one pleases. In the Eastern world, press freedom is more often conceptualised as the responsibility of the government to correct media in the interest of the public. Press freedom in autocratic societies will therefore mainly concern the amount of state-intervention, whereas in democratic societies it will depend on the amount of control executed by commercial owners of the media and/or their advertisers.

Press freedom also means the absence of censorship, which is an indicator in this research as well. A distinction can be made between direct censorship by governments on media outlets and/or their reporters, and self-censorship. The latter can occur when journalists in more autocratic regimes are apprehensive of arrest and conviction without a fair and proper trial. Self-censorship can also occur to prevent those in power over the media, such as governments, commercial media owners and advertisers, from being offended. Likewise, it can be stimulated by editorial regulations and norms and through social control in newsrooms.

This point is well illustrated by Michael White, a former political editor, assistant editor, columnist and foreign correspondent who wrote for The Guardian for more than 30 years. “Self-censorship plays a part. What, even at the saintly Guardian? Sometimes, yes, I think. It's not like working for one of Fleet St's autocracies. No one writes deliberately to see their work end up on the electronic spike, so Murdoch staff find it easier to attack the BBC – often and at length – than explain the predatory tactics of Sky or why Chris Patten's memoirs were ditched by HarperCollins. At the Telegraph, you do not lightly write about publicity-shy, tax-lite owners of weird castles on the Channel Islands – it's easier to accuse elected MPs of lesser follies. At the Daily Star, owned by Richard "Asian Babes" Desmond, you do not write about foul-mouthed porn barons. The Mail, well, it is a law unto itself and reflects the robust prejudices of its editor, Not-Sir-Paul-Dacre, who has not been in power for half as long as Colonel Gaddafi and its shows to his credit” (White, 2011).

5.1 The practice of the basic functions of journalism in Russia

Russian journalists have to work in a completely different environment than their colleagues in the United States. This follows not only from the case study on Putin in Chapter 4, but is also illustrated by Freedom House (2017a). Of the overall ‘freedom of the press’ indicator Russia ranks 83. In comparison: the United States ranks 23.

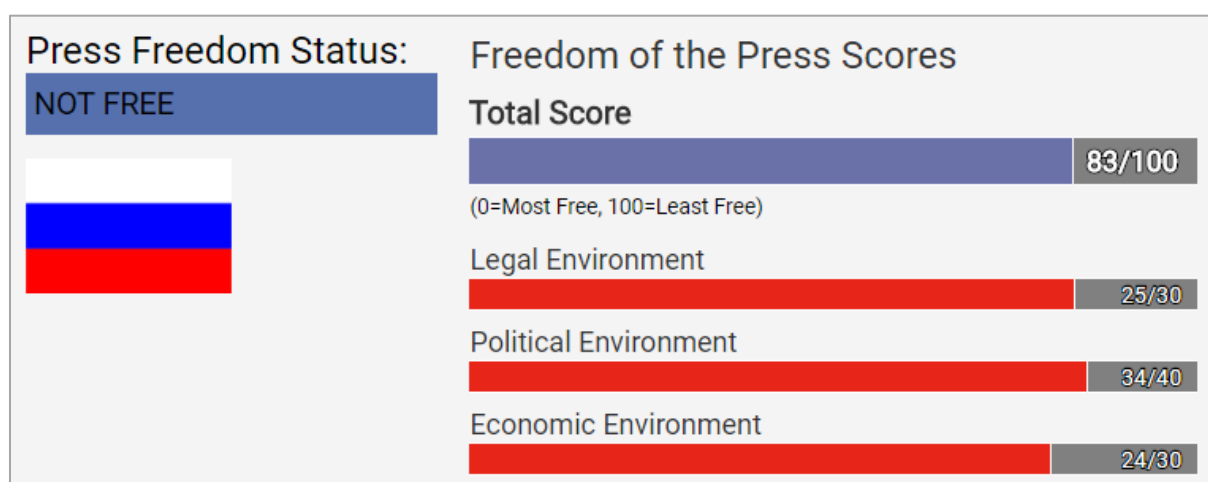


Figure 48 – Freedom of the Press Scores in Russia. Source: Russia profile (Freedom House, 2017a).

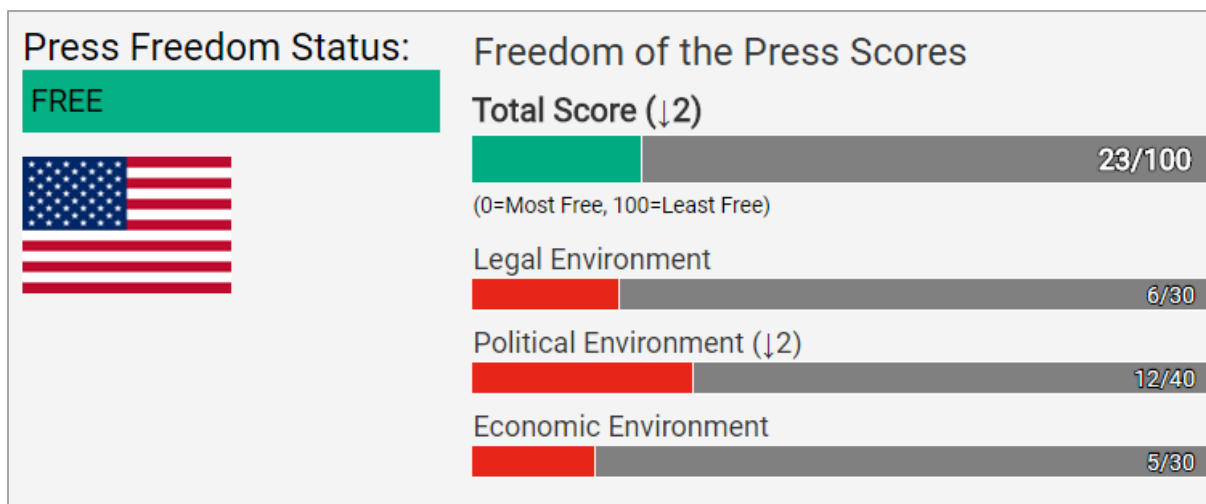


Figure 49 – Freedom of the Press Scores in the United States. Source: United States profile (Freedom House, 2017b).

In order to illustrate that the Russian press freedom scores are not an exception, but did steadily decrease over the last decade, Politifact sketched the trend from 2002 until 2015 based on reports from The Freedom House (Qiu, 2016). The figures show a continuous decrease in press freedom and ranking under Putin's regime.

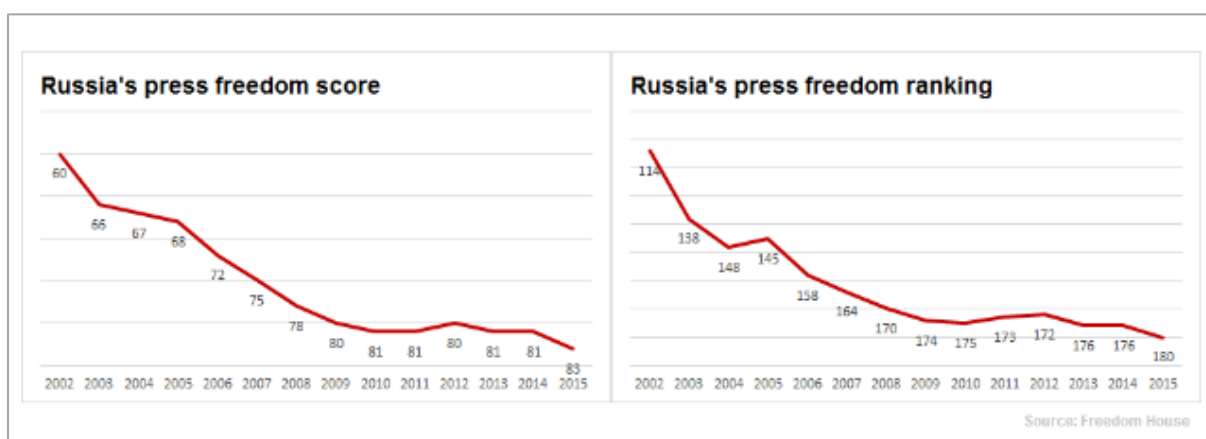


Figure 50 – Press freedom data of Russia. Source: Russia's press freedom scores and rankings, 2002 – 2015 (Qiu, 2016).

As has been described in Chapter 4, Russia has a long history of direct and indirect state control over the media, which has even been intensified since 2011. This determines the climate in which journalists work to an important extent. Russian journalist Mikhail Fishman: “Putin indicates the direction and his bureaucrats, eager to please the Kremlin, push to shut down what remains of free media. In that sense, we are all in a position of threat. I think, in the next year or two, it will be very tough for journalists in Russia, very tough” (Dougherty, 2015). Freedom House (2017a) also points to this fact. “Russia remains a country with a large array of media outlets, but limited access to critical or independent coverage and diverse political viewpoints”.

Russian journalists frequently fear for their lives in Russia, because there is a lot of violence against them. In recent years, journalists such as Anna Politkovskaya, Natalia Estemirova, Anastasia Barboerova and human rights lawyer and journalist Stanislav Markelov were murdered for their critical reporting. At the best, the perpetrators are caught, but the clients usually remain unpunished (Cukier, 2017).

The number of journalists that is killed is large. “Since 2006, the Committee to Protect Journalists has recorded 20 journalists’ killings, while Freedom House has counted 63 violent attacks on reporters” (Walker 2016). Politifact, which combined data of two NGO’s, found out that since 2000 34 journalists have been murdered in Russia. However, this number “doesn’t include murders where the motives are unclear, or journalists killed in war and on other dangerous assignments, like covering the mob or riots” (Qiu, 2016). Politifact also offers a comparison, which shows that in the same period in the United States three journalists were killed.

From the ‘Russia profile 2017 of Freedom House’ it becomes clear that violence against Russian journalists was also common in 2016. “There were widespread reports of attacks, arrests, and threats against both professional journalists and social media users. The risk of violence or prosecution was particularly high in Chechnya, an insurgency-prone Russian republic governed by pro-Kremlin strongman Ramzan Kadyrov. A group of Russian and foreign journalists and human rights workers were attacked and beaten by masked assailants as their bus approached the Chechen border in March” (Freedom House, 2017a).

The latest incident was the attack on Tatyana Felgenhauer, deputy editor of the Ekho Moskvyy radio station in October 2017. She was horrifically stabbed in her neck while at work at the radio station. Earlier that year, a journalist of the radio station fled from Russia after an attackers tried to set her car on fire and also other journalists working for the station encountered hostilities (Walker 2017b).

After this incident, the Russian newspaper Novaja Gazeta reported that it wants to arm journalists with ‘trauma guns (Cukier, 2017). ‘However, the editor in chief of Ekho Moskvyy, is still in place. In 2015 he said: “I defended our editorial policy. Every reporter who was on the air before the crisis is still in place, in spite of the fact that they asked me not to let this person or that person on the air” (Dougherty, 2015).

The journalistic climate in Russia is thus characterised by direct and indirect state control, direct and indirect censorship and an unsafety. It can be therefore be expected that self-censorship plays an important role in Russian journalism. In an interview with the Huffington Post, Alexey Kovalev, a Russian Journalist, acknowledges that: “Well, one thing that you need to know about journalism in Russia is that on paper, we are also protected by the Russian constitution. But unlike the United States, there aren’t any checks and balances to keep that in place. It works on paper, it exists on paper, but there are millions of ways to humiliate or threaten a publication without resorting to unconstitutional measures. There has been a lot of debate in Russian media community about where the independence ends. Where lies the line between censorship and self-censorship. If you want to stay afloat, for the sake of your audience

you want to keep your publication free from harassment, but that means that you are self-administering these restrictions” (Robins-Early, 2017).

About the journalistic functions that journalists at Russia’s state media can deploy, Sharibzhanov, (2017) remarks: “State media such as those in Russia are guided by official decrees and state-imposed guidelines, and not necessarily by ethical principles taught to professional journalists. (...) It is impossible to look at mass media in illiberal and undemocratic or pseudo-democratic regimes as a reliable source of information and current news. Indeed, their primary purpose is three-fold:

1. whitewash unjust, illegal or illegitimate actions by the ruling regime;
2. increase the regime’s popularity and influence abroad, using foreign broadcasting;
3. maintain regime stability through ensuring contentedness of the population through propaganda. The former two elements both come down to the third element of purpose, tasked with ensuring regime survival.”

5.1.1 The information-function

Just like journalists in the United States (see subparagraph 5.2.1) journalists in Russia have been confronted with cuts in expenses and newsroom personnel. And just like their American colleagues they had and have to adjust to a world where – especially via internet and online media – much more information is available. “Media in Russia exists not only under state pressure, but with the constraints of an industry that is facing the same challenges worldwide: the ever-accelerating race for more pageviews against the diminishing attention span of their audiences, dwindling budgets and ad revenues. And this in turn opens up more possibilities to manipulate coverage through more conventional means, such as access bias” (Kovalev, 2017).

However, fact-checking information is more difficult for Russian journalists. This is a result of the fact that it is often very unclear which parts of information are facts and which parts are state propaganda. Alexey Kovalev, a Russian journalist points to the fact that Russian media have not enough money for fulltime fact-checking. “It’s extremely easy to put out anything you want because there will be no one to challenge you. Very few people will care and speak out publicly” (Calamur, 2017).

Scott Gehlbach, Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, who was interviewed for this Final Project (see Appendix H), points to the high level of coordination when it comes to the news covering of national state television. “Every week, executives of the three television stations are at the Kremlin to speak about the news coverage of the previous and the coming week. However, journalists and editors have some freedom to act autonomously, as long as they keep to the rules of the editorial policy. Yet, the degree of coordination is high”.

Galina Timchenko, executive editor of website Meduza, mentions that Russian journalists are used to fake news since a long time. “The Kremlin’s idea is, and unfortunately they won, that there is no truth

at all, everybody has his own truth. This has resulted in a situation where truth is seen as relative, where there is no provable fact, and, from the point of view of a journalist, no such thing as journalistic objectivity” (Calamur, 2017).

With the closing down of RIA Novosti in 2013, which has been described in the Putin-case in Chapter 4, this became even more difficult. Russian journalists lost a news outlet with professional and semi-independent coverage. RIA Novosti continued under another name, under the reign of a Kremlin-loyalist. Ilya Oskolkov-Tsentsiper, a media entrepreneur: “Independent news media has no future in Russia for the moment. The only stronghold left is Vedomosti, which is explained by the fact that it is co-owned by The Wall Street Journal and the Financial Times. News media is doomed to articulate the views of and serve the interests of their owner” (The Calvert Journal, 2014).

5.1.2 The debate-function

In Russia there seems to be little possibility for journalists to fulfil a debate-function. Putin solely allows limited access to ‘public’ briefings and never have them televised. “Control instead of competition, has been the trademark of Putin’s government. Under his tenure, decision making has been concentrated in the Kremlin inner circle and fully shut off from the public eye. Putin himself holds one press conference a year, with over 1.000 reporters from all over the country. This is more a gala public relations event than a format for asking pressing policy questions” (Lipman, 2005).

Scott Gehlbach sees a different role-perception by Russian journalists. “Let me tell you a story. There is a journalist that I interviewed when I was doing research for the paper that you read and he said that for many years, he understood his job was to help the president, President Putin. And I can imagine somebody at – for example – Fox News saying that his job or her job is to help President Trump, but we came to think of that as the exception to the norm in Western media, whereas I think for the main television channels in Russia today that is very much the norm” (Appendix H).

Gehlbach also mentions a lack of aggressiveness in the attitude of Russian journalists, that we might be accustomed to in the attitude of journalists in many Western countries. “I remember going to a press conference for Vladimir Zhirinovsky, who is the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia – it’s a joke because the party is neither liberal nor democratic – and I was at the press conference where he announced that he was running for president and all of the major television stations were there and I don’t think there was a single question other than by one of the foreign reporters. It was different during the 1990’s, the media were much more aggressive back then, but it changed in the 2000’s with Putin’s assertion of control over the Russian media. Nowadays, the way journalists report on the Kremlin is more docile and flattering” (Appendix H).

Before the intensified direct and indirect state intervention on more independent media, since 2011, the existence of these media and their sometimes critical reporting was allowed to some extent. As has been described in Chapter 4, until 2011 these media outlets did not form a threat to Putin’s power. Samuel

Greene, director of King's College London's Russia Institute, explains this as follows: "Until relatively recently, the Russian government has been more or less happy to allow a range of points of view to compete in the public space, knowing, first, that the Kremlin effectively controlled the most important channels of communication through the three main television channels, and second, that as the economy continued to grow and ordinary Russians continued to prosper, the Kremlin's own narrative was believable. But as the economy has faltered, confrontation with the west has grown and internal politics have become more complicated, and the competition for Russians' hearts and minds is growing fiercer and more fraught. And that is not a competition that the Kremlin is prepared to lose, almost whatever the cost' (The Calvert Journal, 2014).

Lipman (2015) also points to the small sized audience of liberal outlets. "The largest mainstream daily newspaper Izvestia has a press run of 250.000; others rarely exceed 100.000. And these runs have not gone up since national television came under tight control – a significant sign of low public interest in liberal media" (Lipman, 2005, p.323).

Although the Russian government allows discussions to take place on internet, blogs, social media and forums, but they also try to gain power over internet and influence the tone. "In order to achieve a positive image of the state, the government has introduced 'trolls' or people who write positive commentaries on the government and its policies in exchange for money, effectively polluting the online debate" (Laevskaya, 2015).

5.1.3 The watchdog-function

Given the circumstances described with regard to the information- and debate-function of Russian journalism, it is also hard for Russian journalists to fulfil the watchdog-function. This has to do with increased direct and indirect state control, the unsafe climate and restrictive legislation.

Marc Bennetts, the British journalist based in Moscow who was interviewed for this Final Project acknowledges the dangerous climate in which Russian journalists work: "Russian journalists face a lot more risks than foreign journalists, such as violence and imprisonment. They are more than often the ones who first expose government corruption, et cetera" (see Appendix G). As it comes to western journalists, he describes their role as less hazardous: "The Kremlin often doesn't care too much what western journalists write, as critical articles fit in with the government's narrative of an anti-Russia campaign by western countries/media. But it's possible to report and work here without too many problems. Violence against western journalists is rare. It's hard to dig out information, however, and officials are often reluctant to speak to western journalists, which is a problem" (Appendix G).

In Chapter 3 is described how new and restrictive media legislation was entered in Russia during the past decade. This legislation restricts investigation into official corruption for independent journalists, who are frequently sued by high managers and government officials because they report for instance on their luxurious lifestyle. "In recent years, the popularity of these libel processes has declined, in favour

of allegations of extremism and calls for hatred. In the meantime, investigating corruption by the local police is equivalent to raising hatred” (Azhgikhina, 2016).

In 2005, Pasti (2010, pp. 68) did not sketch such a pretty outline of journalism and of the future expectations when it comes to the youngest generation of journalists. “Journalism is developing in the direction of diverting the attention of people away from serious problems, the entertainment share is growing, while journalists increasingly pursue ratings”(p.68). Regarding the new generation, she describes that “they do not show any interest in the role of adversary and investigator; on the contrary, editorial censorship operates in the frame of official news (p.69). In 2017, journalist Kovalev (2017) outlines a little more optimistic image: “Not all is universally grim, of course. Outside Moscow, there are brave news websites critically covering local affairs, to the chagrin of provincial governors. And new, highly specialised outlets are covering subjects such as charity work or courts and prisons in depth that the general interest media cannot afford”.

5.2 The practice of the basic functions of journalism in the United States

As has become clear in the case study about President Trump in Chapter 2, journalists are nowadays often accused of skewed reporting. However, this is not a new feature. Also during previous periods in time, journalists in the United States were often accused by politicians of bias, regarding the way they report on politicians and their activities. This is comprehensible, because the journalists are strongly dependent on the prevailing media for their careers and also because they know exactly how powerful



Source: *Trump vs. the press*, Chappatte, 2017

they can be, regarding the influencing of the public opinion, the criticism of politicians and by carrying out revelations which can seriously damage politicians and their careers.

Nelson (2000) appropriately explains how the love-hate relationship between politicians and the media works and how it has changed over time. Until approximately 1920, the media landscape in the United States was determined by newspapers and magazines, as Americans read political news in them. This news was not solely about presidents, but also about matters concerning the Congress and the Supreme Court. In other words: presidents did not dominate the political news yet. This changed with the rise of radio in 1920. This meant that there was a need for suitable people who could elucidate on policies and political views and who could, for instance, be interviewed. This brought the president into vision as well. This effect was amplified with the advent of television in 1950. Within the next decade, 90% of the American people owned a television. This provided a broad and large platform for presidents. It also

required something from them: it became part of their jobs to look good on television and to appeal to masses of people in that way. However, with the rise of cable television – and later with the advent of the internet – the national public partitioned. This caused a change: where presidents' speeches were previously broadcasted on all television channels, they were now merely broadcasted on a few channels. This meant that presidents should do their absolute best and work harder to be broadcasted in order to reach an extensive public. Moreover, this is the reason why the State of the Union increased in its importance: it is the only speech that is broadcasted by each television network or channel.

The attitude of political reporters regarding politics and politicians is regularly characterised by cynicism. Nelson (2000) provides a number of explanations for this. The first is that although the profession of political reporters often has a high status, the work in practice often consists of waiting for the president and other politicians, mainly for their briefings and statements. Therefore, the competition between political reporters of the different media is strongly present at all times. At the moment reporters do find themselves the opportunity to ask questions to politicians, journalists try to distinguish themselves from others by being critical and delving into the 'news behind the news', or in other words, they dig for the best pieces of information. At the same time, Nelson recalls a survey of the *New York Times*, *Times Magazine* and *CBS News* between 1953 and 1978 by Grossman & Kumar (1981, in Nelson, 2000). It appears from this survey that in this period, favourable reporting about presidents occurred twice as often as unfavourable reporting. Although this seems to contradict the cynical attitude of journalists, Nelson (2000) points out that most of the time, correspondents have to submit stories at least once a day and often do not receive enough time to research everything they would like to investigate. As a result, journalists often use the statements given by presidents and their press secretaries because they do not possess any other information.

Although the United States has no formal state censorship, Pilger (2001) points out that there is state censorship that is run by voluntary omission. "The source of most Americans' information, mainstream television, has been reduced to a set of marketing images shot and edited to the rhythms of a Coca-Cola commercial that flow seamlessly into the actual commercials. Rupert Murdoch's Fox network is the model, with its peep-shows of human tragedy. Non-American human beings are generally ignored, or treated with an anthropological curiosity reserved for wildlife documentaries."

Besides that, there is influence deriving from commercial media owners in the form of 'market censorship', as already has been stated in Chapter 3. "Mainstream media do not want to run stories that will offend their advertisers and owners. In this way, the media end up censoring themselves and not reporting on many important issues, including corporate practices" (Terdiman, 2007).

Self-censorship plays also a role in American newsrooms. Oswald (2009) describes how news coverage can be skewed during the editing-process. "The story is told of a reporter who first comes up with an investigative story idea, writes it up and submits it to the editor and is told the story is not going to run.

He wonders why, but the next time he is cautious enough to check with the editor first. He is told by the editor that it would be better not to write that story. The third time he thinks of an investigative story idea but doesn't bother the editor with it because he knows it's silly”.

Even though American journalists are doing their work within the United States within relatively safe circumstances – especially when compared to their Russian colleagues, see paragraph 5.2 – they do face increased hostility, which is not surprising if the hostile attitude of president Trump towards the media is taken into account. Freedom House (2017) reports: “The temper of his [Trump] attacks—which observers criticized as an attempt to undermine trust in the media and support for their traditional watchdog role—escalated when the Washington Post, the New York Times, and other outlets launched fact-checking features that revealed a large number of inaccuracies and exaggerations in Trump’s campaign assertions. Journalists were also harassed and intimidated during Trump campaign rallies, sometimes with the encouragement of the candidate or his subordinates, and the campaign temporarily barred some outlets from its events. Journalists faced abuse on social media in the highly charged political atmosphere, with many bombarded by messages that were obscene, threatening, or anti-Semitic. A report by the Anti-Defamation League found that those sending anti-Semitic messages tended to self-identify as Trump supporters, conservatives, or right-wing nationalists, and were often responding to coverage of Trump, though it found no evidence that such attacks were explicitly encouraged by any candidate”.

However, Mr. al-Hussein, the United Nations high commissioner for human rights, remarked in August 2017 that “the president’s demonization of the news media was ‘poisonous because it has consequences elsewhere’. If a journalist were to be harmed, he asked, ‘does the president not bear responsibility for this, for having fanned this?’ Countries that did not recognize the essential role of the news media could be inspired if journalists in the United States were attacked, he said. He noted that Cambodia’s government, for example, had withdrawn licenses from the news media and it had cited Mr. Trump as an inspiration for doing so.” (Cumming-Bruce, 2017).

5.2.1 The information-function

The mainstream news media are important sources to inform the American public about politics and they have a significant impact on the implementation of politics. Media power is therefore also political power. Journalists in the United States have the freedom and the means to offer their audiences complete and realistic reporting.

However, as has been stated above, state censorship (voluntarily, by omission), market censorship and self-censorship do play a role. In addition, just like journalists in many other Western countries, they are also under increasing pressure to execute their job during a time with a plethora of sources and information. Under the influence of commercial interests and associations between media outlets, the newsrooms of American media have had to deal with major cuts in personnel during recent years. This means that more labour than before needs to be performed with fewer people than in the past. Oswald (2009)

remarks: “Journalists recognize that they are forced to interpret the facts of a story and inform the public based upon that interpretation. Journalists are also pressured for speed and brevity in reporting. Consequently, reporters often trivialize the issues, events, and people they cover. Complex legal arguments and technical debates compound the inherent difficulties associated with accurate coverage of a political issue. As a result, the media often oversimplify the issue”.

The fact that journalists often have to work too immediate because of time pressure causes them to have to rely on government sources to a larger extent. In addition, in the era of Trump, this situation did not become any better. Not just because Trump organises less press briefings, but also because the relationship with the President’s spokespersons is radically different from that of his predecessors. Ryan Lizza states the following about this (see Appendix E): “That changed on the first press briefing, where he shouted and bullied journalists and told lies. That destroyed his reputation for the press. Press secretaries under Trump lie for him. “Previous press secretaries saw their jobs as a bridge between the press and the president. They saw themselves as working for both parties. A part of their job was to manage that relationship. Not just hired for the president, but serving the public. By serving the press. That seems now a very old fashioned view, but it was a common view of press secretaries for the president. On his first day Spicer made clear that that was not the model. And Sarah Sanders [Trump’s current press secretary] has not proven to be different, on the contrary”.

As described in Chapter 3, the power over the media is in the hands of merely a small group of large companies, who solely aim at increasing their profits and keeping their advertisers contented, to an increasing extent. Bagdikian (2000) points to the fact that as a result of this, “news and analyses of progressive ideas and groups are close to absent in the major media. Similarly absent is commentary on dangers of this political one-sidedness to American democracy” (Bagdikian, 2000).

Terdiman (2007) and Oswald (2009) also appoint the effects of advertisement upon objective reporting and dissenting opinions. “Another effect of these so-called market forces at work is that mainstream media will go for what will sell and news coverage becomes all about attracting viewers. Yet the fear of losing viewers from competition seems so high that many report the exact same story at the very same time. Objective coverage gets a backseat” (Terdiman, 2007). “In effect, broadcasters sell audiences to advertisers”. To keep big advertisement companies on national television satisfied, such as Philips Morris, Procter and Gamble and General Motors, media sometimes rather serve their interests, than the interest to inform the public. “The present state of the mass media, consisting of a few large monopolies, makes it nearly impossible for unpopular views to be heard” (Oswald, 2009).

Terdiman (2007) points also to the effect of concentration of commercial media ownership in the hands of just a few big enterprises upon the search for truth by journalists. “The consolidation of power in a small number of media companies has hurt the search for the truth in newsrooms across the country. As

media conglomerates get bigger, the gap between newsrooms and boardrooms grows, and the goal becomes satisfying shareholders, not citizens.”

Concern over bias in reporting as a result of commercial control over the media, leads to negative reactions of both the industry and the liberal and the conservative parties. “Liberal commentators claim that big business hampers political diversity by advancing corporate interests. They contend that the media cover only established views and conventional perspectives in order to uphold the status quo. On the other hand, this elite group of individuals is considered by many to favour the liberal perspective on political issues. Conservatives claim that the concentration of corporate power has created a media that further the liberal cause by predominantly focusing on the negative aspects of society” (Oswald 2009).

5.2.2 The debate-function

In the United States, journalists have the opportunity to influence the public debate. To what extent they exactly have this convenience is hard to define. Oswald (2009) points out that journalists have four possibilities to influence policy-making by the government: “ (1) by creating the reality in which government leaders act, (2) by playing the role of public opinion representatives, (3) by giving attention to particular issues, and (4) by acting as a link between governmental bureaucracies”.

However, the fact that the media system in the United States is highly privatised and barely perceives public media has a downside when it comes to the debate-function. Therefore, Benson (2016) indicates that commercial interests can reduce the quality of the debate-function. He points to international comparative research that demonstrates that public media are better able to perform that function and thus also contribute to the public’s confidence in the media and to involvement in the democratic institutions.

As a whole, the media system of the United States – increasingly privately held or foundation funded – seems to be moving back towards the corrupt and agenda-driven media system that prevailed in the United States and most of Western Europe prior to World War II, and probably still is the global norm. In this kind of system, global oligarchs accept less than maximal profits in exchange for the obvious publicity – and silencing – power of the media. Benson (2016) asks the following question, concerning the media system in the United States: “What will be the end result of the American experiment in hyper commercialism and philanthropy? While there are some bright spots, a number of problems loom on the horizon for American news media. If current trends hold, full-time professional journalism will continue to be downsized. The tens of thousands of journalists being laid off at major legacy news organizations are not being replaced by the trickle of new jobs at digital and non-profit news organizations, not even close. Digital-only commercial media are subject to even greater commercial pressures than their legacy predecessors were, as advertisers gain greater control over the editorial process via native advertising. The only escape from advertiser control seems to be increased reliance on reader contributions and subscriptions, which tend to favour high-income demographics and ultimately wall off most people from the promised civic and cultural benefits of the Internet. As a whole, the US media system – increasingly

privately-held or foundation-funded – seems to be moving back toward the corrupt and agenda-driven media system that prevailed in the US and most of Western Europe prior to World War II, and probably still is the global norm. In this kind of system, global oligarchs accept less than maximal profits in exchange for the obvious publicity – and silencing – power of the media. This doesn't mean there won't be quality journalism anymore. But there are clearly limits, and as economic power becomes increasingly concentrated, these limits will degrade the quality of democratic life. Any media reform worthy of the name will need to address these new challenges”.

5.2.3 The watchdog-function

Many journalists in the United States believe that adversarial reporting is a necessity of the profession. A journalist of ABC News illustrated this once very well: “If you send me to cover a pie-baking contest on Mother's Day, I'm going to ask dear old Mom why she used artificial sweetener in violation of the rules, and while she's at it, could I see the receipt for the apples to prove that she didn't steal them. I maintain that if Mom has nothing to hide, no harm will have been done. But the questions should be asked. Too often, Mom, and presidents-behind those sweet faces-turn out to have stuffed a few rotten apples into the public barrel” (Oswald 2009).

Customarily, the United States has a tradition when it comes to investigative journalism. The tradition has deteriorated as a consequence of major cuts in journalism and because of the emergence of online media. The online news feature often involves fast and manageable formats of information, where the speed of the service is often very high. This is at odds with the time and attention required for serious investigative reporting. Reuters (2017, p.101) designates this as well: “American media companies remain global leaders in pioneering new digital revenue streams, but questions remain over whether commercial efforts alone will be enough to support levels of watchdog and investigative journalism needed to sustain a healthy democracy. While a select number of national newspapers and a handful of non-profits (ProPublica plans to open their first regional operation in Illinois this year) still fund rigorous newsgathering operations, state and local public affairs coverage generally remains a shadow of its former self. The future of news in the US may ultimately depend on whether the post-election surge in willingness to pay proves fleeting or a harbinger of a broad-based cultural change in public support for quality journalism”.

However, in the era of Trump, investigative journalism might get a boost. As was observed in Chapter 4, Trump's approach directed at the media has led to intensive fact-checking by the media and other organisations. Investigative reporting is of course often based upon secret sources and many times on leaked information. In the recent year, there were numerous of Trump's threats aligned at both people

from his own administration and the media. This provoked a lot of criticism from on one hand journalists, and on the other hand from other people as well. Julian Assange, founder of Wikileaks, answered Trump in a response via Twitter.

Pilger (2001) notes that American journalists are often not very critical of government and political leaders. He points to an investigation by Michael Goss of the University of Illinois. “Goss examined 630 articles on sanctions published in the *New York Times* from 1996 to

1998. In those three years, just 20 articles - 3 per cent of the coverage - were critical of the policy or dwelt upon its civilian impact”. Pilger also finds that journalists in the United States sometimes allow themselves to be uncritically tempted by American propaganda. “In a study of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* (...) 75 per cent of the sources were government officials - a record not that far behind the old *Pravda*. Truly independent reporters such as Seymour Hersh are described, revealingly, as ‘dissidents’ and ‘advocates’.”

Although that statement has already been made in 2011, Dan Rather, CBS Broadcaster, believes that American investigative journalism has currently lost its backbone (Terdiman, 2017). According to him, many journalists today are too cosy with people in powerful political or corporate positions. “You can get so close to a source that you become part of the problem, he added. Some people say that these powerful people use journalists, and they do. And they will use them to the fullest extent possible, right up until the point where the journalist says, ‘Whoa, that’s too far’. A watchdog is not an attack dog... But what does the lapdog do? He just crawls into someone’s lap. A good watchdog barks at everything that’s suspicious.” The idea that the relationship between journalists and politicians is sometimes too intimate, is also supported by Ryan Lizza (see Appendix E): “There is a parasitic relationship between Trump and the press. Trump created a massive market for serious journalism in the States. The one moment Trump attacks institutions and the next moment he calls those reporters and has a friendly chat with them”. So there is something very cynical about his attacks on the press. There are friendships and especially in New York there are journalists he has known for decades.”

According to Chris Hamby, however, there is also reason for optimism (see Appendix F). He describes that Trump is seen “as a fundamental shift and almost as an existential threat to the free press broadly and especially to investigative journalism”. Although according to Hamby it is clear that a shift has



Figures 51 and 52 – Tweets of President Trump and Julian Assange.
Sources: @realDonaldTrump and @JulianAssange on Twitter.

taken place in the last year, it should not all have to be that awful. On the contrary: “To my opinion, Trump has not created a whole new reality. He pushed the public discourse to extremes and forced us journalists to confront some of the issues that have been simmering for a long time. Both issues present opportunities for journalism.” Hamby points to “a growing demand for reliable information and encouragingly people seem willing to pay for it. Since the election, outlets including the New York Times, the Washington Post, the New Yorker, the Atlantic, have all set subscription records. The Times added half a million new digital subscribers in just a six month period. Some outlets are hiring, for example the Post with sixteen new journalists and a rapid-response investigative team. There are a number of outlets doing great investigative journalism, not just these legacy publications.”

5.3 Conclusions with regard to the practice of basic functions of journalism in Russia and the United States

One of the conclusions of the research into the basic functions of journalism in Russia and the United States is that the possibilities for journalists to execute the information-function, the debate-function and the watchdog-function differ fundamentally between both countries. The research pointed out that the execution of these basic functions, based on democratic values, are less easy to fulfil by Russian journalists who work in an autocratic society, than for their American colleagues, working in a democratic society. As already has been stated in the introduction to this chapter, scientific research to develop categorisations of journalistic functions in different societal models might be useful for further research (see Chapter 6). However, the research for this Final Project into the current basic journalistic functions shows that Russian journalists compared to American journalists have to do their work in a climate that can be characterised as less free when it comes to press freedom, as more intensely censored and as far more dangerous.

At face value, the outcome of this research thus seems to show the United States as the champion regarding press freedom, especially when it is compared to Russia. However, a closer look at the research results with regard to media freedom shows some striking similarities between the two countries. Gehlbach (2010a) states that media freedom is an instrument to facilitate decision making by the public. He developed a model in which media freedom and decision making are related as follows:

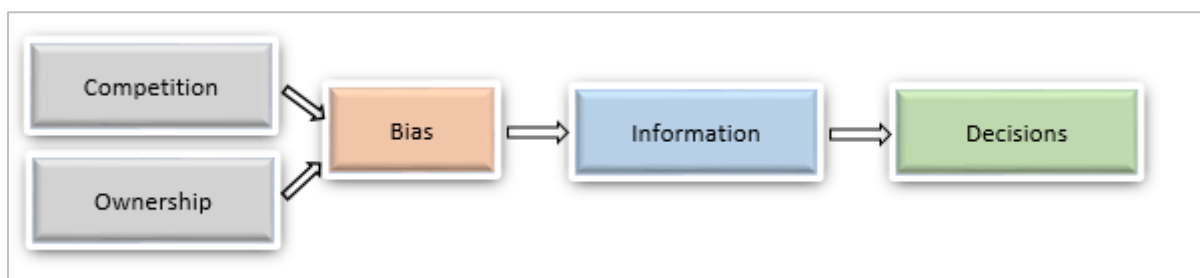


Figure 53 – Model of the relation between media freedom and decision making.
Source: based on ‘Media freedom: wat matters?’ (Gehlbach, 2010a).

Although this model seems rather oversimplified when it comes to decision making by audiences (many other variables will matter in this case, such as information from trusted influential and peers, other institutions than the media, et cetera), the model is helpful in indicating the outcome of the research for this Final Project into the basic functions of journalism in Russia and the United States. As will be substantiated below, the relationship between competition and ownership on the one hand, its effects on bias and the effect of bias on information, leads to some striking similarities between the two countries. Information is in the context of the outcomes of this research considered as information through the information-function, the debate-function and the watchdog-function.

As has been stated in Chapter 3 and in the case study of Putin in Chapter 4, Russia has a stark concentration of media ownership, predominantly in the hands of the state, state related organisations and Kremlin friendly business enterprises which belong to the inner circle of the Kremlin. As a result, there is little competition between the media. The research into the basic functions of journalism in Russia in this chapter shows that competition that might have come from internet and social media being subdued, especially as a consequence of new and restrictive state regulations. When it comes to bias, the research also pointed to the vast and superfluous share of state propaganda on the widely watched and state owned national television, to the influence of the Kremlin friendly commercial media owners on media's editorial policy and content and to the fact that independent media outlets have been decreased in number and in their ability to provide space for critical and oppositional views. The research shows that many Russians still have big faith in the media. And although the research points out that even though some journalists and scientists believe that many Russians are able to separate facts from fiction, others think that this is becoming more and more difficult, especially while the Russian government spends much time and effort and an enormous amount of money into its propaganda. The conclusion is that Russian journalists have little possibilities to execute the information-function, the debate-function and the watchdog-function as a result of concentrated media ownership, hardly any media competition and a strong bias in media content. The research further substantiates this conclusion. For instance, with the fact that fulfilment of the information-function is difficult, while independent media outlets are being shut down or editorially repressed, newsrooms are understaffed as a result on cuts on expenses and personnel and the lack of resources to apply serious fact-checking. The debating-function, with which to influence debate is almost impossible, while journalists of the state media follow Kremlin orders, and journalists working for media outlets owned by Kremlin friendly commercial business owners have to comply to editorial policies that prevent abashment of the Kremlin and advertisers. As a result of the dangerous and violent climate, the watchdog-function is almost non-existent for journalists and increasing restrictive legislation.

The United States has the widespread image of media freedom as compared to other countries and American journalists have far better conditions to fulfil the basic functions of journalism. However, the results of the research show that there are restrictions in practice which limit the factual freedom and the

effectiveness of American journalists to execute the basic functions. Application of the model of Gehlbach (2010a) sheds light on these restrictions. When it comes to media ownership and competition, Chapter 3 presented that due to an increased consolidation, the ownership of media in the United States is now concentrated in the hands of just a few huge commercial enterprises and the share of public broadcasting is only 2%. Looking at bias, the research into the basic functions of journalism shows that the interests of the commercial media owners are visible in content of mainstream mass media by voluntary omission of reporting and images. This concerns content that is not in the interest of media owners, or in the interest of their advertisers, while it does not suit the image they want their companies or the United States to reflect. The research also points also to self-censorship by journalists as a result of these policies. Compared to Russia, however, the United States has still many more media outlets that reflect and report critically. Still, in contrast to Russia, the research shows a low faith of Americans in their media and the results point to a bipartisan effect: people seem to trust the media they use more frequently, than media in general. This points to the existence of partisan ‘bubbles’, which can obviously lead to a strengthening of views on biased content. Based on the outcome of the case study of Trump in Chapter 4, it can be expected that his attacks on the credibility of the media, will further strengthen this bipartisan effect. When it comes to the information-function, American journalists can do still a much better job than their Russian colleagues, safeguarded by press freedom practiced and guaranteed by the First Amendment. There are however some constraints. The research shows that just like in Russia, media in the United States have suffered from major cuts in costs and personnel. With an increasing and rapidly growing supply of information and with the speed that the news service carries with it via internet and social media, it becomes more difficult to fact-check all information. At the same time, the research points out that this becomes more and more important in an era where fake news is superfluous, whether coming from the office of the president, from Russia, from trolls or from commercial media owners. However, as a result of lesser staffed newsrooms, American journalists more often rely on official sources, such as those from the government. In this respect, the research also points to the fact that correspondents for the White House now have to work with press secretaries that are only interested in serving the president and not so much the public via the press. The execution of the debate-function by American journalists still seems to be guaranteed. However, under the government of President Trump, restrictions become visible. As the case study on Trump in Chapter 4 pointed out, Trump is bypassing the traditional media where he can, by using his ‘own medium’, his Twitter account. Furthermore, the research into the basic functions of journalism shows that Trump has diminished the number of press conferences, an act that shows a similarity to President Putin, who only gives one annual press conference per year. And during press briefings in the White House, journalists are regularly confronted with lies and abashment from Trump’s former and current press secretary. The watchdog-function of journalism, once an outstanding feature of American journalism, has been largely faded out by big cuts on journalism in general and investigative journalism in particular. The speed of the online news service is at odds with the time and effort that are necessary for serious investigative journalism. However, some

journalists are hopeful, while the effect of the new president also seems to lead to a ‘Trump-bump’ in the growing number of subscriptions to (online) media outlets, which brings additional income and possibilities for more investigative journalism. Others are more negative, while they see a too close connection between journalists and government officials to be truly assertive enough for real investigative journalism.

Applying the model of Gehlbach (2010a) on the outcome of this research into the basic functions of journalism in Russia and the United States leads therefore to the conclusion that eventually, journalists in Russia are more handicapped by the climate they work in to execute these functions. However, it is also clear that American journalists, although working in a democracy and having better safeguards to fulfil these basic functions, are not free from censorship, from bias and from restrictions to their watchdog-function.

A final conclusion is that American journalists can perform their work in a far safer environment than their Russian colleagues. However, the ‘demonization’ of President Trump concerning the news media, seems to lead to diminished safety. The research points to the fact that journalists are increasingly being harassed and abused. As the research shows, these developments are reason for concern, both for American journalists, as well as for the worrying exemplifying effect for other countries when it comes to freedom and safety for the press.

6. Conclusions and evaluation

In this concluding chapter, the research that has been carried out into the three sub-research-questions is first summarised in paragraph 6.1, followed by the answer to the main research question in paragraph 6.2. Furthermore, a short discussion with the view of the researcher, combined with suggestions for further research is added in sub-paragraph 6.3.

6.1 Conclusion

6.1.1 Summary and conclusions of the sub research questions

In order to answer the main research question for this Final Project, three sub-research-questions have been formulated based on the following conceptual model.

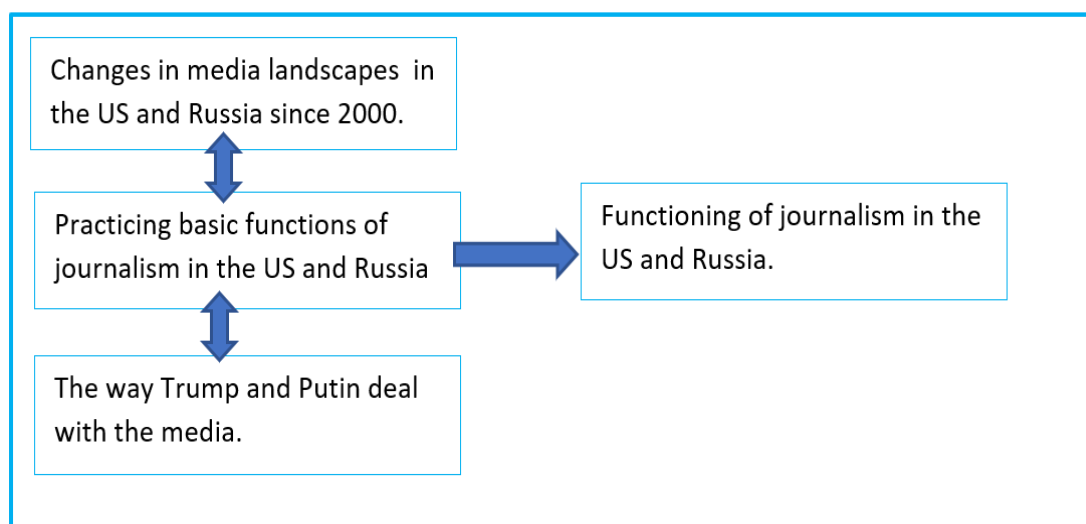


Figure 11 – Conceptual model developed for this Final Project.

In this paragraph, the most important outcomes of the three sub-research-questions are summarised.

1. *What are significant developments in the media landscapes in Russia and the United States since 2000?*

The research into the developments in the media landscapes in Russia and the United States since 2000 was conducted by extensive literature search. Apart from remarkable differences, it showed also striking and sometimes unexpected similarities between both countries. As has been described in Chapter 3, one of the similarities relates to the role and the influence of large companies on the media in both countries: in Russia, media outlets are predominantly owned by the state and by enterprises of Kremlin friendly billionaires and in the United States they are essentially owned by big commercial enterprises. A difference is that in the United States, influence of the state over the media is viewed upon as a limitation of

media freedom. However, the research has also shown that in both countries, large and wealthy companies have a massive influence on the media. The kind of influence differs: Russian media primarily serve a political interest and the state influence is extensive, either directly through the Kremlin or indirectly via large companies loyal to Putin. This is referred to as state censorship. On the other hand, the goal to maximise profit gives business owners a commercial interest in the media and the vast advertising market as well, just like in the United States, where this is referred to as ‘market censorship’.

Another similarity is the large part of mass entertainment in Russian and American news media. The research into the Russian media system shows that this can be identified as an effective component of Putin’s media strategy to keep Russians passive and make sure they ‘voluntarily’ refrain from political activism. On the other hand, the research also points to the fact that in Russia, as well as in the United States, the large share of mass entertainment serves the interests of commercial media owners. In the United States, this is at the expense of the production of more in depth, ideologically diverse and critical news. In both countries, the share of television is still a large part of media consumption, although the influence of the internet and social network media is becoming increasingly significant. And in Russia, as well as in the United States, there is a sharply decreasing share in media consumption when it comes to newspapers. Newspapers in both countries are not able to find a good response to the growing share of online media. The share of radio in the news provision is relatively small.

In the constitutions of the United States and Russia, media and press freedom are enshrined. However, the research showed that these principles are by far better respected in the United States. Not only because Russia has a growing body of restrictive additional laws and regulations on the media, also because – opposite to Russia – American journalists are legally protected from having to release their sources. Seen from a legal point of view, American journalists can therefore carry out their work in much greater freedom than their Russian colleagues.

2. How do President Putin and President Trump deal with the media in their countries?

As described in Chapter 2, the research into the way President Putin and President Trump deal with the media was conducted by the execution of two case studies, complemented with publications from different scientific and journalistic sources, supplemented with expert interviews and presentations. The case study on Putin focused on the way he dealt with the Russian media focused on the period since his re-election in 2011 until 2017. In the case study, an inventory has been made of the (in)direct state control that has been exercised on the news media during this period. For the case study on Trump, an inventory has been made and analysed with regard to the tweets Trump posted online during his first 100 days in office.

The research presents that both President Putin and President Trump desperately want to control the media in their countries. Taking the contextual differences between the two countries into account,

concerning the contrasting political and legal systems, the media systems and the amount of press freedom, they do seem to operate in very different manners in obtaining this goal.

However, a further comparison between the outcome of both case studies shows that there are many more striking similarities between the way Putin and Trump try to control the media than would be expected at first sight. The research shows that both leaders understand the importance of television news on their voters very well. President Trump saved a huge amount of advertisement money by saying 'yes' to every opportunity to come on air with free media exposure. And as the case study on Putin pointed out, one of the first things Putin did once in power, was to regain control over national television.

Another similarity is that Putin and Trump want to have direct access to their audiences. The outcome of the research show that Putin was not only successful in regaining direct state power of national television. He also organised indirect influence on Russian media outlets via commercial ownership of rich and befriended business owners and he effectively reduced independent media outlets in the past seven years. Trump, on the other hand, lacks these direct 'intervention weapons'. But he found an effective answer, simply called 'Twitter'. By using Twitter, he has found his own medium, bypassing the traditional mainstream media which he continuously accuses of fake news (with the exception of befriended Fox News). The success of this strategy is shown by the fact that his tweets are continuously being picked up by mainstream media, bringing him a wide national and international audience.

The research points out that both Putin and Trump see themselves as the sole reliable source of information and loathe it when their power is challenged by countervailing parties via the media. In the case of Putin, it is clear that he – as an autocratic leader – has more and direct 'weapons' to fight the media on this. The case study showed that in the past seven years, the Kremlin effectively repressed oppositional views in media content by an intensification of direct and indirect control over media outlets in Russia. Trump, on the other hand, lacking these weapons, has to follow a different strategy, which concerns the discrediting of the American news media (again with the exception of Fox News). He accuses the news media via Twitter constantly of inaccurate and unfair reporting on him, his family and his policies. The case study pointed out that many of these claims, once fact-checked by the media or other organisations, were actually proven to be false. Although the research also showed that Trump was prone to more negative reporting in his first 100 days as president than some of his predecessors, this seems mainly to have been caused by the fact that his first 100 days in office factually did not go very smoothly.

The outcome of the research show that both Putin and Trump are masters in framing. The case study on Putin exemplifies his art in mastering pro-Russian propaganda. Although criticism can be heard on the large share of media propaganda, especially on national television, fact is that the majority of the Russians still has faith in Putin and in Russian television. The case study on Trump shows how his frame of 'fake news media' tends to cling in people's minds, even when Trump's definition of fake news seems

to be ‘everything that is unsympathetic to him or his administration’. And although the faith of Americans in the media has recently risen since a long time, the case study clarifies that this is not the case when it comes to Republicans and Trump-voters. However, Trump’s message of ‘fake media’ seems powerful and the long term effects might have a lasting effect on the reputation of American news media. Finally, the research in the way Putin and Trump deal with the media displays that there are some points that deserve special attention. The case study of Trump points to the risk that by fact-checking Trump, which can be seen as a necessity given the results of the research, leads to the effect that media themselves reinforce this frame. This can easily lead a booby-trap-effect, meaning that Trump’s claim of fake only will be reinforced in the long run. The case study on Putin shows that recently legislation has been effected that discourages foreign ownership of media in Russia. This shows a forecast to more media concentration in Russian hands only, which probably will have further negative effects on press freedom in Russia. Last but not least, the Putin case also points to recent Russian legislation that makes the blocking of websites linked to ‘undesirable foreign organisations’ easier without reference to court. This has not only the effect of increasing censorship within Russia, it also seems a forebode to serious risks for international social media networks like Twitter, YouTube and others in having their services blocked within Russia.

3. Are the basic functions of journalism practiced in both countries and to what extent?

The research into the basic functions of journalism in Russia and the United States for this Final Project was carried out by a comprehensive literature study on publications from different scientific and journalistic sources, supplemented with expert interviews and presentations.

The outcomes show that the possibilities for journalists to execute the information-function, the debate-function and the watchdog-function differ fundamentally between both countries. Compared to American journalists, Russian journalists have to do their work in a climate that can be characterised as a climate with less press freedom, as more intensely and directly censored and as far more dangerous.

As has been described in Chapter 5, a closer look at the research results with regard to media freedom, points however to some striking similarities between the two countries. A further analysis of the results with help of a model developed by Scott Gehlbach (2010a) shows that there are relations between competition and media ownership on the one hand and bias and the information function of media on the other hand.

As has been described above, Russia has a strong concentration of media ownership, predominantly in the hands of the state, state related organisations and Kremlin friendly business enterprises. As a result, there is little competition between the media. This shows that competition that might have come from internet and social media is being subdued via new and restrictive state regulations. When it comes to bias, Russian state and commercial mass media are characterised by a vast and superfluous share of state propaganda, by the influence of the Kremlin friendly commercial media owners on media’s editorial

policy and content and by a decrease in independent media outlets. And although the research points out that even though journalists and scientists believe that many Russians are able to separate facts from fiction, this might become more troublesome while the Russian government increasingly spends much time, effort and money into its state propaganda.

The conclusion is that Russian journalists have little possibilities to execute the information-function, the debate-function and the watchdog-function as a result of concentrated media ownership, hardly any media competition and a strong bias in media content. The research further substantiates this conclusion. Fulfilment of the information-function is difficult, with independent media outlets being shut down or editorially repressed, with understaffed newsrooms as a result on cuts on expenses and personnel and by the lack of fact-checking resources. The debating-function turns out to be almost impossible, while journalists of the state media follow Kremlin orders, and journalists working for commercial media outlets have to comply to Kremlin friendly editorial policies. As a result of the dangerous and violent climate, the watchdog-function is almost non-existent for journalists and increasing restrictive legislation.

The United States is often seen as one of the champions in media freedom, especially when compared to other countries and American journalists have far better conditions to fulfil the basic functions of journalism than their Russian colleagues. However, the results of the research show that there are restrictions in practice. As has been described above, ownership of media is consolidated and concentrated in the hands of just a few huge commercial enterprises and the share of public broadcasting is only 2%. Looking at bias, the research shows that the interests of the commercial media owners are visible in content of mainstream mass media by voluntary omission of reporting and images that do not suit the interest of media owners and/or their advertisers. Just as in the case of Russia, the research also points to self-censorship by American journalists as a result of these policies. In contrast to Russia however, the research shows a low faith of Americans in their media and the results point to a bipartisan effect: Republicans and Trump-voters seem to trust the media they use themselves more, than liberal media and this is vice versa the case when it comes to liberals. This points to the existence of partisan ‘bubbles’, which can obviously lead to a strengthening of bias. On bases of the outcome of the study case of Trump in Chapter 4, it can be expected that his attacks on the credibility of the media, will further strengthen this bipartisan effect.

The research into the basic journalistic functions show that when it comes to the information-function, American journalists can still do a much better job than their Russian colleagues. However, there are some constraints. The research shows that just like in Russia, media in the United States have suffered from major cuts in costs and personnel and the fast growing share of online news makes fact-checking an intensive and often too costly job, however necessary in an era where fake news is superfluous. Working in lesser staffed newsrooms, American journalists more often have to rely on official sources, such as from the government. In this context, correspondents for the White House in the Trump era have

to work with more hostile press secretaries that are clearly only interested in serving the president and not so much the public via the press. Although the execution of the debate-function by American journalists still seems to be guaranteed, there are restrictions in the Trump era. Trump is not only bypassing the traditional media via his predominant and extensive use of Twitter, he has also diminished the number of press conferences. This act shows a similarity to President Putin, who only gives one annual press conference per year. The watchdog-function of journalism, once an outstanding feature of American journalism, has been largely faded out by big cuts on journalism in general and investigative journalism in particular. However, some journalists are hopeful, while the effect of the new president also seems to lead to a 'Trump-bump': a growing number of subscriptions to (online) media outlets, which brings additional income and possibilities for more investigative journalism. Others are more negative, as they claim to see a connection that is too close between journalists and government officials in order to be truly assertive enough for real investigative journalism.

A final conclusion of the research into the basic functions of journalism is that American journalists can do their work in a far more safe environment than their Russian colleagues. However, the 'demonization' of president Trump concerning the news media, seems to lead to diminished safety. The research points to the fact that journalists are increasingly being harassed and abused. The research points to the concern that these developments might have, both for American journalists, as well as an exemplifying effect for other countries with less press freedom.

6.1.2 Conclusion of the main research question

The main research question for this Final Project was:

What are the effects of the way President Putin and President Trump deal with the news media in their countries on the functioning of journalism in their countries?

The conclusion to the main research question is that in the way both presidents deal with the media, they strongly influence the conditions in the way journalists are able to execute their basic journalistic functions.

Based on the outcome of the research, it can be concluded that journalism in Russia under the regime of President Putin is not able to fulfil the information-function, the debate-function and the watchdog function. The urge to control the media to consolidate his power drove Putin in the beginning of his presidency to regain control over national television and to stimulate befriended and rich business owners to invest in media outlets. This led to a strong consolidation of media power and to direct and indirect state censorship. The effect of the further decline in the number of independent media outlets since 2011, led to a further reduction of the possibility to publish or broadcast critical and oppositional views. Intensified regulation by the Kremlin functions not only to further subdue these views, but also to a reduction of media competition. Consequently, there is not only a great amount of direct and indirect state censorship over the media, but also an understandable urge for self-censorship by editors and

journalists. The vast amount of state propaganda combined with a growing amount of online news, understaffed newsrooms and a lack of resources for fact-checking, leads to the effect that it is hard for journalists to separate fact from fiction. Apart from these circumstances, Russian journalists are forced to perform their professions under dangerous circumstances. Many murders and assaults on journalists in the past decades, characterise the climate they work in.

The research presents that American journalists can still execute the basic functions of journalism, working in a climate with far better conditions than their Russian colleagues. At the same time, though not so obvious, they also have to deal with constraints, which seem to grow under the presidency of President Trump. In the Trump era, journalists have to deal with the fact that Trump bypasses the mainstream news media by employing his own medium: his Twitter account. Moreover, this is also visible in the fact that he lessened presidential press conferences and briefings. This leads to the effect that journalists are often not in the lead, but in a reactive position. Upon that, they are confronted with fake news from the president and the White House, as the many fact-checks of this information show. Trump's attacks on the news media and thereby accusing them of fake news leads to the urge of fact-checking almost every tweet and statement. However, by operating in this manner, journalists risk to further reinforce Trump's claim that the news media are fake. Furthermore, American journalists – just like their Russian colleagues – have to deal with understaffed newsrooms and a growing speed of (online) news. This makes them more dependent on official sources and press secretaries, which are not always as reliable as they should be in the Trump era. As a consequence, separating fact from fiction is – also for American journalists – becoming a more difficult job every day. Finally, the research showed that Trump's hostile and abashing attitude towards the news media seems to lead to more harassment and abuse of journalists. These developments lead to the conclusion that the way Trump deals with the media put further constraints on the possibility for American journalists to execute the basic journalistic functions.

To this research question, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Despite the fact that President Trump is hostile towards the 'mainstream news media', journalism in Russia will be less able to perform its basic functions, because President Putin is an autocratic leader who will allow less freedom and space to media and journalists, compared to President Trump who is a leader in a democratic regime. However, with regard to the overt hostile attitude of President Trump to the news media, it can be expected that journalists in the United States will be confronted with more problems than before in exercising the basic functions of journalism, especially as it comes to their function 'to inform the people'. This outcome is to be expected while the president avoids the intermittent function of the news media to inform people by his use of Twitter as his dominant medium to inform the people of the United States.

The conclusions formulated above prove the hypothesis to be true. However, the hypothesis did not take into account that there is also an effect of the way President Trump deals with the media on the debating-

function and the watchdog-function in the United States. The research proved the existence of an effect on these functions. Concerning the debate-function, there is definitely reason for concern, because of the limitation of the access of journalists to President Trump, who reduces press conferences, communicates primarily via Twitter and has a vengeance with all the news media except for Fox News. However, with regard to the watchdog-function, there seems to be hope. Where the longstanding tradition of investigative journalism was bleached as a result of cuts in expenses and personnel, the ‘Trump-bump’ – more paid subscriptions to (online) media outlets – might lead to investments in journalism and especially in investigative journalism. The latter also seems to be truly essential, especially in the Trump era.

Last but not least, the title of this Final Project is proposing a question: ‘Making or breaking the news?’ As the conclusions above substantiate, in the case of Russia and therefore regarding the way Putin deals with the media, leads to *breaking* the Russian news media. Journalists regularly find themselves in very poor and dangerous circumstances while performing their profession. In the case of the United States, the answer is ‘bipolar’. On the one hand, journalists profit from the many opportunities President Trump himself provides to bring *breaking* news. On the other hand, the research shows that in the Trump era, journalists face restrictions in *making* trustworthy news.

6.1.3 Discussion and suggestions for further research

The outcome of the research shows reason for concern with regard to the effect of the way Putin deals with the media on Russian journalism. With new presidential elections coming up in 2018 and effective suppression of political opposition by Putin, there is little hope for a short-term change. The Russian case – and especially the way Putin deals with the media – substantiates Putin’s claim that ‘who owns the media, owns what they say’.

In the case of the United States, there is also reason for concern. The fact that the news media – in a country which is judged as one of ‘the champions of press freedom’ – are now regarded as ‘fake’, is troublesome. Especially the fact-checking of all false claims may merely lead to the reinforcement of the opinions of those who safely stay inside their own bubbles, comforted with what their own trusted media tell them. This counts for both parties of the political spectrum, be it Republicans, be it Democrats.

Based on the research for this Final Project, many topics for further research emerge. The two most significant topics are the following.

As stated in Chapter 5, the categorisation of the basic journalistic functions are based on democratic values. Subsequently, they are less easy to fulfil by Russian journalists who work in an autocratic society. Scientific research designed to develop categorisations of journalistic functions in different societal models might be useful for further research.

In the case of American journalism, it might be helpful to develop a standard to objectively measure the faith of Americans in their media. During the research for this Final Project, it was sometimes difficult

to define the scientific basis and trustworthiness of research into research dealing with this specific issue. In an era where the separation of fact from fiction becomes an absolute essentiality, it will be incredibly worthwhile to provide unmistakable facts.

6.1.4 Evaluation

The evaluation of this research shows that the research approach and execution of the project has led to validated outcomes. This was especially important since this Final Project concerns qualitative research. In the case of qualitative research, the broader implications are often subject for discussion. However, by applying different research methods (triangulation) in this report, the outcomes are validated. The research methods that were used in the process of creating this project are extensive desk research (turned into scientific research) and the use of a variety of different sources. The execution of the case studies is documented thoroughly and is supplemented by the views of experts, both through interviews and in expert presentations.

A fundamental practice that follows from this research, concerns the fact that a research is as broad as its main research question. Although effort has been put in narrowing the main research question from the start of this Final Project (see Chapter 1), the evaluation shows that this question (and the derived sub-research-questions) lead to a tremendous amount of work.

However, this being said, during the execution of this Final Project, I personally developed the skills of a true researcher, which is a true gift in itself.

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Appendix A: Inventory of (in)direct state-influence on Russian media outlets 2011 - 2017

Dates	Medium	Incident(s)	Reason(s)	Reaction(s)/follow-up
2011	Newspaper Gazeta.Ru, part of SUP Media owned by Kommersant and Alexander Mamut, a businessman and investor.	Roman Badanin resigned from his post as deputy editor. "Many staffers quit as a sign of protest" (Lipman, 2016).	The 'Map of violations' was published (a map concerning electoral violations and fraud) (Lipman, 2016). "The website's managers decided to remove this banner (...) Mikhail Kottov, Gazeta.ru's chief editor, said removing the banner was a purely commercial decision. However other publishers alleged the conflict was due to Badanin's refusal to run an advertisement for Putin's political party, United Russia"(Benyumov, 2016).	By September 2013 Gazeta.ru had completely re-staffed its politics desk, while many of the reporters who had covered the 2011 and 2012 elections had resigned (Benyumov, 2016).
2011 (Dec)	Newspaper Daily Kommersant-Vlast (weekly). Part of Kommersant publishing house, owned by billionaire Usmanov.	Chief editor Kovalsky and general director Andrei Galiyev of Kommersant Publishing House were fired (Benyumov, 2016; Lipman, 2016).	Publishing of "a photograph of a voting ballot featuring an obscene word scribbled next to Putin's name" (Benyumov, 2016). "Issue of the magazine devoted to mass opposition protests sparked by allegedly-rigged parliamentary elections" (The Calvert Journal, 2013).	"Staff at the newspaper wrote an open letter supporting Kovalsky, calling his ouster an act of intimidation" (Benyumov, 2016). "Kommersant until recently a high quality mainstream daily, lost a few more prominent journalists, grew tame and fell below editorial standards"(Lipman, 2016).
2012	Radio. Kommersant FM Radio station. Part of Kommersant publishing house, owned by billionaire Usmanov.	Chief editor replaced.	"Under rumoured pressure from the Kremlin (Benyumov, 2016).	
2012	Magazine Bolshoi Gorod (twice a month).	Editor Dzyadko fired.	Fired because of "political opposition-minded views" (Lipman, 2016).	"Since then generally avoided sensitive political subjects" (Lipman, 2016). In 2013 news spread that Vinokurov (owner, also of amongst others Dozhd TV) threatened to close down Bolshoi Gorod, if the outlet did not reduce costs or would be able to generate income from readers (The Moscow Times, 2013).

Dates	Medium	Incident(s)	Reason(s)	Reaction(s)/follow-up
2013 March	Radio. Kommersant FM Radio station. Part of Kommersant publishing house, owned by billionaire Usmanov.	Chief editor Vorobyov resigned.	Dmitry Sergeyev, president of Kommersant Publishing House, told Interfax news agency: "The dismissal of Alexei Vorobyov has nothing to do with the editorial policy of the radio station and is prompted exclusively by personal reasons" (The Calvert Journal, 2013).	
2013 March	Newspaper Gazeta.ru, part of SUP Media owned by Kommersant and Alexander Mamut, a businessman and investor.	Chief editor Kotov resigned.	Sergeyev, representative of SUP Media was appointed executive director: all departments became subordinate to him (The Calvert Journal, 2013).	
2013, December	News agency RIA Novosti, state-owned. "A network covering more than 45 countries and reporting in 14 different languages. Editor in chief Svetlana Mironyuk hired a number of popular, influential journalists from liberal media outlets, and her website carried live reports from anti-Putin protests in Moscow during the winter of 2012. Yet Mironyuk was able to preserve a good relationship with the Kremlin" (Dougherty 2015).	An executive order of Putin lead to the liquidation of RIA Novosti (Benyumov, 2016; Lipman, 2016).	The state, which owns RIA Novosti, set about building an entirely new news organisation in its place. The new outfit was called Rossiya Segodnya (the Russian translation of 'Russia Today'), and Dmitry Kisleyov, the country's best known pro-Kremlin commentator, was appointed as general director (Benyumov, 2016). "The decision shuts a decades-old state-run news agency widely viewed as offering professional and semi-independent coverage, while putting a reconstituted news service in the hands of a Kremlin loyalist (Myers, 2013).	"By December 2013, editor in chief Mironyuk, suddenly, was out. RIA Novosti was shut down by the Kremlin, then reorganized as part of a new agency headed by a Kremlin-friendly broadcaster (...) Mironyuk eventually left Russia"(Dougherty, 2015). "In the remaking of RIA Novosti – once the largest, most innovative and independent of Russia's state media – most of the correspondents left, many of the agency's news projects shut down and layoffs swept the newsroom. (...) Though the original URL RIA.ru still works, the website is just an appendage of Rossiya Segodnya (Benyumov, 2016).
2014, January	Television station Dozhd TV, an opposition television station. "Dozhd is the only remaining television channel in Russia that presents a non-governmental perspective on politics and public life. Founded in 2010, it has reported on politically sensitive issues like corruption, the 2011-2012 Moscow street protests, and the war in Ukraine" (Dougherty, 2015).	"Russia's biggest cable television providers started, one after another, dropping Dozhd from their coverage, saying it was in response to angry calls from customers upset about the Leningrad poll" (Benyumov, 2016).	"At the start of the year Dozhd TV published an online survey asking viewers if Leningrad should have been surrendered to the Nazis in order to save hundreds of thousands of lives" (Benyumov, 2016). Political journalist and anchor of Dozhd TV, Fishman "was convinced that Dozhd's travails had all been orchestrated by the Kremlin. There were some reasons, formal reasons, having to do with economics, he said, but no one has any doubts it was a decision issued from above (Dougherty, 2015)"	"The audience of "about 17 million has dramatically dropped to about 2 million, as has its revenues" (Lipman, 2016). "Dozhd has since been forced to change its business model, shifting its focus to broadcasting online to paid subscribers" (Benyumov, 2016). "This was not the last trouble: the Duma passed a law that prohibits commercial advertisement on paid channels. Not before too long the station was told that its rent contract would not be extended and that it had to vacate its offices" (Lipman, 2016). "Now the channel is watched mostly on the web, though it's still available as part of a few cable packages" (Dougherty, 2015).

Dates	Medium	Incident(s)	Reason(s)	Reaction(s)/follow-up
2014, March	Website Lenta.ru (news). "Political website with high quality news coverage" (Lipman, 2016).	Chief editor Galina Timchenko was fired by the managing shareholder of SUP Media, Alexander Mamut (Benyumov, 2016).	"The reason given for the dismissal was an official warning from Russian state censors, issued because one of the website's stories (an interview with a Ukrainian nationalist leader) contained a hyperlink to materials deemed extremist" (Benyumov, 2016).	"More than 80 editors and reporters – nearly the entire newsroom – quit in protest, publishing an open letter calling Timchenko's ouster "an act of censorship" and a violation of Russia's media laws. Lenta.ru's next chief editor was Alexey Goreslavsky, the former chief of the pro-Kremlin website Vzglyad, where he had primarily managed the company's relationships with various government offices. " (Benyumov, 2016). "Timchenko founded a new website Medusa, however working from Latvia. According to Lipman (2016) this is the first time since post-Soviet Russia that a "political émigré medium" is founded.
2014, March	Website Grani.ru	Russia's attorney general ordered federal censors to block the opposition website Grani.ru" (Benyumov, 2016).	Grani.ru was accused of "publishing incitements to illegal action, including unsanctioned political rallies" (Benyumov, 2016).	"Grani.ru was the first online news publication to be blocked in Russia, but it soon had company as the opposition websites Kasparov.ru and Ezhednevnyi Zhurnal, were blocked for the same reasons. The site, which was struggling financially even before being taken down, continues to operate using an array of mirror sites, and hosts instructions for circumventing internet censorship. Though it still publishes reports about current events, its content is exclusively political" (Benyumov, 2016).
2014, August	Television station Ren TV/programme The Week. This was "one of the last remaining analytical political programmes on Russian television. According to research data, it was also one of the most popular shows on REN TV" (Benyumov, 2016).	REN TV closed The Week with Marianna Maksimovskaya (Benyumov, 2016; Lipman 2016).	"The station never offered a reason for cancelling the program" (Benyumov, 2016).	"The station has since replaced Maksimovskaya's show with a new program called Dobrov on Air, hosted by Andrei Dobrov, who claims to present the news 'from a normal person's perspective' (...) After the news broke, Maksimovskaya briefly remained at REN TV as a deputy editor, but eventually resigned in December 2014" (Benyumov, 2016).

Dates	Medium	Incident(s)	Reason(s)	Reaction(s)/follow-up
2014, December	Website Russkaya Planeta (online news service)	Investors at Russkaya Planeta suddenly announced that chief editor Pavel Pryanikov was out, and new leadership would be moving in"(Benyumov, 2016).	"Apparently due to one of the investors' interests in 'Russian cosmism', the editors were told their staff was 'weak cosmists', and not up to the journal's tasks. They were let go, and the site was redesigned" (Benyumov, 2016).	"Along with Pryanikov, who managed to transform Planeta into one of Russia's most original publications, several other editors left, saying the change in leadership was part of an effort to overhaul the journal's editorial policy. Lots of reporters have since left the journal, which has become a patriotic media outlet, publishing articles about Russian weapons, op-eds by nationalists commentators and criticism of the Russian opposition"(Benyumov, 2016).
2014	Radio Ekho Moskv. Talkradio, most popular radio station in Moscow (Lipman, 2016).	A morally dubious tweet of one of the journalists (Lipman, 2016).	This lead almost to firing of top editor of Ekho Moskv (Lipman, 2016).	"Thanks to Venediktov's unique talent to maintain good relationships with the Kremlin and yet not to compromise on his editorial integrity, Ekho was able to overcome repeated attacks" (Lipman, 2016). "Because the Kremlin-controlled Gazprom Media owns a majority stake in Ekho Moskv, it could change the station's editorial policy by replacing the editor at any time. For now, the authorities do not need such a shake-up because Ekho Moskv helps them compete with the opposition. Venediktov does not have job security, but as long as he is editor-in-chief, his editorial policy guarantees that this status quo will largely remain intact" (The Moscow Times, 2015).
2015, February	Television station TV2 (one of the oldest independent networks)	"In late 2014 TV2 (...) was in danger of being shut down. Its shows were terminated by the agency in charge of broadcast licences. Internet and cable broadcasting ceased soon after"(Benyumov, 2016).	"Loyal viewers speculated it was because of its independent editorial policy" (Benyumov, 2016)" (Benyumov, 2016).	"An NGO called Sreda, a charity supporting independent media, art and sciences, came to the rescue and announced that it was giving TV2 a 7.5m rouble grant. Today, the station exists as an internet project and continues to produce video content online" (Benyumov, 2016).

Dates	Medium	Incident(s)	Reason(s)	Reaction(s)/follow-up
2015, August	Russian media group	"RMG, owned by a holding company, would then be sold to Gosconcert, part of the Russian Ministry of Culture" (Benyumov, 2016).	"In the summer of 2015, Vladimir Kiselyov, the founder of the Federation Foundation, a pro-Kremlin NGO, suggested the creation of a 'patriotic media holding company' to Putin. Kiselyov proposed merging "several television stations" and Russian Media Group (RMG) assets, such as Russkoe Radio, Hit FM, Radio Maxim, DFM, Monte Carlo and the music station Ru.tv." (Benyumov, 2016).	"A consortium of managers, producers, and artists tried to buy out the owners, investment fund IFD Capital, but failed. In August, the holding company appointed a new executive director but he quit after a week, complaining about interference from the Ministry of Communications in the company's editorial policies. In autumn, much of the staff at RMG, including most of the employees at Russkoe Radio, resigned. Today, the sale of RMG to Gosconcert is still being negotiated" (Benyumov, 2016).
2016, January	Magazine and website Forbes	German owner (group Axel Springer) was forced to sell off its shares in Forbes and other assets held in Russia. Businessman Fedotov bought Forbes. Chief editor Murtazaev then quit, "citing 'personal reasons'" (Benyumov, 2016).	"Because of a new law restricting foreign ownership in Russian media companies" (Benyumov, 2016).	"After Murtazaev's departure, Forbes hired Nikolai Uskov, a journalist with little experience in business reporting, as its chief editor. He quickly announced that under his stewardship, Forbes wouldn't be about politics, though he vowed to remain "a thorn" in the side of the powerful" (Benyumov, 2016).
2016, May	News company RBC	"Three top-editors left: Elizaveta Osetinskaya, Roman Badanin and Maxim Solyus"(Benyumov, 2016).	"Allegedly as a result of pressure from the Kremlin (which Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, firmly denies) (...) According to insiders, the resignations came as a result of coercion from the Kremlin after anger over several recent investigations, including reports on the Panama Papers revelations (...) When leaving his post, Soluys pointed out that police recently brought fraud charges against Nikolai Molibog, RBC's general director, making it unlikely that Prokhorov will escape this conflict unscathed" (Benyumov, 2016).	"It's too soon to say who will replace them, or what kind of relationship the next editor will build with the Kremlin and RBC's liberal owner, Mikhail Prokhorov (...) Many fellow editors and reporters at RBC say they plan to resign too, while others have vowed to continue their work "until the first story is censored" (Benyumov, 2016).

Dates	Medium	Incident(s)	Reason(s)	Reaction(s)/follow-up
2017, December	App Telegram	On 12 December, a Moscow appeal court upheld a decision to fine Telegram 800,000 roubles (11,500 euros) for refusing to hand over its decryption keys to Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB). It was the latest stage in a battle that has dragged on all year. If Telegram does not comply, the authorities could start blocking the service on 28 December" (Reporters without borders, 2017).	"The authorities base their demand for the decryption keys on the draconian terrorism law that was adopted in 2016 in the face of unanimous protests from civil society. Telegram has built its reputation on respect for free speech and privacy, and says the demand constitutes an unwarranted violation of these principles" (Reporters without borders, 2017). A few opposition demonstrations in 2017 have drawn large crowds of young people, suggesting that the Internet generation is less influenced than its elders by the propaganda on the big television channels. President Vladimir Putin has just announced that he is running for a fourth term" (Reporters without borders, 2017).	"Telegram also insists that it does not have access to the decryption keys, which are generated on the devices of each individual user. Agora, the human rights group that is representing Telegram in this case, wrote to the UN special rapporteur for freedom of expression, David Kaye, on 13 December asking him to intercede. Meanwhile, also on 13 December, a Moscow administrative court rejected a complaint against the FSB that had been brought by well-known independent journalist Oleg Kashin arguing that the demand for Telegram's decryption keys threatens the confidentiality of journalists' sources. A similar complaint by fellow journalist Alexander Plyushchev was rejected in October" (Reporters without borders, 2017).
2017, December	Website Open Russia. "Open Russia is linked to a political movement of the same name founded by Mikhail Khodorkovsky, a Kremlin critic now living in exile, but there is no legal connection between them (Reporters without borders, 2017)".	The independent news and information website Open Russia was blocked along with all the resources linked (...) to 11 organizations so far deemed to be 'undesirable'" (Reporters without borders, 2017).	The law under which websites linked to 'undesirable foreign organizations' which is recently adopted, makes blocking of websites possible without reference to court (Reporters without borders, 2017).	"Not to be outdone, the telecommunication surveillance agency Roskomnadzor has been (...) calling on Twitter, YouTube and others to delete Open Russia's accounts or risk having their services blocked within Russia. The Russian social network Odnoklassniki immediately complied. The Roskomnadzor ordered media outlets to delete all online links to the blocked websites on the grounds that they 'help to disseminate illegal content'. The outlets are likely to take the order seriously. The News Times website already received a formal warning in late November over three links to 'illegal content' – pages containing swearwords. The Russian authorities have been constantly tightening their Internet legislation in recent years and this is the result – an unprecedented level of censorship", said Johann Bühr, the head of RSF's Eastern Europe and Central Asia desk" (Reporters without borders, 2017).

Appendix B: Further analysis of (in)direct state influence on Russian media outlets 2011 – 2017

Number of times (in)direct state pressure was exercised on media outlets

<i>Media</i>	<i>Times (in)direct state pressure was exercised</i>	<i>Years</i>
Website	4	2014 (3), 2017
Newspaper	3	2011 (2), 2013
Radio	3	2012, 2013, 2014
Television station	3	2014 (2), 2015
Magazine	2	2012
News company/media group	1 (and 1 under the threat of being sold to the state)	2016 (and 1 under threat since 2015)
App	1	2017
News agency	1	2013

Categorisation of the effect of increased (in)direct state-control on media outlets

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Short notation of incidents</i>	<i>Categorisation as</i>
2013, December	News agency RIA Novosti, state-owned	An executive order of Putin lead to the liquidation of RIA Novosti (Benyumov, 2016; Lipman, 2016). "The network covered more than 45 countries and reporting in 14 different languages (...) website carried live reports from anti-Putin protests in Moscow during the winter of 2012" (Dougherty 2015).	Diminishing independent media outlets.
2013 March	Newspaper Gazeta.ru, part of SUP Media owned by Kommersant and Alexander Mamut, a businessman and investor.	Sergeyev, representative of SUP Media was appointed executive director: all departments became subordinate to him (The Calvert Journal, 2013). Chief editor Kotov resigned.	Increasing Kremlin-friendly control over media outlets.
2014, December	Website Russkaya Planeta (online news service)	Investors at Russkaya Planeta suddenly announced that chief editor Pavel Pryanikov was out, and new leadership would be moving in" (...) "Lots of reporters have since left the journal, which has become a patriotic media outlet, publishing articles about Russian weapons, op-eds by nationalists commentators and criticism of the Russian opposition"(Benyumov, 2016).	Increasing Kremlin-friendly control over media outlets.
2016, January	Magazine and website Forbes	German owner forced to sell its shares in Forbes and other Russian assets. Russian Businessman Fedotov bought Forbes. Chief editor Murtazaev then quit, "citing 'personal reasons'" (Benyumov, 2016).	Increasing media ownership in Russian hands.

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Short notation of incidents</i>	<i>Categorisation as</i>
2015, August	Russian media group (RMG)	"RMG, owned by a holding company, would be sold to Gosconcert, part of the Russian Ministry of Culture" (Benyumov, 2016). Still pending.	Increasing media ownership in Russian hands.
2013 March	Radio. Kommersant FM Radio station. Part of Kommersant publishing house, owned by billionaire Usmanov.	Chief editor Vorobyov resigned. President of Kommersant Publishing House: "The dismissal of Alexei Vorobyov has nothing to do with the editorial policy of the radio station and is prompted exclusively by personal reasons" (The Calvert Journal, 2013).	Personal reasons?
2012	Magazine Bolshoi Gorod (twice a month).	Editor Dzyadko fired (The Moscow Times, 2013), because of "political opposition-minded views" (Lipman, 2016).	Repression of oppositional views and content.
2016, May	News company RBC	"Three top-editors left (...) according to insiders, the resignations came as a result of coercion from the Kremlin after anger over several recent investigations, including reports on the Panama Papers revelations (Benyumov, 2016).	Repression of oppositional views and content.
2011 December	Newspaper Daily Kommersant-Vlast (weekly). Part of Kommersant publishing house, owned by billionaire Usmanov.	Chief editor Kovalsky and general director Andrei Galiyev of Kommersant Publishing House were fired (Benyumov, 2016; Lipman, 2016). Reason: "Issue of the magazine devoted to mass opposition protests sparked by allegedly-rigged parliamentary elections" (The Calvert Journal, 2013).	Repression of oppositional views and content.
2011	Newspaper Gazeta.Ru, part of SUP Media owned by Kommersant and Alexander Mamut, a businessman and investor.	The 'Map of violations' (concerning electoral violations and fraud) was published by Gazeta.Ru. Management removed it and said this was a purely commercial decision. However others are convinced that the real reason was the editor's refusal to run an advertisement for Putin's political party. Deputy editor resigned and "many staffers quit as a sign of protest" (Lipman, 2016).	Repression of oppositional views and content.
2014	Radio Ekho Moskv. Talkradio, most popular station in Moscow (Lipman, 2016).	A morally dubious tweet of one of the journalists of Ekho Moskv. This led almost to firing of top editor of Ekho Moskv (Lipman, 2016).	Repression of oppositional views and content.
2014, January	Television station Dozhd TV, an opposition Television station. Founded in 2010, it has reported on politically sensitive issues like corruption, the 2011-2012 Moscow street protests, and the war in Ukraine" Dougherty, 2015).	"Dozhd TV published an online survey asking viewers if Leningrad should have been surrendered to the Nazis in order to save hundreds of thousands of lives (...) Russia's biggest cable television providers started dropping Dozhd from their coverage, saying it was in response to angry calls from customers upset about the Leningrad poll" (Benyumov, 2016).	Repression of oppositional views and content.
2014, August	Television station REN.tv/programme The Week. This was "one of the last remaining analytical political programmes on Russian television. According to research data, it was also one of the most popular shows on REN TV" (Benyumov, 2016).	REN TV closed The Week with Marianna Maksimovskaya (Benyumov, 2016; Lipman 2016). This was "one of the last remaining analytical political programmes on Russian television. According to research data, it was also one of the most popular shows on REN TV" (Benyumov, 2016).	Repression of oppositional views and content.

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Short notation of incidents</i>	<i>Categorisation as</i>
2015, February	Television station TV2 (one of the oldest independent networks)	"Shows were terminated by the agency in charge of broadcast licences. Internet and cable broadcasting ceased soon after (...) Loyal viewers speculated it was because of its independent editorial policy" (Benyumov, 2016).	Repression of oppositional views and content.
2014, March	Website Grani.ru	"Russia's attorney general ordered federal censors to block the opposition website Grani.ru" (...) accused of "publishing incitements to illegal action, including unsanctioned political rallies. (Benyumov, 2016).	Repression of oppositional views and content.
2014, March	Website Lenta.ru (news). "Political website with high quality news coverage" (Lipman, 2016).	Chief editor Galina Timchenko was fired. The reason given was "an official warning from Russian state censors, issued because (...) an interview with a Ukrainian nationalist leader contained a hyperlink to materials deemed extremist" (Benyumov, 2016).	Repression of oppositional views and content.
2017, December	Website Open Russia. "Open Russia is linked to a political movement of the same name founded by Mikhail Khodorkovsky, a Kremlin critic now living in exile, but there is no legal connection between them (Reporters without borders, 2017)".	The independent news and information website Open Russia was blocked along with all the resources linked (...) to 11 organizations so far deemed to be 'undesirable' (Reporters without borders, 2017). The law under which websites linked to 'undesirable foreign organizations' which is recently adopted, makes blocking of websites possible without reference to court (Reporters without borders, 2017).	Repression of oppositional views and content.
2017, December	App Telegram	Fine for refusing to hand over decryption keys to Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) (Reporters without borders, 2017). Court appeals by journalists concerning the confidentiality of sources were rejected (Reporters without borders, 2017).	Threat to confidentiality of sources.
2012	Radio. Kommersant FM Radio station. Part of Kommersant publishing house, owned by billionaire Usmanov.	Chief editor replaced "under rumoured pressure from the Kremlin (Benyumov, 2016).	Unclear.

Categorisation of reasons for increased (in) direct state influence	
Repression of oppositional views and content.	11
Increasing Kremlin-friendly control over media outlets.	2
Increasing media ownership in Russian hands.	2
Diminishing independent media outlets.	1
Threat to confidentiality of sources.	1
Personal reasons?	1
Unclear.	1

Appendix C: Inventory of tweets sent by president Donald Trump about the media in his first 100 days in office, basis for analysis of the practical research

	Date	Trump tweets on media	Reasons for tweets	Framing the media	Fact-checked?	Proven true or false?
1	24-1-2017	Congratulations to @FoxNews for being number one in inauguration ratings. They were many times higher than FAKE NEWS @CNN - public is smart! [With this tweet Trump responds to the inauguration ratings of Fox News (Osborne 2017b).	Frames: FoxNews is an outstanding medium. CNN is fake news.	Yes	False. "CNN replied to Mr Trump's tweet by sharing the viewing numbers for the broadcaster and CNN (...) According to Nielsen cumulative numbers, 34 million people watched CNN's inauguration day coverage on television. 34 million watched Fox News. There were an additional 16.9 million live video starts on CNN Digital platforms. Those are the facts" (Osborne 2017b).
2	28-1-2017	The failing @nytimes has been wrong about me from the very beginning. Said I would lose the primaries, then the general election. FAKE NEWS!	With these three tweets Trump "railed against the New York Times and the Washington Post" (Morin, 2017c).	Frames: The New York Times fails. The New York Times reports dishonest.	No	
3	28-1-2017	The coverage about me in the @nytimes and the @washingtonpost has been so false and angry that the times actually apologized to its dwindling subscribers and readers. They got me wrong right from the beginning and still have not changed course, and never will. DISHONEST	[see above]	Frames: the coverage of The New York Times and The Washington Post is false, angry and dishonest with regard to Trump. The New York Times had to apologize to its readers.	Yes	False. "The Times's publisher and executive editor wrote a letter on Nov. 13 thanking readers for their loyalty and praising the newsroom for covering the 2016 election 'with agility and creativity'. Nowhere in the letter does The Times apologize" (Qiu, 2017). In the letter, The New York Times did raise questions about the fact that the paper - like other news media - had underestimated "his support under American voters" and to ensure readers that they "can rely on The New York Times to bring the same fairness, the same level of scrutiny, the same independence to our coverage of the new president and his team" (The New York Times, 2017). "In the three months after Trump's election, the Times added 276,000 net digital-only subscribers — more than it had added for the entire year of 2015" (Provenzano, 2017).

	Date	Trump tweets on media	Reasons for tweets	Framing the media	Fact-checked?	Proven true or false?
4	29-1-2017	Somebody with aptitude and conviction should buy the FAKE NEWS and failing @nytimes and either run it correctly or let it fold with dignity!	[see above] (Pappas, 2017a)	Frames: the news media are fake. The New York Times is failing. News media should be bought by 'proper' persons to run it properly.	No	
5	30-1-2017	Where was all the outrage from Democrats and the opposition party (the media) when our jobs were fleeing our country?	In response to the media coverage of the 'Muslim ban' (Siddique, 2017).	Frame: the media are the 'opposition' party.	Yes	False. "If media 'outrage' is to be interpreted, in this case, as a willingness to report on American job losses, Trump is mistaken. The media, which hold a desire for accuracy and truth in reporting above all else, has reported a great deal on job losses and automation" (Provenzano, 2017).
6	3-2-2017	Thank you to Prime Minister of Australia for telling the truth about our very civil conversation that FAKE NEWS media lied about. Very nice!	Trump responds to a reaction of the Australian Prime Minister Turnbull on Australian radio about a phone call between the two (Henderson & Graham, 2017).	Frame: the news media are 'fake'.	Yes	False. "While he [Turnbull] denied reports that Trump had hung up on him, he hesitated when asked if Trump had a brash manner. I'll leave others to comment on him but he's clearly a very big personality, Turnbull said" (Provenzano, 2017). A full transcript "shows a heated 24-minute conversation in which Trump vents about his accepting refugees a day after he signed an entry ban" (Miller et. al, 2017).
7	4-2-2017	After being forced to apologize for its bad and inaccurate coverage of me after winning the election, the FAKE NEWS @nytimes is still lost!	This tweet came "on the heels of a report in the Times that revealed Trump is still closely connected to the Trump Organization". It also came "two days after Times CEO punched back at Trump over his claims of 'dwindling' readership" (Reuters, 2017a).	Frames: The New York Times had to apologize to its readers for bad and inaccurate coverage of Trump. The New York Times is still lost.	Yes	False. The New York Times did write a letter to its readers, but it was not to apologize. It was to raise questions about the fact that the paper – like other news media – had underestimated "his support under American voters" and to ensure readers that they "can rely on The New York Times to bring the same fairness, the same level of scrutiny, the same independence to our coverage of the new president and his team" (the New York Times, 2017).

	Date	Trump tweets on media	Reasons for tweets	Framing the media	Fact-checked?	Proven true or false?
8	6-2-2017	Any negative polls are fake news, just like the CNN, ABC, NBC polls in the election. Sorry, people want border security and extreme vetting.	In these two tweets Trump slams coverage of the administration's temporary ban on refugees and of his leadership (Fox news, 2017a).	Frames: negative polls on Trumps policies are fake news. The CNN, ABC and NBC polls in the election were false.	Yes	False. "Professional polling is scientific, not political, in nature. Polls by television networks during the election were not 'fake news'. In fact, most national polls were not far off the mark. The polls correctly showed Hillary Clinton winning the popular vote by a relatively small margin" (Stelter, 2017a).
9	6-2-2017	I call my own shots, largely based on an accumulation of data, and everyone knows it. Some FAKE NEWS media, in order to marginalize, lies!	[see above] (Fox news, 2017a)	Frame: fake news media marginalise the success of Trump.	Yes	False. "While it's fair to harbour a healthy scepticism of institutional bias, an August 2016 FiveThirtyEight assessment of major polling firms found that none of the three of the polls Trump name-drops in his tweet — CNN, ABC and NBC — earned an accuracy grade below A-" (Provenzano, 2017).
10	6-2-2017	The failing @nytimes writes total fiction concerning me. They have gotten it wrong for two years, and now are making up stories & sources!	These two Trump tweets came "the morning after the Times printed a scathing story on Trump's White House dealings and the inner workings of his administration" (Feldscher, 2017b).	Frames: The New York Times fails. The New York Times writes fake news.	No	
11	6-2-2017	The failing @nytimes was forced to apologize to its subscribers for the poor reporting it did on my election win. Now they are worse!	[see above] (Oppenheim, 2017)	Frames: The New York Times fails. The New York Times had to apologize to its readers for their reporting on Trump.	Yes	False. The New York Times did write a letter to its readers, but it was not to apologize. It was to raise questions about the fact that the paper - like other news media - had underestimated "his support under American voters" and to ensure readers that they "can rely on The New York Times to bring the same fairness, the same level of scrutiny, the same independence to our coverage of the new president and his team" (the New York Times, 2017).

	Date	Trump tweets on media	Reasons for tweets	Framing the media	Fact-checked?	Proven true or false?
12	8-2-2017	Trump administration seen as more truthful than news media'	Trump responds to a poll, conducted by Emerson College (Mills, 2017).	Frame: The media are less truthful than the Trump administration.	Yes	Partly true. "This is cherry-picked. Mr. Trump linked to an Emerson College poll in which 48 percent called him dishonest compared with 53 percent for the news media. In other polls, a majority of respondents have characterized Mr. Trump as dishonest and untrustworthy" (Qiu, 2017). The poll by Emerson College "found that the administration is considered truthful by a slim majority, 49 percent, versus 48 percent of registered voters who said it was untruthful. By way of comparison, only 39 percent of registered voters view the media as truthful, with 53 percent saying the news media is dishonest. However, the partisan split on this topic is clear – 89 percent of Republicans find the Trump administration truthful, versus 77 percent of Democrats who find the administration untruthful. Conversely, 69 percent of Democrats find the news media truthful, while a whopping 91 percent of Republicans consider them untruthful. Independents consider both untruthful," Emerson reports" (Mills, 2017).
13	10-2-2017	The failing @nytimes does major FAKE NEWS China story saying "Mr.Xi has not spoken to Mr. Trump since Nov.14." We spoke at length yesterday!	With this tweet Trump "blasted The New York Times again, this time calling out the newspaper for its 'major fake news' story on China" Reuters, 2017b).	Frames: The New York Times fails. The New York Times provides fake news.	Yes	False. "The story was originally published before it was revealed that Trump had committed to the "One China" policy in a phone call with Xi on Thursday"(Kludt, 2017). "Mr. Trump's morning Twitter complaint is misleading. The Times published a story in print on Feb. 10 about the relationship between Mr. Xi and Mr. Trump and did include the line Mr. Trump quoted. The two leaders spoke on the phone the evening of Feb. 9, after the story had gone to press. Online, the story was updated and stated the evening phone call was the first time they had spoken since Nov. 14" (Qiu, 2017).
14	11-2-2017	I am so proud of my daughter Ivanka. To be abused and treated so badly by the media, and to still hold her head so high, is truly wonderful!	Trump responds to news coverage concerning the fact that several fashion firms were dropping [Ivanka Trump's] fashion line because sales went down. Also, Kellyanne Conway, plugged Ivanka's fashion line in an interview (Chaitin, 2017).	Frame: the media are abusing and badly treating Ivanka Trump.	Yes	False. "We examined this tweet in full fact check. There is no evidence that Nordstrom acted out of political considerations" (Kessler, 2017).

	Date	Trump tweets on media	Reasons for tweets	Framing the media	Fact-checked?	Proven true or false?
15	12-2-2107	Just leaving Florida. Big crowds of enthusiastic supporters lining the road that the FAKE NEWS media refuses to mention. Very dishonest!	Trump responding to reports of local news (Reyner, 2017).	Frames: The news media are fake. The news media do not report accurately/honestly.	Yes	False. "Local media reported about the crowds that lined the roads as Mr. Trump travelled from his Mar-a-Lago resort, where he was hosting Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, to the airport. Most of these people were protesters, not supporters" (Qiu, 2017). "Several local news outlets reported that Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort had become a draw for anti-Trump protesters. The Post, though, did mention that Trump supporters were also in tow as Trump readied to leave Palm Beach to fly back to Washington, D.C., after a visit with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The Associated Press, meanwhile, reported on Saturday that thousands of protesters gathered outside Trump's resort the last time he was in town to voice opposition against his executive order temporarily banning refugees and citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries from traveling into the United States (Reyner, 2017). "Mostly false. Congress wins a race to the bottom" (Politifact, 2017).
16	12-2-2017	While on FAKE NEWS @CNN, Bernie Sanders was cut off for using the term fake news to describe the network. They said technical difficulties!	This tweet responds to an interview with Bernie Sanders on CNN where he "joked about 'CNN fake news' at which point the feed cut out" (Fox news, 2017d).	Frames: CNN is fake news.	Yes	False. "Trump's tweet distorted what happened when Sanders brought up 'fake news' on CNN. Sanders was actually criticizing Trump's repeated outcries that CNN is a fake news source. His audio did go out after this joke, but the CNN host picked up the interview after a commercial break for about nine more minutes" (Graves, 2016). "Sanders was mocking Trump" (Politifact, 2017).
17	15-2-2017	The fake news media is going crazy with their conspiracy theories and blind hatred. @MSNBC & @CNN are unwatchable. @foxandfriends is great!	Trump responds to reports that "indicate American intelligence officials discovered phone records show multiple campaign officials spoke repeatedly with Russian officials" (Feldscher, 2017a).	Frames: the news media are fake. The news media hold conspiracy theories and hatred. MSNBC and CNN are unwatchable. Fox and friends is great.	No	

	Date	Trump tweets on media	Reasons for tweets	Framing the media	Fact-checked?	Proven true or false?
18	15-2-2017	Information is being illegally given to the failing @nytimes & @washingtonpost by the intelligence community (NSA and FBI?). Just like Russia	Trump accuses "US intelligence agencies of illegally giving information to the media over his team's alleged contact with Russian officials" (Osborne, 2017a).	Frame: The New York Times and The Washington Post fail.	Yes	False, concerning the 'failing New York Times and Washington Post'. "Actually, The Washington Post is doing great. The New York Times, like The Post, has seen spikes in audience and subscribers" (Ye Hee Lee, 2017a).
19	16-2-2017	Leaking, and even illegal classified leaking, has been a big problem in Washington for years. Failing @nytimes (and others) must apologize!	"President Trump escalated his attacks on the intelligence community (...) who have supplied the 'fake news media' with information on his administration's ties to Russia" (Weisman, 2017).	Frame: the New York Times (and other media) is failing	No	
20	16-2-2017	FAKE NEWS media, which makes up stories and "sources," is far more effective than the discredited Democrats - but they are fading fast!	Trump responds again to reports "that his campaign aides were repeatedly in contact with senior Russian intelligence officials" (The Week, 2017).	Frame: news media are fake, however more effective than Democrats.	No	

	Date	Trump tweets on media	Reasons for tweets	Framing the media	Fact-checked?	Proven true or false?
21	17-2-2017	Thank you for all of the nice statements on the Press Conference yesterday. Rush Limbaugh said one of greatest ever. Fake media not happy! "One of the most effective press conferences I've ever seen!" says Rush Limbaugh. Many agree. Yet FAKE MEDIA calls it differently! Dishonest	In this series of tweets Trump reacts to reports of the first press conference he held while being in office. This press conference got a lot of (inter)national media attention, because Trump claimed a bigger electoral win than actually happened, accused the media of lies, offended a Jewish reporter and bashed the media for reporting on the basis of leaks (AFP, 2017).	Frame: media are fake and dishonest.	No	
22	17-2-2017	The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @CNN, @NBCNews and many more) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American people. SICK!	These two Trump tweets, followed at the same day [see above] (AFP, 2017).	The news media are fake. The New York Times, NBC News, ABC, CBS, NBC News and CNN are failing. They are the enemy of the American people.	No	
23	17-2-2017	The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!	[see above] (AFP, 2017)	[see above]	No	

	Date	Trump tweets on media	Reasons for tweets	Framing the media	Fact-checked?	Proven true or false?
24	18-2-2017	Don't believe the main stream (fake news) media. The White House is running VERY WELL. I inherited a MESS and am in the process of fixing it.	President Trump reacts to media reports of the past week, concerning leaks in his administration, ties of his team with Russia and the resignation of Michael Flynn, his national security advisor (Berke, 2017).	Frame: the mainstream media are fake.	No	
25	20-2-2017	Give the public a break - The FAKE NEWS media is trying to say that large scale immigration in Sweden is working out just beautifully. NOT!	In this tweet Trump reacts to media reports about a rally he held in Florida. During the rally Trump referred to "what's happening last night in Sweden". This raised questions, for nobody knew what he meant. (Buncombe, 2017).	Frame: the news media are fake.	Yes	False. "Sweden processed a record number of asylum applications in 2015. The nation's crime prevention council did note an increase in assaults and rapes last year, but it also recorded a drop in thefts and drug offenses. Over all, it said, there was no significant increase in crime" (Qiu, 2017).
26	24-2-2017	Find the leakers within the FBI itself. Classified information is being given to media that could have a devastating effect on U.S. FIND NOW	Trump calls to track down the leakers of classified information (Jackson & Johnson, 2017)	Frame: the media are recipients of leaks.	No	
27	24-2-2017	FAKE NEWS media knowingly doesn't tell the truth. A great danger to our country. The failing @nytimes has become a joke. Likewise @CNN. Sad!	This tweet followed after "CNN, the BBC, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times were barred from a White House press briefing" on February 24th 2017 (Mortimer, 2017).	Frames: the news media are fake. The news media don't report accurately/honestly. The news media are a danger to the people. The New York Times and CNN are failing and have become a joke.	No	

	Date	Trump tweets on media	Reasons for tweets	Framing the media	Fact-checked?	Proven true or false?
28	25-2-2017	The media has not reported that the National Debt in my first month went down by \$12 billion vs a \$200 billion increase in Obama first mo.	A tweet by Trump saying that the media ignores good news about his administration (Collins, 2017).	Frame: the media report selectively and neglects good news about the Trump administration.	Yes	Partly true. "The numbers in this morning Twitter message are accurate, but it's a stretch for Mr. Trump to take credit for a 0.06 percent decline in the federal debt. The dip is a temporary and normal fluctuation that doesn't negate the long-term trend of rising debt. And it is more accurately a reflection of the policies of Mr. Obama" (Qiu, 2017).
29	25-2-2017	I will not be attending the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner this year. Please wish everyone well and have a great evening! [Trump announced in this tweet that he would "not attend the annual White House party on 29 April, which some media organisations were considering boycotting because of Mr Trump's attacks on the media" (Worley, 2017).	Frame: this longstanding tradition between media and the president of the United States is not important.	No	
30	26-2-2017	Russia talk is FAKE NEWS put out by the Dems, and played up by the media, in order to mask the big election defeat and the illegal leaks!	Trump responds to media reports concerning "allegations that associates of Trump's campaign were in contact with Russian officials prior to the election" (Conway, 2017).	Frames: the media play up fake news. The media mask the election defeat of the Democrats and the illegal leaks.	Not yet	Not yet clear. "Related to the Russian interference matter, multiple investigations, including a federal probe led by special counsel Robert Mueller, are looking into whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russian officials" (Leach, 2013).
31	26-2-2017	For first time the failing @ny-times will take an ad (a bad one) to help save its failing reputation. Try reporting accurately & fairly!	Trump responds to the fact that "The New York Times screened its first television advert during the Oscars - hitting back at Donald Trump over 'fake news' (Walker, 2017).	Frames: The New York Times fails. The New York Times needs ads to repair its reputation. The New York times does not report accurate and fair.	Yes	False. "The president scoffed at the Times for taking out an ad 'for the first time'. But that isn't true. It may have been the newspaper's first ad during the Oscars, but the Times has run commercials in the past" (Papenfuss, 2017).

	Date	Trump tweets on media	Reasons for tweets	Framing the media	Fact-checked?	Proven true or false?
32	9-3-2017	Despite what you hear in the press, healthcare is coming along great. We are talking to many groups and it will end in a beautiful picture!	With this tweet Trump reacted to the fact that some conservatives have criticized the replacement plan as 'Obamacare 2.0.' (Pappas, 2017b).	Frame: the press does not report accurately/honestly.	Yes	False. "Painting an overly rosy picture of reactions to his bill to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, Mr. Trump excoriated reporting on the fallout. The press, The Times included, reported on widespread opposition to Mr. Trump's bill, including among Republicans"(Qiu, 2017). "The press is reporting reactions to the replacement plan from lawmakers and industry groups from all sides of the political spectrum. Conservative and liberal industry groups have opposed the plan, along with Democrats and some Republican lawmakers, both moderate and conservative" (Ye Hee Lee, 2017b).
33	13-3-2017	It is amazing how rude much of the media is to my very hard working representatives. Be nice, you will do much better!	For this tweet of Trump, it is not clear to what specific incident he refers to (Derespina, 2017).	Frame: many media are rude to people of Trump's administration.	No	
34	15-3-2017	Does anybody really believe that a reporter, who nobody ever heard of, "went to his mailbox" and found my tax returns? @NBCNews FAKE NEWS!	With this tweet Trump "responded to the leak of his 2005 tax returns" (Osborne, 2017c).	Frame: NBC News reports fake news.	Yes	False. "In Mr Trump's tweet, he said "nobody ever heard of" David Cay Johnson, the Pulitzer Prize winning reporter who claimed to have received Mr Trump's tax returns in the post from an unknown source" (Osborne, 2017c).
35	20-3-2017	Just heard Fake News CNN is doing polls again despite the fact that their election polls were a WAY OFF disaster. Much higher ratings at Fox	President Trump ripped CNN Monday morning for restarting its polling operation following the presidential election and said its competitors are doing a much better job (Feldscher, 2017c).	Frames: CNN produces fake news. CNN polls are a disaster. Fox News is better in polling.	Yes	False. "They're not our polls co-host Poppy Harlow noted, saying that Gallup conducted the survey" (Crowe, 2017).
36	28-3-2017	The failing @NYTimes would do much better if they were honest! https://t.co/ATy8R3knS2	This Trump tweet refers to an article written by John Crudele about the not neutral coverage of Trump by The New York Times (Crudele, 2017).	Frames: The New York Times fails. The New York Times reports dishonest.	No	

	Date	Trump tweets on media	Reasons for tweets	Framing the media	Fact-checked?	Proven true or false?
37	29-3-2017	If the people of our great country could only see how viciously and inaccurately my administration is covered by certain media!	Trump is referring to an article on the website of the New York Times, reporting "about staff infighting in the White House" (Sampathkumar, 2017).	Frame: certain media report vicious and inaccurate about Trumps administration.	No	
38	29-3-2017	Remember when the failing @nytimes apologized to its subscribers, right after the election, because their coverage was so wrong. Now worse!	Trump tweets that The New York Times made an apology to its readers (Sampathkumar, 2017).	Frames: The New York Time fails. The New York Times apologised to its readers because of wrong covering of the presidential election.	Yes	False. The New York Times did write a letter to its readers, but it was not to apologize. It was to raise questions about the fact that the paper - like other news media - had underestimated "his support under American voters" and to ensure readers that they "can rely on The New York Times to bring the same fairness, the same level of scrutiny, the same independence to our coverage of the new president and his team" (the New York Times, 2017).
39	30-3-2107	The failing @nytimes has disgraced the media world. Gotten me wrong for two solid years. Change libel laws?	Mr. Trump linked to a column that validated his accusation of Obama had wiretapping him (Jackson, 2017a)	Frames: The New York Times fails. The New York Times disgraced the media world. Libel laws for media should be changed.	Yes	False. "Mr. Trump linked to a New York Post column that argued that a Jan. 20 article in The Times validated his accusation that Mr. Obama had wiretapped him. This is false (Qiu, 2017).
40	31-3-2017	Mike Flynn should ask for immunity in that this is a witch hunt (excuse for big election loss), by media & Dems, of historic proportion!	With this tweet Trump "backed a decision by his former national security adviser to seek immunity in congressional investigations" (Hosenball, 2017).	Frame: the media (as the Democrats) are executing a witch hunt.	No	

	Date	Trump tweets on media	Reasons for tweets	Framing the media	Fact-checked?	Proven true or false?
41	1-4-2017	It is the same Fake News Media that said there is "no path to victory for Trump" that is now pushing the phony Russia story. A total scam!	Trump reacts to the "ongoing controversy about his White House campaign linked to Russia (Fox News, 2017b).	Frames: the news media are fake. The news media are pushing phony stories.	Not yet	Not yet clear. "Related to the Russian interference matter, multiple investigations, including a federal probe led by special counsel Robert Mueller, are looking into whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russian officials" (Leach, 2013).
42	2-4-2017	Anybody (especially Fake News media) who thinks that Repeal & Replace of Obama Care is dead does not know the love and strength in R Party!	This tweet "follows a week of Trump's attacks on the conservative House Freedom Caucus after the failure of the GOP Obamacare replacement bill, the American Health Care Act" (Yilek, 2017).	Frame: the news media are fake.	No	
43	16-4-2017	The recent Kansas election (Congress) was a really big media event, until the Republicans won. Now they play the same game with Georgia-BAD!	In this tweet Trump "accused news organizations of downplaying the special congressional election in Kansas after the Republican candidate won (Morin, 2017a).	Frame: media neglect state elections where republicans win.	No	
44	17-4-2017	The Fake Media (not Real Media) has gotten even worse since the election. Every story is badly slanted. We have to hold them to the truth!	It is not clear which event or incident triggered this tweet by Trump.	Frame: the media are fake. The media have become more fake since the election: every story is badly slanted.	No	

	Date	Trump tweets on media	Reasons for tweets	Framing the media	Fact-checked?	Proven true or false?
45	18-4-2017	Despite major outside money, FAKE media support and eleven Republican candidates, BIG "R" win with runoff in Georgia. Glad to be of help!	With this tweet Trump "took credit for the likely runoff [against Democrat Jon Ossoff]" (Costa, 2017).	Frame: fake media support democratic candidates more than republican candidates.	Yes	True, but exaggerated. "This tweet about the results of the special election in Georgia's Sixth Congressional District is exaggerated. Votes for Democratic and Republican candidates were nearly even for the House seat vacated by Tom Price, Mr. Trump's new health secretary" (Qiu, 2017). "The day after the Georgia special election, Trump took credit for the ensuing runoff election. He said he was "glad to be of help," even though Republicans in the race distanced themselves from him as the election got closer. And while Republicans avoided an embarrassing loss, it wasn't exactly a BIG "R" win that Handel will face Ossoff in the runoff. Ossoff garnered 48 percent of the vote in a strong Republican district, just shy of the 50 percent needed for an outright win. Many pundits said the result indicated danger signs for Republican lawmakers in the Trump era (Ye Hee Lee, 2017c).
46	20-4-2017	Failing @nytimes, which has been calling me wrong for two years, just got caught in a big lie concerning New England Patriots visit to W.H.	This Trump tweet refers to reports by "the Times and other news organizations tweeted out photos comparing the Patriots' visit with Trump with the team's White House event with President Barack Obama in 2015 — there was a much bigger crowd around Obama, according to the photos" (Jackson, 2017c).	Frames: the New York Times fails. The New York Times lies.	Yes	True. "The official Patriots account quickly shot back, saying that the photos "lack context." They attributed the apparent difference in crowd size to a change in seating arrangements. 'In 2015, over 40 football staff were on the stairs', the team tweeted. 'In 2017, they were seated on the South Lawn'. (...) The Times acknowledged the error and removed the photo from their website"
47	21-4-2018	No matter how much I accomplish during the ridiculous standard of the first 100 days, & it has been a lot (including S.C.), media will kill!	With this tweet Trump anticipated the critical news coverage he expected around his first 100 days (Berenson, 2017).	Frame: media will not acknowledge the accomplishments of Trump.	No	

48	23-4-2017	New polls out today are very good considering that much of the media is FAKE and almost always negative. Would still beat Hillary in popular vote. ABC News/Washington Post Poll (wrong big on election) said almost all stand by their vote on me & 53% said strong leader.	With this tweet Trump responded to polls "with worst approval rating at 100 days for any post-war president" (Eleftheriou-Smith, 2017).	Frame: the media are fake and almost always negative. Polls by ABC News/Washington Post are not good predictors.	Yes	False. "Mr. Trump falsely suggested on Twitter that he had beaten Mrs. Clinton in the popular vote. In the April ABC/Washington Post poll referred to by Mr. Trump, 46 percent of voters said they voted for Mrs. Clinton and 43 percent for Mr. Trump. This is similar to Mrs. Clinton's popular-vote margin from November (Qiu, 2017). "It's not until the second to last paragraph of the long story that it's shown Clinton would still lose to the president, despite the high disapproval ratings and problems with his first 100 days detailed by the paper" (...) Just before Trump sent his tweet, "ABC's Jonathan Karl tweeted: According to the ABC/WP poll, among 2016 voters, @realDonaldTrump would beat Hillary Clinton in a rematch — in the popular vote, no less" (Beard, 2017).
49	24-4-2017	The two fake news polls released yesterday, ABC & NBC, while containing some very positive info, were totally wrong in General E. Watch!	[see above]	[see above]	Yes	[see above]
50	25-4-2017	Don't let the fake media tell you that I have changed my position on the WALL. It will get built and help stop drugs, human trafficking etc.	Trump responds to media reports about the fact that instead of "demanding that funding for his promised border wall be included in a must-pass spending bill, reducing the chances of a government shutdown at the end of the week by making clear he's flexible on that timeline" (Fox News, 2017c).	Frame: the media are fake.	No	
51	29-4-2017	Mainstream (FAKE) media refuses to state our long list of achievements, including 28 legislative signings, strong borders & great optimism!	With this tweet Trump "accused the 'fake' media of refusing to report on his administration's achievements on the 100-day mark of his presidency" (Morin, 2017b).	Frame: the media are fake. The media are not willing to state Trump's achievements.	No	

Appendix D: Basis for analysis of data generated in the Trump tweets directed at the media

Media(outlet)	Times	Pos/Neg	Descriptions	Nr. of times descriptions were used
Fox	3	positive	Congratulations on/positive about inauguration ratings	2
			Great	1
New York Times	16	negative	Failing	11
			Wrong	5
			Apology to readers	4
			Fake news	4
			Dishonest	2
			Bad and inaccurate coverage	2
			Poor reporting on election win	2
			Worse	2
			False	1
			Angry	1
			Dwindling subscribers	1
			Writes total fiction	1
			Making up stories and sources	1
			Enemy of American people	1
			Sick	1
			Became a joke	1
			Sad	1
			Failing reputation	1
			Disgraced the media world	1
			Change libel laws	1
			Big lie	1
CNN	7	Negative	Fake news	4
			Failing	2
			Unwatchable	1
			Enemy of American people	1
			Sick	1
			Became a joke	1
			Sad	1
			Election polls were disaster	1
ABC	4	Negative	News poll not accurately	2
			Fake news	1
			Failing	1
			Enemy of American people	1
NBC	3	Negative	Fake news	1
			Failing	1
			Enemy of American people	1
			Sick	1
			Unwatchable	1
			News poll not accurately	1

Media(outlet)	Times	Pos/Neg	Descriptions	Nr. of times descriptions were used
Washington Post	3	Negative	False	1
			Angry	1
			Failing	1
			Poll not accurately	1
CBS	1	Negative	Failing	1
			Enemy of American people	1
Fake news media	16	negative	Not reporting accurately	5
			Dishonest	4
			Lied	2
			Marginalize	1
			Conspiracy theories and blind hatred	1
			Make up stories and sources	1
			Enemy of American people	1
			Danger to our country	1
			Pushing phony stories	1
			Sick	1
			Scam	1
			Worse	1
Media (incl. press)	11	Negative	Not reporting accurately	5
			Fake	2
			Opposition party	1
			Abused and treated Ivanka Trump badly	1
			Failing	1
			Recipient of leaks	1
			Viciously reporting	1
			Witch hunt	1
			Play up fake news	1
			Rude to government representatives	1
			Almost always negative	1
			Less truthful than Trump administration	1
Negative polls are fake news	1	Negative		1
Fake news	1	Negative		1
Total	66			

Tweets of Trump with positive or negative connotations		
Times tweets were positive about the media, Fox only	5%	3
Times tweets were negative about the media	95%	63
		66

Tweets of Trump directed at what he calls 'fake news media'		
New York Times	47%	16
CNN	20%	7

ABC	12%	4
NBC	9%	3
Washington Post	9%	3
CBS	3%	1
	100%	34

Times tweets were directed at (news)media and 'fake news media'			
(News) media' and 'fake news media' (together)	41%	27	66
('News) media'	41%	11	27
'Fake news media'	59%	16	27

Descriptions mostly used in times tweets were directed at CNN and The New York Times

Medium	Nr. of times tweets targeted	Descriptions mostly used	Nr. of times descriptions used
<i>The New York Times</i>	16	Failing	11
		Wrong	5
		Apology to readers	4
		Fake news	4
<i>CNN</i>	7	Fake news	4
		Failing	2

Descriptions of media in tweets of Donald Trump during his first 100 days in office	Nr. of times descriptions are used
Failing (19)/Failing reputation (1)	19
Fake (2)/Fake news/play up fake news (12)/Pushing phony stories (1)	15
Bad and inaccurate coverage/not reporting accurately/viciously reporting (1)	13
Danger to our country (1)/Enemy of the American people (6)	7
Dishonest	6
False (2)/Big lie (1)/Lied (2)	5
Wrong	5
Apology to readers	4
News poll not accurately (3)/poll not accurately (1)	4
Sick	4
Worse	3
Angry	2
Became a joke	2
Congratulations on/positive about inauguration ratings	2
Make up stories and sources	2
Poor reporting on election win	2
Sad	2
Unwatchable	2
Abused and treated Ivanka Trump badly	1
Almost always negative	1
Change libel laws	1
Conspiracy theories and blind hatred	1
Disgraced the media world	1

Dwindling subscribers	1
Election polls were disaster	1
Great	1
Less truthful than Trump administration	1
Marginalise	1
Opposition party	1
Recipient of leaks	1
Rude to government representatives	1
Scam	1
Witch hunt	1
Writes total fiction	1

Inventory of fact-checks of the tweets of Trump about the media		
Fact-checked	51%	26
Not fact-checked	45%	23
Not yet fact-checked	4%	2
Total of tweets	100%	51

Number of times fact-checks of the tweets of Trump about the media turned out to be (partly) true (but exaggerated) or false		
False	85%	22
Partly true	8%	2
True but exaggerated	4%	1
True	4%	1

Appendix E: Records of an interview with Ryan Lizza, political analyst for CNN and Eelco Bosch van Rosenthal, journalist at NOS/NTR Dutch public television

I have attended an afternoon meeting at De Balie in Amsterdam on November 5th 2017, titled: ‘One Year of Trump - An afternoon with journalist Ryan Lizza from The New Yorker and CNN on Trump and The White House’. During this meeting Ryan Lizza was interviewed by Eelco Bosch van Rosenthal, journalist at NOS/NTR Dutch public television.

During this meeting of 90 minutes I took notes from the parts of the interview that dealt with Trump, the media and the press. Parts of the interview that dealt amongst other things about Trumps policies, I have not noted, while they do not belong to the scope of this Final Project. I have drafted my notes beneath. In doing so, I included quotations as quotes if I knew for certain that I had correctly noted the quotations.

Records of the interview

“My work has become more difficult in the sense that the volume of the news coming out of the White House is much higher than under Bush, Clinton and Obama (...) I am writing more than ever before in my career.”

“There is a parasitic relationship between Trump and the press. Trump created a massive market for serious journalism in the States. The one moment Trump attacks institutions and the next moment he calls those reporters and have a friendly chat with them”. So there is something very cynical about his attacks on the press. There are friendships and especially in New York there are journalists he has known for decades.”

Trump knows how to use the press for his advantage. I grew up in the 80’s and Trump was a New York public figure then. He was covered in de New York Daily and the Daily News. If you would have asked me as a kid if I thought he would ever become president ... no. But he knows how to master the media. If you see how he ran his campaign. He decided not to pay for media-campaigns, but make use of free media, especially the cable networks. Contrary to his opponents, such as Rubio who used paid media, he was available for interviews and on air. And the cable networks took him. It saved him billions of dollars on advertising.

Trump is a New York person. He cares about what the New York Times and the tabloids write and lately also about The Washington Post. But most of all he cares about television. He watches cable television coverage several hours a day.

“If you are the leader of a country without a strong history of press freedom and without protections in the Constitution, it is very easy to take on the press. If you are a Putin or a Erdogan you can jail journalists, you can take away their licenses, you can kill journalists.” The most alarming aspects of the remarks Trump made about the media are that he wants to make it easier to sue journalists and that he never talks in a positive way about the First Amendment. “In reality however, he has made no efforts whatsoever to change press freedom, to open up a debate about the First Amendment or to pursue any legislation or regulation.” (...) “That makes it a lot less scary. Also because we know there is no support, at least among republicans, to change the press laws.”

“So what do you do when you have no autocratic control over the media? You attack their credibility. You run a campaign to discredit independent sources of information. So that your own media, both your Twitter-feed and the pro-Trump media, become the only sources of information for your voters. So you can discredit independent sources.” And that is what he has done with the press.

It works amongst Trump-voters. You see that when they don’t believe that established facts are facts, because they have listened to Trump. “If something comes from The New York Times or the Washington Post, they just dismiss it. That is even the case with Sarah Sanders, the press secretary of Trump. When one of the reporters mentioned something from The Washington Post during a press briefing the other day, she just said: ‘who believes The Washington Post?’ That is just immediate discounting information you don’t want to grapple with.”

Sean Spicer, the former press secretary of Trump had been working in the GOP for many years. Many journalists knew him not as a particular brilliant political mind, but as a reliable spokesperson for whoever he was working for. He did not have a reputation as a liar. That changed on the first press briefing, where he shouted and bullied journalists and told lies. That destroyed his reputation for the press. Press secretaries under Trump lie for him. “Previous press secretaries saw their jobs as a bridge between the press and the president. They saw themselves as working for both parties. A part of their job was to manage that relationship. Not just hired for the president, but serving the public. By serving the press. That seems now a very old fashioned view, but it was a common view of press secretaries for the president. On his first day Spicer made clear that that was not the model.” Sarah Sanders has not proven to be different, on the contrary.

The trust of American people in institutions is low in general and the media suffer from that as well. Journalism has responded well to Trump. We have seen impressive reporting and serious coverage over the last year. It is exactly as the founders of our country would have wanted journalists to respond. And

that has been appropriate with regard to the person that Trump is. Autocratic, the way he talks about press freedom and the way in which he does not seem to be very enthusiastic about the norms of liberal democracy. I think the press has done a very good job in covering that story.

Appendix F: Record of a presentation by Chris Hamby, investigative reporter at BuzzFeed News and winner of the Pulitzer Price 2014

On June 23rd 2017, the Dutch expertise centre for journalism (in Dutch: Het Expertisecentrum Journalistiek) organised the ‘Big expertise day new media’ (in Dutch: de Grote Expertisedag Nieuwe Media) for de 7th time. During this meeting, several pioneers of (online) journalism shared new insights. Among them was Chris Hamby, investigative reporter at BuzzFeed News and winner of the Pulitzer Price 2014. He gave a presentation about ‘Investigative journalism in the Trump era’.

Because of the fact that I was not able to attend the meeting, I have watched and studied the entire video of the presentation online. I have made a record of the most relevant parts of the presentation for this Final Project.

Record of the presentation ‘Investigative journalism in the Trump era’.

Hamby starts his presentation by telling that concerns about investigative journalism are not new. It has been subject of discussion amongst journalists, the difference is that it is in public discussion now.

“Despite the gloom and doom that we hear quite a bit, there is reason for cautious optimism about the future of journalism and investigative reporting. I have seen a tendency recently to view the Trump presidency as a fundamental shift and almost as an existential threat to the free press broadly and especially to investigative journalism. It is undeniable that there has been a significant change in the last year.”

“There are broadly two issues: the long term continuing effects of the changing economic circumstances of the media industry, combined with the rise of populist politicians like Trump. To my opinion, Trump has not created a whole new reality. He pushed the public discourse to extremes and forced us journalists to confront some of the issues that have been simmering for a long time. Both issues present opportunities for journalism.”

Hamby tells about the influence of the use online news media on investigative journalism. The tendency was to see online news media as bad for investigative journalism, because readers are getting used to brief and simple information. Hamby remarks that it does not mean that people would not consume information if it would come in other forms. He states that a disillusionment with a vast sea of online information that was questionable, unreliable and fake news already started before Trump.

“The Trump message is fundamentally populist and anti-establishment’. He tapped into the various – and in some way reasonable – anger that people across the ideological spectrum had.” Hamby points at the fact that there was a political paralysis for two reasons. The first is the erosion of the fact that there are true, objective and verifiable facts. You can debate over different policy options, if you have

generally agreed upon the facts for these options. The second is that trust in the media has been diminished, partly because of self-inflicted wounds by journalism. This had for instance to do with a focus on 'chasing clicks' and other trends with which journalists undermined themselves.

"There is an increasing belief that media as institutions are only interested in protecting itself and that it looks down on average people. There are certain kernels of truth to it. I do think that a lot of journalists I have seen – sort of the NY/DC journalists – have priorities and interests that are different from that of most Americans and that there is a sort of condensation of the 'fly-over states', the middle of America." Hamby acknowledges that this criticism has some basis, but not totally. But in his opinion it began before the rise of Trump. "Trump did not create these trends, he helped popularize them and brought it out in the open. He forced us to deal with them."

"The erosion of the idea of truth has reached new heights. There is a good reason to worry about fake news. But Trump has redefined it to use it as a weapon to discredit critical reporting. Actual fake news consist of entirely made up information made look credible. Trump basically uses the term for anything he does not like."

"There is the infamous phrase by Kellyanne Conway, the Trump-advisor and spokesperson, that when a reporter pointed out at the White House press secretary and claimed that the Trump inauguration was in fact not the largest ever, she replied to the press secretary with 'alternative facts' which led to no shortage of cartoons in the media." Hamby also shows some of them on his PowerPoint slide.

Hamby says the criticism of the media as an establishment institution has also reached new heights. Next, he displays a tweet of Trump calling the media not his enemy, but the enemy of the American people and a news article headline stating 'BuzzFeed is a 'failing pile of garbage'', which was about the release of a dossier containing allegations about Trump and Russia. "Reasonable people can decide whether it was a good idea to publish that, but what was different about this were the reactions to it."

"The advantages of portraying yourself as the sole reliable source of information are obvious, but this was already occurring to some extent before Trump: the campaign that Barack Obama ran became a presidency where information was tightly controlled. The administration used social media to bypass the traditional media gate keepers and take the message directly to the population. Trump also tweeted recently that something very much to that effect, but he was much more overt about it. It came down to 'We don't need the media, I can go around them', which was the same idea that Obama had, but the latter just was not quite so blunt on how he stated it." Hamby continues by mentioning some examples of Obama's way of expressing himself about this matter.

"So I became very concerned during the Obama administration, as did other journalists, about what seemed to be an increasing level of message control. It became extremely difficult to get a basic on-the-record interview with agency officials. All we really got were canned statements. The main difference we have seen in the early days of the Trump administration is just a more 'toxic' atmosphere at some of

these agencies. The difference is that some of the top officials at these agencies are just openly hostile to the mission of their agencies. You have Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon saying his mission is to quote the deconstruction of the administrative state. The result seems to be a sort of chilling effect on civil servants, that goes further than what I have seen before."

"But all of this presents opportunities for the media industry. Yes, some people will continue to simply ignore reporting that challenges their worldview. I don't have a solution for that. But there also seems to be a growing demand for reliable information and encouragingly people seem willing to pay for it."

"Since the election, outlets including the New York Times, the Washington Post, the New Yorker, the Atlantic, have all set subscription records. The Times added half a million new digital subscribers in just a six month period. Some outlets are hiring, for example the Post with sixteen new journalists and a rapid-response investigative team. There are a number of outlets doing great investigative journalism, not just these legacy publications."

Hamby now continues with the part of his lecture about various journalistic models. Since this is too far off the topic of this project, the next part of this document will give an overview of the lecture's conclusion.

"So this is a wake-up call for us in the media industry. I am not convinced that this has to be the future of public discourse. Yes, the atmosphere has changed. Yes, there is reason for nervousness and uncertainty. There is also reason for cautious optimism. The same technological advantages that have baffled our industry have given us the tools to reach more people and present news in new and more engaging ways."

"The distrust and hostility that's boiled over has sparked a bit of soul-searching that provides an opportunity for our industry to refocus on the core principles and practices that have always underpinned great journalism. And I think that it is more important now than maybe it ever has been."

Appendix G: Interview by e-mail with Marc Bennetts, a British journalist based in Moscow

Marc Bennetts is a British journalist, working and living in Moscow. He writes for Newsweek, Politico, The Times, and The Observer, as well as in Esquire, The Guardian, Foreign Policy, and The Sunday Telegraph. He has also worked as a reporter in Ukraine, North Korea, and Iran. I read some of his articles on Russia and asked him whether he was willing to be interviewed by me for this Final Project.

Bennetts agreed immediately and proposed that I would send the questions per e-mail, which he would answer in a reply. In this Appendix, the interview questions and the answers of Bennetts are recorded.

1. As a British journalist based in Moscow with many years of experience in reporting from Russia and other countries, how do you describe the basic functions of journalism?

Journalism has many functions. 1. To write what the powerful don't want people to read. 2. To keep people informed and be thought-provoking. And of course, journalism is also often simply a form of entertainment and/or distraction for readers.

2. In your professional opinion, are these functions universal c.q. are they also applicable in countries with more autocratic regimes?

In an ideal world they would be universal. In reality, it's impossible in some countries, i.e. North Korea, for journalists to perform the first and often - to any meaningful degree - the second. In other countries, i.e. Russia, the first is still possible, but there are risks (for domestic journalists, mainly - foreign journalists are in a far less dangerous position.)

3. Looking at your daily/ongoing practice in Russia: to what extent are you able to exercise these basic functions?

The Kremlin often doesn't care too much what western journalists write, as critical articles fit in with the government's narrative of an anti-Russia campaign by western countries/media. But it's possible to report and work here without too many problems. Violence against western journalists is rare. It's hard to dig out information, however, and officials are often reluctant to speak to western journalists, which is a problem.

4. In your opinion: is your answer on this question applicable to most journalists operating in the Russia? If not: can you elaborate on your answer? If yes: can you elaborate on your answer?

Russian journalists, as i said, face a lot more risks than foreign journalists (violence, imprisonment). That said, they are more than often the ones who first expose government corruption, etc.

5. RIA Novosti was closed down in 2013. Can you elaborate on the reasons? Can you inform me about the effects of this decision? What were responses that followed on this decision: by yourself, former colleagues and other journalists?

RIA Novosti was closed down because it was providing (especially in English language reports) an objective voice, as well as giving an opportunity for Putin's critics to state their opinions in state media. There were differences of opinion within the Kremlin administration as to whether this was a good thing, or not. On one hand, it was good for Russia's international image and allowed the Kremlin to point to the existence of certain media freedoms. On the other hand, for the Kremlin hardliners, who eventually won the argument, it was a travesty that westerners were being employed by a Kremlin-funded news agency to write articles that didn't follow the "party line." (This doesn't contradict my early statement that the Kremlin doesn't care what western journalists write, because RIA Novosti was a Russian news service run on Russian money). Dmitry Kiselyov, who eventually took over as state media boss, told journalists that they should be "weapons" in the "information war" against the west in his first week on the job. Many people were unhappy with this and quit. I had left RIA Novosti around a year before it was closed down. (By the way, it hasn't exactly been closed down - it still survives as a news service).

Appendix H: Skype-interview with Scott Gehlbach, Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, November 18th 2017

On November 18th 2017, I interviewed Scott Gehlbach via Skype. Gehlbach is Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. I had read his research ‘Reflections on Putin and the Media’ (Gehlbach, 2010b) and asked him for an interview to elaborate on the outcomes of this research. This Appendix describes the interview questions and answers.

In the record, solely the answer to question 1 is a quote, because although I wanted to record the interview on my iPhone, the dictaphone did not work properly. For the answers on the other questions I have written out the notes I have taken during the interview.

1. As a researcher with a focus on considering the contemporary experience of Russia as a former communist state, how would you describe the basic functions of journalism in contemporary Russia?

“I would say that the journalism, as I understand it, that is practiced in Russia today, is very different compared to the way it is practiced in Western countries. With some important exceptions, the norms of journalistic practice in Western countries are not practiced by which I call the mainstream media in today’s Russia.

Let me tell you a story. There is a journalist that I interviewed when I was doing research for the paper that you read and he said that for many years, he understood his job was to help the president, President Putin. And I can imagine somebody at - for example - Fox News saying that his job or her job is to help President Trump, but we came to think of that as the exception to the norm in Western media, whereas I think for the main television channels in Russia today that is very much the norm.

I would also say there is a lack of aggressiveness that we might be accustomed to in many Western countries. So I remember going to a press conference for Vladimir Zhirinovsky, who is the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia – it’s a joke because the party is neither liberal nor democratic – and I was at the press conference where he announced that he was running for president and all of the major television stations were there and I don’t think there was a single question other than by one of the foreign reporters. It was different during the 1990’s, the media were much more aggressive back then, but it changed in the 2000’s with Putin’s assertion of control over the Russian media. Nowadays the way journalists report on the Kremlin is more docile and flattering.”

2. What are characteristics in the way President Putin handles the media?

An important characteristic is the increased control that Putin executes over the media. However, despite what many people think, nowadays the system in Russia is authoritarian, not totalitarian. And it is capitalist, not socialist. Putin wants to hold power, but has no ambition to change Russian society fundamentally.

This is reflected in the way Putin deals with the media. From the beginning, he has put great emphasis on controlling what is reported in the news on national television. Government control of the media can be either direct or indirect. In the 1990's Russian national television was financially heavily supported by the state, which also brought state influence. At the beginning of the new century, this diminished and the advertising market grew. This could have led to more independent national television. But Putin took control over NTV and over the two other national television networks. Thereby, indirect control by the state was replaced by direct control.

Putin therefore controls the three national television networks (they are directly state-owned or by Gazprom, which is owned by the state), which are the prime source for Russians for national and international news. Every week, executives of the three television stations are at the Kremlin to speak about the news coverage of the previous and the coming week. However, journalists and editors have some freedom to act autonomously, as long as they keep to the rules of the editorial policy. Yet, the degree of coordination is high. Apart from that realm, he allowed freedom to media executives to draw viewers with their own choices for programming. This led to somewhat more diversity in what is covered and programmed.

Controlling other media, such as other television stations, radio and papers is less easy, while there are many of them. However, in the years since this research, more media outlets have been brought under direct or indirect state control. A Kremlin-strategy is – and has been – also to stimulate businesses which are Kremlin-friendly to invest in the media. In the research the example of Kommersant is mentioned. This daily newspaper was bought by Usmanov, a billionaire. After his purchase, the management was replaced and the opinion page was closed. Besides that there are also examples in which the state put economic pressure on media-editors and journalists.

Putin has had success with his strategy to control the media in Russia. At the same time, people do not believe everything that they see in the television news. Research shows that Russian viewers have the expectation that the news is shaped, both by the government and by commercial parties. They find that they themselves are responsible to find out what is significant and what is biased. However, bias can be effective in shaping the beliefs of viewers, so long as there is some informational content to the news. That is also why Kremlin controlled media mix fact and fiction: they provide enough real information to keep people guessing.

Too much media bias can also have an opposite effect. That happened with NTV in 2001. It was taken over by state-controlled Gazprom, got a different management, many of their best reporters were replaced and the news became predominant pro-Kremlin. The effect was that many viewers backed away from the station. An example from the research of a media outlet that is owned by Gazprom but was back then – and is still – assertive, is Ekho Moskvyy.